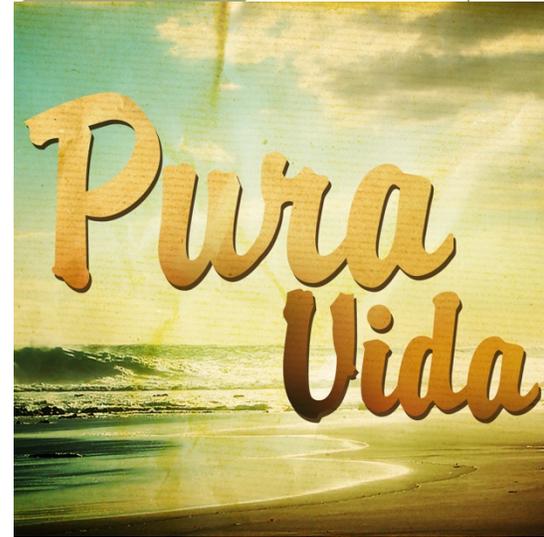


GROUP STUDY 3: PRACTICAL TEACHING

Introduction: It's one thing to know a lot about weightlifting and another thing to actually lift weights. It's one thing to know a lot about nutrition and another thing to eat healthy. Similarly, it's one thing to know a lot about the Bible and another thing to actually live out what it teaches. That's why the Christian life isn't just about knowledge. It's when our acts of faith intersect with God's faithfulness that our faith grows. From Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish builders, we discover that hearing and learning are not enough. The value is in the application, because, in the end, it's obedience that makes all the difference.



ICE BREAKERS

- Did you grow up attending a church that emphasized application? If not, what was emphasized in your church?
- Is there a teaching that you have heard that you remember today? What stands out about it in your memory?

EXPLORE

Take some time and review Matthew 5-7 briefly as this week's passage comes right after Jesus's "Sermon on the Mount." Jesus concludes his teachings with this parable about living a wise or a foolish life. What do you notice about it?

- Read Matthew 7:24-28
 - Why do you think Jesus concludes his sermon with this parable?
 - What does this strong claim say about how Jesus views his own teachings?
 - What is the relationship between, "...and puts them into practice" in verse 24 and "...had its foundation on the rock" in verse 25?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever applied a specific teaching of Scripture that, looking back, prepared you for an unexpected storm?
- Can you think of a difficult time you have faced that could have been avoided if you had applied a principle found in Scripture?
- In verse 27, Jesus describes the foolish man's house falling with a great crash. Have you experienced or seen someone whose life went in this direction? Without giving too many specifics, describe what could have been avoided if the teachings of Jesus had been applied in their life.
- If, for the past five years, you had been applying what the Scriptures teach about finances, how would things be different for you today? Apply this same question to marriage or relationships.
- What are two areas of your life where a bit more application would make a noticeable difference? How can this group support you in pursuing those things?

PRAYER & PRACTICE

We can be the most learned of believers, but if our knowledge doesn't move toward application, then our faith will wither. The writers of the Bible challenge us to respond to God's truth in many

different ways: love your enemies, show forgiveness, and practice generosity. What have been the most difficult truths for you to apply? Take time to pray over those together.