



Beyond the Sermon

A Sermon Application Guide

Title: Under the Influence

This guide is designed to offer a simple tool for those wanting to take the next step with Sunday's message. You can print this guide to study on your own, or use it in a group and experience transformation together.

Prayer

"Dear God, Thank you for the light you bring into my life. Help me see through the temptations that distract me from Your love. Guide me as I refill my lamps with prayer, worship, and Your Word. Grant me the strength to say no to distractions and open my heart to a deeper connection with You. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and make me ever more prepared to walk in Your light. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Message Theme

Spiritual Preparedness Through a Growing Relationship with God

Key Truths

Ever feel like life throws temptations your way that seem pretty good, but deep down you know they're not the real deal? Yeah, that's Satan whispering in our ear, offering cheap thrills instead of the lasting joy God has for us. Think of it like this: God wants to be our BFF, our closest friend. But sometimes we settle for substitutes, like fleeting pleasures or temporary highs. Building a real relationship with God takes time and effort, but it's way more fulfilling than those quick fixes. Remember the story of the wise virgins? They had their lamps ready with extra oil, symbolizing their preparedness. In our lives, that oil represents our spiritual strength. We gotta keep that flame burning bright! So how do we fill our spiritual lamp? Easy! Through worship, prayer, and saying "no" to stuff that pulls us away from God. Imagine it like feeding your soul healthy food - it nourishes your connection with God. Being filled with the Holy Spirit isn't a one-and-done deal. It's like a muscle you gotta keep exercising. The more we seek God, the stronger and more vibrant our faith becomes.

Practical Application

Salvation is a gift from God, but spiritual growth requires effort. There is always more to learn and experience in your faith journey. Here are some tips to stay focused on God and avoid distractions that can weaken your faith. Remember consistency is key. Start small, dedicate some time each day, and gradually cultivate a richer and more fulfilling relationship with God.

1. **Reflect on your spiritual life.** Are you satisfied? Are there areas where you feel distant from God? Be honest with yourself.
2. **Identifying Substitutes:** Think about your daily routine: What activities do you turn to for comfort or happiness? Are any of these potentially hindering your connection with God? Consider alternatives that could nourish your spirit. Instead of reaching for social media, spend time in prayer or reflection. Swap unhealthy coping mechanisms with healthy habits like exercise or spending time in nature.
3. **Cultivating Your Relationship with God:** Start small: Commit to a short period of daily prayer or Bible reading. Even 5-10 minutes can make a difference. Find a worship style you enjoy: Explore different music, services, or prayer groups to see what resonates with you. Engage with a community: Connect with a church or faith-based group for support and encouragement in your spiritual journey.
4. **Prioritizing the Holy Spirit:** Actively seek God's presence: Throughout your day, invite the Holy Spirit into your thoughts and actions. Practice gratitude: Recognizing God's blessings, big and small, can deepen your connection with Him. Embrace challenges: View difficulties as opportunities to grow closer to God through prayer and seeking His guidance.

Reference Verses

- Matthew 25:1-13
- Ephesians 5:18
- 1 Corinthians 14:18
- Revelation 3:17-19

Declarations

- *"I will not settle for counterfeits! I will seek the true fulfillment God offers!"*
- *"I choose to actively pursue a connection with God, not substitutes!"*
- *"I will not be a foolish virgin! I will keep my spiritual lamp burning bright!"*
- *"Through prayer, worship, and resisting temptation, I will be prepared for whatever comes!"*
- *"With God's strength, I can resist temptations that hold me back!"*

What's Next?

Now it's time to write down anything the Lord has spoken to you. Praise Him, Thank Him and ask the Holy Spirit to help you walk this out.

Scripture Reference

Under the Influence

Matthew 25:1-8 KJV Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

Matthew 25:9-10 KJV But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Matthew 25:11-13 KJV Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Ephesians 5:18 NIV Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit...

1 Corinthians 14:18 KJV I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all...

Revelation 3:17-18 KJV Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear...

Revelation 3:19 KJV As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Revelation 3:18 KJV I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire...