

AUTOPSY • Week 3: Autopsying Others

Daily Briefing • Day 5 of 5 • Success Leaves Clues

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

3 John 11

This week we have been learning to observe others' outcomes and trace upstream to the beliefs and behaviors that produced them. Today we turn to the positive side of that practice. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to see the good, positive, and beautiful fruit You bear in other people's lives as they seek to know You and build Your kingdom. Give me a discerning mind that sees health across all areas of life, not just one or two wins at the expense of all the others. Guard me from my idols and help me to walk in whole-life, holistic health, flourishing under Your reign and rule in every area. I pray these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

The self-help world has a phrase it uses constantly: "success leaves clues." The idea is simple. If you want a result someone else already has, study how they got there. Observe their habits, their decisions, and their daily practices. Then copy them. It is compelling advice. And the biblical version of it is better, more honest, and more comprehensive than any version the self-help world offers, because the Bible asks a harder question about what success actually means.

Hebrews 13:7 is one of the most specific commands in the New Testament about learning from positive examples. The writer tells his readers to remember their leaders, consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Three things, in that order. And the outcome to consider is not career achievement or organizational results. It is the full trajectory of how a person lived under God's authority. The leaders being referenced were people who had taught the Word of God and walked it out to the end. Their spiritual destination was considered as part of the outcome. That is a different standard than mere physical, financial, or professional success.

Proverbs 6:6-8 narrows the observation to one specific lesson in the realm of nature. The ant has no commander, no officer, no ruler. She prepares bread in summer and gathers food at harvest. She is not a model for every area of life. She teaches one thing: diligent, forward-looking effort that comes from internal drive rather than from external pressure. The ant teaches one specific thing in one narrow area. Some people in your life will have that same narrow lesson to teach. They model one virtue or habit worth copying but their full life does not earn wholesale imitation. Knowing the difference before you start following someone is the whole point of today's holistic assessment.

READ & MEDITATE

Hebrews 13:7

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."

Proverbs 6:6-8

"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest."

Matthew 6:33

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Read Hebrews 13:7 and notice the three commands: remember, consider, imitate. They happen in sequence. Then read Proverbs 6:6-8 and identify the one specific virtue the ant models. Then read Matthew 6:33 and ask what it says should govern the ordering of your life across all areas.

REFLECT

Hebrews 13:7 does not say to imitate your leaders' techniques, personalities, or productivity systems. It says to consider the outcome of their entire way of life and imitate their faith.

Think of someone in your life whose faith you would describe as worth imitating. Consider what the outcome of their way of life looks like across career, health, family, faith, and character. What does the fruit their faith has produced across those areas tell you about God's wisdom compared to the wisdom and example and values the world offers?

The outcome Hebrews 13:7 asks you to assess is not a peak moment or a professional accomplishment. It is the arc of an entire life lived under God's authority.

Based on that standard, what would disqualify someone as a model worth imitating, even if they have impressive results in one or two areas? How will you approach learning from one or two areas while rejecting beliefs and behaviors in others?

The world glorifies people who win in one area and lose everywhere else. Before you copy someone's beliefs and behaviors, you need to know which kind of example you are looking at.

Think of someone whose success in one area you have been tempted to imitate. Run the holistic assessment across five areas: career, health, family, faith, and character. What does the full picture tell you? This might look like a business leader whose financial results you admire but whose family has paid the price, a fitness influencer whose discipline you want to copy but whose approach is driven by vanity rather than stewardship, or a high-achieving peer whose work ethic you respect but who has no meaningful relationship with God. Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

Proverbs 6:6-8 endorses learning one specific lesson from the ant. Matthew 6:33 names the framework that governs all of life.

Fill in the blanks from Matthew 6:33:

"But seek _____ the _____ of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be _____ to you." (Matthew 6:33)*

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

Notice the direction of the verse. You seek first. God adds everything else. The kingdom is not the thing you tack onto a life already built around career, health, and relationships. It is the thing you build on, around, and toward. God adds everything else to that pursuit.

Honestly assess which direction your life currently runs. Is the kingdom of God the thing you seek first while trusting God to add everything else you need? Or is the kingdom something you have added onto an overstuffed life already organized around other priorities? This might look like treating church attendance as one item on a full schedule rather than the community that shapes the schedule, approaching serving as something you do after your "me time" or recreation gets first say, or thinking about your faith as one dimension of your identity rather than the thing that defines all the others. Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

MY "I WILL" STATEMENT

Sample: *This week I will identify one person whose life shows consistent positive fruit across career, health, family, faith, and character. I will reach out and ask them one specific question about how their faith has shaped the area of life where I most need to grow.*

This week, because of what God has shown me in His Word, I will:

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite 3 John 11 from memory:
