



THE
WAY OF JESUS

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
MATTHEW 5 – 7

The book of Proverbs speaks of many possible paths a person might take in life. These paths are called ways - the way of evil - the way of the wise - the way of folly - the way of the sluggard - the way of the righteous - the way of death - the way of life. In fact, these are mentioned 50+ times in Proverbs. The ways refer to a person's course of life which is based on cumulative decisions.

I've often said that a person's entire course of life is not cast based on one or two decisions. But, over time, our accumulated decisions and habits and mode of operation do determine our course of life.

Through Jesus' words in Matthew 5-7 (that we refer to as the Sermon on the Mount) He gave instructions about a way of life that would bring blessing to the follower on earth and glory to God in Heaven.

Following the *Way of Jesus* would not replace Scriptures like the Ten Commandments, which are familiar to his audience; rather the *Way of Jesus* would breath fresh life into that ancient path and bring new perspective to Godly principles that may have grown cold and stale.

If a person followed the *Way of Jesus*, they would be different....

...than the religious people like the Scribes and Pharisees,
...than the pagans who had no understanding of the true God,

Following the *Way of Jesus* would give purpose to their lives on earth and please their Father in Heaven.

These three chapters from gospel of Matthew can have the same effect on us that they did on the original hearers. Whenever we sense that our spiritual path has become a little cold, or a little black - and - white; it's time to dwell in the red-letter words of the Bible and dive straight into what Jesus said. *THAT* is what the *Sermon on the Mount* is all about - the heart of the matter!

This study will be a verse-by-verse Bible study in a four week a month format. As bonus over the course of these nine months, you will write out the book or pretty journal for writing your verses each day. The best translation of the Bible for this study guide is the ESV (English Standard Version.)

May the Lord richly bless you as you study His Word!

SCHEDULE

September	Introduction	The Way of Jesus
October	Matthew 5:1-16	The Way of Blessing
November	Matthew 5:17-32	The Way of Righteousness
January	Matthew 5:33-48	The Way of Humility
February	Matthew 6:1-18	The Way of Prayer
March	Matthew 6:19-34	The Way of Peace
April	Matthew 7:1-20	The Way of Seeking
May	Matthew 7:21-29	The Way of Wisdom

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
IS A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT
THE LIFE OF A DISCIPLE OF
JESUS SHOULD LOOK LIKE.
HOW WE SHOULD LIVE
BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS AND
WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR US.

INTRODUCTION

The Way of Jesus conveys the same content as the law given to Israel through Moses. But that law was external and challenging to follow. God promised in Jeremiah 31:31 that something new would be coming - the New Covenant. This would be different from the Old Covenant in that He would put His law

_____ and write it on their _____.

St. Augustine said the Sermon on the Mount was probably the:

best _____ least _____

and the least _____

Among the first red-letter words of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew, two that we should take note are:

_____ and _____

Matthew 5:3-11 are called The Beatitudes from the Latin word

_____, which means _____.

The first beatitude is Blessed are the _____ in _____.

Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. What is it about the Sermon on the Mount that makes it so interesting for people to study and so difficult to obey?
2. How did you respond to rules when you were a child? Have those responses created habits toward either legalism or rebellion that hinder you from applying the Way of Jesus now?
3. Jesus' public ministry began with the invitation to Repent (Matthew 4:17). Why do you think some may find this unnecessary or even offensive?
4. You probably know what it is to be poor in bank account; but how would you describe someone who is poor in spirit?
5. Read 1 Peter 5:5-6 and explain why being poor in spirit is essential to be included in the kingdom of heaven?

Blessed: More than a temporary or circumstantial feeling of happiness, this is a state of well-being in relationship to God that belongs to those who respond to Jesus' ministry. The poor in spirit are those who recognize they are in need of God's help. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. - ESV Study Bible

THE BEATITUDES



Before you even begin your first lesson on the next page, set aside about twenty minutes to read through all three chapters in one setting: As you read the text, ignore the verse and chapter separations and consider this a message straight from Jesus. Picture yourself sitting on the hillside and concentrating on every word that Jesus was sharing, just like a disciple on a retreat with Jesus.

Any disciple who would repent and follow Jesus and take to heart the message He was conveying would have a roadmap for the way in which they were to live - *The Way of Jesus*.

THE WAY OF BLESSING

Do you ever wonder if you're on the right track in your spiritual life?

I mean, you believe Jesus is God's son - you've asked him to forgive your sins - you're trying to make good decisions in life, but there is a nagging little voice that still questions whether you're missing something because you don't always feel super blessed. And Christians are supposed to be *blessed* people.

Maybe you don't overthink life quite that much; but it's not necessarily a bad thing to ask yourself, "*am I truly following the Way of Jesus and am I happy about it - am I blessed?*"

Remember, the phrase blessed also means happy or fortunate. So YOU, my friend, are one fortunate girl simply because you are following the *Way of Jesus!* I know it's not all that simple, I know our feelings get in the way, I know we have difficulties and disappointments, but this first lesson should help us to remember how blessed we truly are as we dwell on all the wonderful benefits of following Christ.

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:1-6 in your journal.

In His opening words, which we call the beatitudes, Jesus defined some characteristics followed by some benefits that would be true of His followers. There are nine of these unique statements and each one begins with "*Blessed are.*"

In your journal:

- Underline each characteristic (i.e., poor in spirit) and print it on the left most portion of the stair steps on page 6.
- Circle the conjunction 'for' in each of the sentences which helps you distinguish the characteristic phrase from the benefit phrase.
- Underline each benefit (possess the kingdom of heaven) and print it on the right most portion of the corresponding step on page 6.

We worked through verse three in our introduction, so this week we'll pick up the text from there.

(v4) It seems somewhat ridiculous to say 'happy are those who mourn', but essentially, that's what Jesus said, 'happy are the unhappy'. But the crucial question is what are we unhappy about? In the context of this message, and noting the first characteristic 'poor in spirit', what type of mourning is Jesus talking about? What is being mourned over? (Read 2 Corinthians 7:10 for insights.)

(v4) What blessing does God offer for those who mourn in this way?

- How can this positively affect your life?

(v5) Using a dictionary, define meek or meekness.

- Think of ways in which Jesus demonstrated meekness while on this earth:

(v5) What blessings are the meek to receive? (Read Matthew 19:28-30 for insights.)

(v6) A sincere hunger/thirst for righteousness might be understood from a couple of different aspects. Let's consider some of them:

- First, when a person comes to the end of themselves, (often through difficulties) it's common for them to develop a sudden hunger for God in their life. Read Psalm 107: 5-9 and summarize this example of hungering in this way followed by satisfaction.

- Second, when we walk with Jesus we have a longing to be right with God. Read Romans 3:21-24 and explain how our hunger to be righteous in God's eyes is satisfied:

- Lastly, we also find that we develop a greater desire (hunger and thirst) to be in right standing with people. Read Ephesians 4:21-29 and list a few areas where we might be convicted to deal more righteously with people.

Our appetite for all of the above may ebb and flow, but God is faithful in our lives. He will gently convict us, help grow our appetites and then work in our lives to satisfy our hunger and thirst for what is right.

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:7-10 in your journal.

(Follow the same instructions as yesterday for marking in your journal and filling in the chart on page 6.)

Let's dig into the next four Beatitudes today....

(vs7) This is the only beatitude that promises reaping what has been sown!

- Define Mercy:

- Explain why you would want to receive it:

(vs8) What is the blessing promised for the pure in heart?

- It makes a person wonder how you get a pure heart. Read Psalm 32:1-5. What did the Psalmist do that enabled his heart to be made pure again:

- How does clearing your heart of things that stand between you and God help you to see God, or hear God?

(v.9) There is a blessing promised to peacemakers.

- It is true that Christians can play a role in keeping peace between people. Read James 3:17-18 and bullet point some of the characteristics that promote peace between people:
- But there is another aspect of being a peacemaker and that is helping people make peace with God - helping people to know God. Read Daniel 12:3. What are people who turn many to righteousness likened to in this passage?

As we arrive at the eighth beatitude there is a sharp change in tone from the more gentle Christian attributes like mercy, purity, and peace to persecution. Anyone who follows Jesus will be persecuted - it is part of the kingdom!

(v.10) We can be rightly or wrongly persecuted for many things in life, but this passage is talking about followers of Jesus being persecuted because of what?

Read John 15:18-20. From this passage, and the 8th beatitude, what type of persecution should be expect if we walk in the *Way of Jesus*?

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:11-13 in your journal.

(Mark the final beatitude following the same instructions as previous days. Circle the phrase salt of the earth in orange.)

In this world there are natural forces like gravity that silently hold our universe together. These forces take place in the background of our lives without our notice. There is also a spiritual force in the background, as common as gravity and as infrequently noticed. It could be described as the tension between the supporters of the kingdom of God and the supporters of the kingdom of this world.

(v.11) Explain the spiritual tension we should be expecting:

(v.12) We share our experiences of persecution with what ancient group of people?

Jesus said to be happy when we're persecuted for our faith, because:

1) it takes our eyes off earthly rewards, 2) it strips away superficial belief, 3) it strengthens the faith of those who endure, and 4) our attitude through it serves as an example for others. We can be comforted knowing that God's greatest prophets (Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel) were persecuted. - Life Application Study Bible

Now we transition into the first of two metaphors that help us understand our privilege to influence people along our path.

(v.13) In the days of Jesus, before refrigeration, salt was used as a preserving agent to keep meat from rotting. What other positive qualities of salt can you think of?

(v.13) With the benefits of salt in mind, explain what salt is a great analogy of a believer's role in society?

- List one or two practical and specific ways you can act as salt where you spend most of your time (work, school, family):

(v.13) One concern that is expressed in this verse is that of salt losing its taste or saltiness.

- What might cause this to happen in a believer's life?

- What steps can you personally take to guard against this?

LESSON 4

READ and WRITE Matthew 5: 14-16 in your journal.
(Circle the phrase light of the world in orange.)

Today's verses are very popular! Children's songs, devotion books, and album titles have all been inspired by the idea of Jesus followers becoming the light of the world.

Read John 8:12 - Who is the light of the world?

Read Matthew 5:14 - Who is the light of the world?

(vs14) How can we be actively spreading the light of truth in the world?
List specific ways:

Walking in the light and letting your light shine are common sayings but becoming a light-bearer isn't always fun and games, as the final beatitude about persecution taught us.

Read John 3:19-21

Salt is to the prevention of decay as Light is to _____

- Why would allowing the light of Christ to shine in our lives tend to draw persecution?

(vs16) What is the ultimate goal of allowing our light to shine?

When we consider all these verses this week and all the ways we are blessed in our walk with Jesus, it seems like a very small thing to give in return to make sure our lives are both salty and bright so that others may give glory to God the Father!

NOTES

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. Can you honestly say that you have an appetite for the things related to God's kingdom; or do you more often crave things pertaining to the kingdom of this world?

2. If you don't hunger and thirst for righteousness, what might you be filling up on that dulls your appetite?

3. Read Colossians 3: 1-2. What simple truth contained in these verses might set your appetite on the right track?

4. Salt causes people to crave water. Give examples of how the salty life of a Christian may cause someone to crave living water.

5. What situations tempt you to put your lamp under a basket?

6. Ask the Lord for specific direction on how to be salt and light in your corner of the world and share your plans with your group:

THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Those listening to Jesus were likely familiar with Hebrew Scriptures. When Jesus said they were to be the salt of the earth or the light of the world that did NOT sound familiar. They may have wondered if Jesus was bringing an entirely new teaching or even a new religion.

As if He could read their minds, Jesus began to fortify His message with familiar Scriptures to clear up any confusion. He assured them He was not bringing a new teaching that abolished the law, but rather, He would fulfill the law. By following the Way of Jesus, they could experience an even deeper and stronger righteousness than what they learned from the religious people around them - the scribes and Pharisees.

The Way of Jesus would eventually allow their righteousness to bubble up from the life of the spirit that would be within them rather than from the laws that had been forced upon them. It was the same righteousness but from a different source.

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:17-20 in your journal.

- Mark any words related to the law or commandments with a green underline.
- Out a square around the contrasting words abolish and fulfill.

These verses lay a meaningful foundation for all the passages that begin: you have heard that it was said (referencing what was written in the Law and Prophets). As each new topic was mentioned, Jesus elaborated on the heart of the matter and how to live it through the Spirit rather than through the letter.

There are two distinct parts to these four verses:

- V. 17-18 speaks of Jesus' relationship to the law
- V. 19-20 explains our relationship to the law

(V. 17-18) Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to _____.

He did not intend for His life and message to be a replacement for the Law, but rather a completion by demonstrating God's Holy character.

Read Galatians 3:23-26

- What was the role of the law?
- What event changed the role of the law in the people's lives?
- How would you say Jesus fulfilled the law?

(V.19-20): If we only possessed these two verses to understand God's plan, we would be in trouble. Praise God, we have the whole Bible! We know that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law, not its killer. Our response should be similar - rather than thinking the law of God is old and outdated, we realize that it still represents the holiness of God.

Read Matthew 23:25-26:

- Explain the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Where was their focus?
- How would it be possible for a follower of Christ to exceed that righteousness? Explain the necessary shift in focus.

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:21-26 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase you have heard that it was said in green underline.
- Mark the phrase but I say to you in red underline
- Put a box around the words murder, angry, and insults and connect the boxes with a line to show their relationship

Today we study the first of six familiar topics from the Hebrew Scripture. Each new subject in this chapter begins “you have heard that it was said.” Remember, Jesus wasn’t destroying the law, but rather deepening our understanding of it so that we could appreciate how perfectly it described the character of God.

What is the key topic of this passage?

Read Exodus 20:1-17. Which commandment was being referenced?

(V.22) Jesus likened murder with _____.

Explain what those two have in common:

Anger, insults and name-calling are considered bad manners by anyone. Parents correct their children for such behavior, but the punishment given for insults or name-calling isn’t anything like the punishment that would be given for murder! So it might be challenging to connect anger to murder.

The reason it’s difficult is that we tend to categorize sins in our own way. We think anger is kind of bad, but not really bad. In other words, if we indulge in a little verbal meltdown - no harm, no foul - we just tell ourselves to be more careful next time.

But what Jesus expressed here was that anger contains the seeds of murder and under the proper conditions may germinate and sprout.

- What are the proper conditions that may cause you to become angry and flare up against others?

This can be a sensitive topic for some women who have struggled to submit their thoughts and their tongue to the rulership of Christ. Many of us have suffered bruised or broken relationships that may have been initially damaged by anger. Not every strained relationship is the result of anger; but anger will make every relationship strained.

(V.23-24) The strained relationship in these verses seems to be between what type of people?

(V.23-24) Describe a modern parallel for this type of situation”:

Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-22. Combine with Matthew 5, explain God’s perspective on Christians participating in worship or communion (described as offerings in v.23) when they aren’t even on speaking terms with a brother/sister?

Now for the difficult application:

- Is there someone who has something against me?
- Do I owe someone an apology?
- Have I damaged a relationship with my tongue?

Today is the day to take steps to repair and reconcile!

(V.25-26) The strife described is between what types of people?

(V.25-26) How does this situation differ from that in V. 23-24?

V.26 leads us to believe the accused may actually be guilty. Have you known people who simply cannot say “I was wrong” or “I’m sorry I messed that up”? Admitting fault or culpability is a rung on the ladder of humility that we cannot skip.

- Have you recently done something wrong either intentionally or unintentionally and need to admit your fault to someone?
- Do you need to admit your fault and seek forgiveness from someone?
- Is there a situation where you just need to be humble?

Today is the day to take steps to repair and reconcile!

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 5: 27-30 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase you have heard it was said in green underline.
- Mark the phrase but I say to you in red underline.
- Put a box around the words adultery, lust, and sin and connect the boxes with a line to show their relationship

What is the key topic of this passage? _____

Read Exodus 20: 1-17. Which commandment is being referenced?

Look up a definition of both adultery and lust and explain the similarities and differences.

In the same way that anger contains the seeds of murder, could we say the lust contains the seeds of adultery? How do those seeds germinate and sprout? (Read James 1:14-15 for more insight)

(V.29-30) What is the literal remedy given by Jesus for the body parts that lean toward this sin?

Obviously, cutting off a body part is not the answer here. Explain what types of actions Jesus meant by His illustration.

Read these verses and make note of anything that gives you further insight or inspiration:

Psalm 101:2-3

Romans 13:11-14

Titus 2:11-13

We can appreciate the potential for our eye to cause us to sin, but honestly, as women, we know that the visual arena is probably not as big of a temptation for us as mental areas. We know that our thoughts life is primarily where the seeds of adultery might find good soil.

Making the application:

- Is there anything that I indulge in that could lead me to lust?
- Is there anything I say or wear or do that could lead men to lust?
- Do I entertain vain imaginations that I need to cut out of my life?

Today is the day to take important steps toward inner righteousness!

LESSON 4

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:31-32 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase it was also said in green underline.
- Mark the phrase but I say to you in red underline.
- Put a box around the words divorce and adultery and connect the boxes with a line to show their relationship

What is the key topic of this passage? _____

Some situations in our lives have the tendency to germinate in the heart, and then quickly outgrow the boundaries of the heart. They spill out and affect people around us - most often with tragic results.

That is the case in today's topic - divorce! Hardly anyone's life has escaped the sorrow of marital conflict, infidelity, or divorce - either personally or through family members. For this reason, we proceed with tenderness and sensitivity so as not to inflict pain upon pain.

(V.31-32) Which marriage partner was Jesus talking to?

Read Matthew 19:3-9. The Jewish men of Jesus day were introduced to various methods, popularized in religious circles, that allowed them to do what they wanted and look as though they were still honoring God. No doubt this certificate of divorce had been suggested as the means for a man to put away his wife while maintaining a good standing with God.

- According to V.8 why did Moses allow divorce?

- According to V.9 what was Jesus' concession regarding divorce?

Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to understand what Jesus may have been referring to with His words “it was also said.” If those were the only verses in the Bible on marriage and divorce; what sort of misuse might have sprung from them?

Rather than Deuteronomy 24 giving permission for divorce, perhaps it could be paraphrased this way: “Husbands, if you are so heartless as to put your wife away, at least give her a legal certificate so she can remarry and will not become a destitute woman. Oh, and by the way, if you make that decision - it’s for good! You can’t say, “I don’t want her one day and maybe I’ll take her back on the next day.”

Read Genesis 2:21-25. What are the instructions for the husband in that passage, and by implication for both partners?

It’s obvious that many men had justified their behavior and perhaps even misused the Jewish Scriptures to support their actions. Relationship responsibilities aren’t always easy to uphold. Both men and women often act on the whisperings of our sinful hearts rather than digging deeper for the power of the Holy Spirit. Just like the Jews of Jesus’ day, we want to make our actions appear as though all was done properly on the exterior.

The entire Sermon on the Mount was intended for us to take inventory of the motives of our heart. A marriage relationship is a bond between a man and woman that should reflect Christ and the church. Jesus (our groom) will never cast us aside. We may willingly walk away - but he will not divorce us from his family. As a follower of Christ, our lives should represent the same attitude.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. Read Romans 8:2-4. Explain how this passage helps us understand how we fulfill righteous requirements of the law.

2. What are some subtle ways we might actually encourage each other to bend or break God's law, therefore dishonoring Him?

3. We know that being angry with someone leads down a dangerous path. But what about those innocuous insults that can seem more like complaining. Discuss the danger of speaking casually of another in such a manner. How does this desensitize us toward those seeds of murder?

4. Explain the effect it would have on a Christian's spiritual life to conform to culture's broad definition of sexual purity and narrow definition of sexual sin.

5. How would you answer a Christian friend who says sexual fantasies are healthy because they prevent physical affairs?

6. Discuss some ways you might encourage a Christian friend who has been on the receiving end of an unwanted divorce.

THE WAY OF HUMILITY

In this lesson Jesus advanced three more topics: oaths, retaliation and treatment of enemies. Just as we would expect, the Way of Jesus exalts the hearts of the matter above the requirements of the Law.

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:33-37 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase you have heard that it was said in green underline
- Mark the phrase but I say to you in red underline
- Put a box around the words swear/sworn, oath and say

What is the key topic of this passage? _____

This is the fourth topic that reaches back into the Hebrew laws. It's not a direct reference to a commandment; however, there are two Old Testament Scriptures that are worth reading at this point:

Leviticus 19:12

Numbers 30:2

It's clear that God never intended for his people to go around making promises and then not following through. An accurate summary might be: 'if you promise it - do it!' Here in Matthew, Jesus challenged the extravagant oath-making that had become fashionable - swearing by heaven, or God, or His footstool, etc.

Read Matthew 23:16-22. Write a sentence or two about the games the scribes and Pharisees were playing with their promises:

Oath taking is really a pathetic confession of our own dishonesty. Why do we find it necessary to introduce our promises by some tremendous formula....unless we know our simple word is not likely to be trusted. - John R. W. Scott

What connection do you see between taking oaths or making vows and the previous subject of marriage/divorce?

Jesus always goes right to the heart of the matter - setting aside the games, the technicalities, the escape clauses.

Read James 5:12 and complete this sentence.

“Let your _____ be _____ and
your _____ be _____.”

Give that a try this week - no lengthy explanations - no promises - no exclamation for believability - just answer with a simple yes or no and then follow through and do what you said you would do.

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 5: 38-42 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase you have heard that it was said in green underline
- Mark the phrase but I say to you in red underline

The fifth subject can't be described quite as neatly as previous ones but consider one or two words that might represent the subject matter well.

Read Leviticus 24:17-20. Jesus referenced this Levitical Law but then shifted the attention to a heart attitude which would eclipse the law - a willingness to suffer personal loss rather than cause another to suffer.

The purpose of the Levitical Law was to serve justice and limit compensation for victims to realistic proportions. Over time, people began to use this principle as justification for revenge.

Retribution doesn't usually bring out the best in people. Those who believe themselves to be victims rarely act in sound judgment.

Read Romans 12:14-21. Now, read the important phrase earlier in the same chapter (V.2). Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

The transformation of our mind is the first step to following the Way of Jesus! We so desperately need the mind of Christ to lead us in deciding how to treat those who have mistreated us - or even just annoyed us (like one who begs or one who asks to borrow).

- To reflect God's character, how should you treat our enemies?
- How should we respond to our enemy's needs?
- When is it okay to avenge ourselves?
- What is the danger (V.21) if we do not follow these precepts?

(V.39-40) Re-read the examples given by Jesus and write two modern day equivalents.

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:43-45 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase you have heard it was said in green underline
- Mark the phrase but I say to you in red underline
- Put a box around the phrases that represent difficult people; one who begs/borrows; enemy and those who persecute

With each topic, we've looked to the Old Testament to get a glimpse into Jewish thinking. This time you might ask, where in the world does it say to love your neighbor and hate your enemy - is that really in the Old Testament? The answer is NO. But once again, human nature has a tendency to hear what it wants.

Read Psalm 139:19-22. If you wanted to build a case for hating someone, do you think you could find a way to twist a Psalm like this?

- Whose enemies are really spoken of in the Psalm?
- Now go on to read V. 23-24 of that same Psalm. What was the Psalmist really expressing through the entire text?
- Speaking of the law - read Exodus 23:4-5 and summarize what the law DID command for the people who live in community with others.

...so that you may be _____ (V.45)

How is God leading you to act on this passage? Perhaps an act of kindness toward a difficult person? Maybe an olive-leaf to begin restoration of a broken relationship? Note what God is showing you:

LESSON 4

READ and WRITE Matthew 5:46-48 in your journal.

- Put a heart over the words love in V. 43-46

Even though there isn't technically an Old Testament law that says "love your enemies", it is the heart of God to love and show mercy to all people - to cause the sun to rise and send rain on the just as well as the unjust. In fact, the idea of love for neighbor (whether friend or foe) is foundational to the *Way of Jesus*.

Read Matthew 22:36-40. Why do you think Jesus said that all of the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments?

(V.46-47) Jesus described a certain group of people - those who are easy to love and easy to get along with. Name a few of these types of people in your life:

You probably have another group of people in your life - irregular people - difficult to be in the same room with much less love.

As you reflect on these groups ask yourself:

- In what ways have I treated people in these categories differently?

- What adjustments does God want me to make as I walk more in the Way of Jesus?

Sometimes we get the mistaken notion that acting like Jesus should come naturally to Christians. After all, we have the Spirit of Jesus living in us - shouldn't we be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect?

When our relationships suffer we wonder what's wrong with us and we may even begin to worry that we're just not cut out for the Christian life.

Read Titus 2:11-12. That verse reminds us there is training involved. Training is intentional - it doesn't just come about on its own.

List two areas of relationship where you think God wants you to train in godliness and note how you intend to do that training.

1)

2)

NOTES

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. Do you have a reputation for doing what you say you will do? If not, what areas, do you desire to improve your dependability?

2. Read Philippians 2:3-8 which might be described as the way of the cross rather than the way of revenge.

Share a situation where you have been clearly wronged and God has shown you how to respond with humility.

3. As a Christian, how does one balance protection of home and family with Jesus words in verse 39, "Do not resist the one who is evil?"

4. What encouragement would you give to a friend who said, "I simply cannot even be kind to my enemy, much less love them"?

5. The character of God is such that He sends rain on the just and on the unjust. What hinders us from doing the same and how can we begin to overcome those hinderances?

6. Explain how the simple act of praying for your enemy may enable you to love them.

THE WAY OF PRAYER

We've arrived at the most familiar and maybe the most misused verses of the Sermon on the Mount - The Lord's Prayer. The same chapter that contains the familiar Our Father who art in Heaven also contains a warning against reciting empty phrases!

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:1-4 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase when you give in green underline
- Mark each word secret with a green circle
- Mark each word reward or no reward with a red circle
- Put an "H" over the word hypocrite
- Mark the last 10 words of V. 4 with a squiggly line

Any honest Christian can admit they sometimes have a propensity to be more concerned about how spiritual they appear to others than how intentionally they live to please God. We just naturally love to receive attention and admiration from other people.

(V.1) We need warnings in life, so it's fitting this chapter begins with the word:_____.

According to this verse and from personal experience - what are some bad motives for doing good things?

(V.1) What is the result of doing god things with bad motives?

Re-read Matthew 5:16. At first glance it could seem like a contradiction to our current verse, but let's think a little...

- What is the heart of the exhortation in Matthew 5:16?

- What might that mean in your day to day life?

Verse 1 is a thesis statement for a trio of devotional practices. Read the verses indicated and write each topic on this chart:

Christian Practice

Matthew 6:3-4 _____

Matthew 6:5-6 _____

Matthew 6:16-18 _____

Write the last 10 identical words of each of those passages:

As Jesus shared on those aspects of devotion, He didn't suggest that His disciples begin to give or pray or fast; He seemed to assume they were already doing those things. The point was how they would do them. As always, Jesus went right to the heart of the matter.

(V.2) Write a handful of words/phrases that describe how the hypocrites would give:
(Ex. Loudly)

(V.2) In what ways have we adopted any similar methods in our culture?

(V.3) What did Jesus mean when he said, "When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"?

Jesus used the word hypocrite in each of the passages on giving, praying and fasting. Write a dictionary definition:

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:5-8 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase when you pray in green underline
- Mark the word secret with a green circle
- Mark each word reward with a red circle
- Put an "H" over the word hypocrite
- Mark the last 10 words of verse 6 with a squiggly line

The second topic of this section is prayer. Assuming we already pray, the focus here is on how we pray.

(V.5) Describe how the hypocrites prayed:

(V.5) What seemed to be their concern?

(V.7) Describe how the Gentiles (pagans) prayed:

(V.8) since Jesus' directive was "do not be like them", how should a true disciple of Jesus be different in the matter of prayer?

(V.6) Jesus' followers should be driven by different motives, they should walk in a different way. List as many single words as you can that would describe praying with a heart of devotion:

(V.6) Each time Jesus commented on the actions of the hypocrites, he also mentioned their reward. Contrast the reward of the hypocrite compared to the true disciple of Jesus:

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:9:15 in your journal.

If you had never heard the phrase The Lord's Prayer you would assume it was the prayer that the Lord prayed. That would be a good guess - but actually, the prayer our Lord prayed was recorded by John in his gospel as Jesus was praying to His Father in Heaven before he was betrayed.

This prayer is more like a blueprint giving us an outline of how we should pray after hearing the contrast of how we should not pray (note the Pharisees and Gentiles in verses 5-7). Let's study this prayer as a pattern - not a recitation.

(V.9) "Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name" Explain how our prayers should be directed and why? With what type of attitude, relationship or approach should we begin?

(V.10) "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" After worship, whose cause should we be interested in? To whose will are we to surrender our way, our ambitions, our life?

(V.11) Jesus encouraged His followers to bring their petitions to the throne of God. Beside being a basic need, what does daily bread imply to you?

Read Exodus 16 (the account of God giving bread to His people in the wilderness). With this in mind, what was Jesus teaching about our frequency in prayer?

What aspects of our daily lives/daily needs do these verses address:

(V.11) _____

(V.12) _____

(V.13) _____

In the same way that we need daily supplies for physical life (food, shelter), we also need daily supplies for relational life (wisdom, patience, forgiveness); AND we need daily supplies for spiritual life (overcoming temptations)!

I love how Jesus makes everything simple and genuine. Prayer is honoring our Father in Heaven; seeking HIS will as part of HIS kingdom, and asking that our physical, relational and spiritual needs be met by HIS grace. Prayer is not mindless babbling like the heathen, as if to impress God; or a drama meant to impress people. It's just authentic, daily communication with our Father.

(V.14-15) We only have one sentence left for today. As we try to figure out what a passage means, it can sometimes be helpful to eliminate what it does NOT mean.

1. We know this is not a formula for salvation because we know our salvation is a free gift based on God's grace. It is NOT based on our choice to either forgive or not forgive other people in our life. (Read Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:4-6)

1. We also know that this sentence does not mean that God refuses to forgive individual sins we've committed until we perfectly forgive others around us. (Read 1 John 1:9)

So, what DOES it say? Let's ask another question - what happens between two people when there is a trespass (a careless word for example)? What is the relationship like? What is the fellowship like?

Once that trespass is confronted, resolved and forgiven how does the relationship improve?

If I am not in fellowship with God, I cannot pray effectively. But fellowship with my brother helps to determine my fellowship with God; hence, forgiveness is important prayer. - Warren Wiersbe

LESSON 4

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:16-18 in you journal.

- Mark the phrase when you fast in green underline
- Mark each word secret with a green circle
- Mark each word reward with a red circle
- Put an "H" over the word hypocrite
- Mark the last 10 words of V. 18 with a squiggly underline

The final topic is fasting, with the same consistent pattern:

- How the hypocrite conducts himself in Christian practice; the hypocrite's reward.
- How someone following the Way of Jesus is different; the follower's reward.

(V.16) Write a handful of words/phrases that describe how the hypocrites fasted:
(Ex. Sad face)

(V.16) What was this person's motive?

(V.17) What do you think Jesus really meant when he said, "anoint your head and wash your face"?

Of the three Christian practices (giving, praying, fasting) in this week's lesson....

A) Which is the easiest or most common for you to participate in?

B) The least common - most difficult?

C) Which is the easiest practice for you to become hypocritical - like an actor, or stage player, all show and no heart?

In what ways do you sense God refining your motives to better enable you to walk in the Way of Jesus?

Using your own everyday vocabulary, write a prayer below that follows the model that Jesus taught. Customize it to your own physical, relational and spiritual needs.

Believers do not pray with the view of informing God about things unknown to Him, or of exciting Him to do His duty, or of urging Him as though He were reluctant. On the contrary, they pray in order that they may arouse themselves to seek Him, that they may exercise their faith in meditating on His promises, that they may relieve themselves from their anxieties by pouring them into his bosom; in a word, that they may declare that from Him alone they hope and expect, both for themselves and for others, all good things. - John Calvin

NOTES

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think it's so tempting to make sure other people know about our giving and think well of us for it?

2. (V.8) says, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask". Logic would return the question - then why ask? What are some compelling reasons you think it's good to talk things over with God?

3. Certainly praying aloud with others is a good practice. What is the balance between corporate prayer and secret prayer?

4. Can you describe a time or situation when you were impressed by someone's prayer? Do you think it was their intention to impress you or did you just want to learn to pray like them?

5. Is it always a wrong motivation to pray simply because it's true prearranged time to pray?

6. What are some practical advantages that come from keeping our spiritual disciplines secret?

THE WAY OF PEACE

The first half of chapter six highlighted the *Way of Jesus* in the areas of prayer, giving, and fasting. The second half continues with more practical matters near to our heart like money, possessions, and ambitions. The way we handle these aspects of our lives will determine whether we walk in the *way of peace* or the *way of anxiety*.

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:19-21 in your journal.

- Mark the phrases treasures on earth/in heaven with green underline
- Mark each word treasure and heart with a circle and draw a line to demonstrate their connection.

(v. 19-20) What are the two possible domains for us to invest in?

(v. 19-20) Explain the durability of treasures laid up on earth:

The practical wisdom of laying things aside for future use is obvious to us. It was even more obvious for an agriculturally-based society. In farming, there is a time for planting and a time for harvesting, and the harvest needs to be stored in order to last until the next one.

With Jesus' words in mind, read the following passage and note what the Bible does and doesn't teach regarding laying up treasures on earth:

Proverbs 6:6-11

Proverbs 21:20

1 Timothy 5:8

(v. 21) Why do you think there is such a strong bond between our hearts and our treasure?

Worldly ambition has a strong fascination for us and the spell of materialism is hard to break. Jesus help us to choose well...surely we may say that to lay up treasure in heaven is to do anything on earth whose effect last for eternity.
- John R. W. Stott

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:22-24 in your journal.

- Circle the word eye and the phrases eye is healthy, eye is bad
- Mark the contrasting words darkness and light with a box
- Mark the phrase two masters with a green underline, and the words God and money with a box

Jesus already explained that our hearts become attached to our treasures. If we treasure things here on earth, our *heart* becomes trained toward those things; but if we treasure those things related to God's kingdom, our *heart* will follow us there as well.

(v.22) After focusing on the heart, Jesus turned the attention to what other body part?

(v. 22) What role does your eye play in your normal life?

It can be said, without light there is no sight. If a person's eye is not healthy enough to let light into the body, what would be the result?

(v. 23) Now consider the spiritual analogy: if your eye is healthy - *if it actually lets the light in - your whole body will be filled of light*. List some practical ways we can proactively have healthy spiritual eyes that will let the *light* in for our whole body to be spiritually healthy:

Ready 1 John 2:15-16. Here is a warning against allowing the influence of the world dominate the *desires* of the eyes. What result would you expect if that influence were allowed to continue unchecked?

(v. 24) What are the two opposing masters we all encounter in life?

The Bible actually speaks of money and riches quite a bit. I think god knows our vulnerabilities. He's not impatient or harsh with us, but as we study His Word, we see our temptations more clearly. Read these passages and note any wisdom you find for your way of life:

Psalm 119:36

Luke 16: 10-14

1 Timothy 6:6-10

James 2:2-4

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 6:25-29 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase do not be anxious with green underline
- Mark each anxious with an "A" above it

Don't worry! Don't be anxious! Have you ever felt those exhortations were useless because the habit of worry was already deeply rooted in your life? Nonetheless, you obediently wrote the words do not be *anxious* in our journal. But note of the first word you wrote - THERE-FORE! You know the saying '*what is therefore - THERE FOR?*'

Think of it this way - if I said, "I already put your clothes in the dryer, therefore, they are dry," you would have dry clothes because of what happened previously - they were put in the dryer for you. Jesus was explaining that their anxiety could be done away with because the previous questions are settled:

- Where is your heart and treasure? Heaven (not earth)
- What is the desire of your eyes? God's kingdom (note pleasures)
- Who is your master? God (not money)

Do you see the great importance of establishing the location of your treasure and deciding who is your master?

- If we are able to set our heart on heavenly treasures, fix our eyes on the kingdom, and make God our master....
- Then (therefore) we don't need to worry or have anxiety about our life.

Circle the number that best represents your level of worry or anxiety in recent days:

(least amount) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (most amount)

(v. 25) What areas of worry have you indulged in before you realized this truth expressed by the Way of Jesus?

Read these passages and note anything additional they teach about worry, trust, faith, health, lifespan?

Proverbs 3:5-8

Proverbs 14:30

1 Peter 5:6-7

LESSON 4

Read and Write Matthew 6:30 - 34 in your journal.

- Mark the phrase do not anxious with a green underline
- Mark each word anxious with an "A" above it
- In verse 26, 30, 32 double underline *heavenly Father or God* and circle the verb that directly follows it:

Let's make that into a chart:

Verse	Subject	God's Attention
26	birds	Heavenly Father _____
30	lilies / grass	God _____
32	you / me	Heavenly Father _____

It may be tempting to think of this passage as a charming little piece of poetry. We all think our terribly important lives are much more complex than birds or flowers. Even when Jesus tells us our *Heavenly Father know what we need*, that promise can bounce right off our worry-filled heart and we keep right on worrying.

(v. 32-33) By nature, all humans are seekers, but we seek differently....

- The people of the world (Gentiles) seek

- Followers of Jesus seek

If we are chronically anxious, which of the above do we resemble?

It's like choosing sports teams, you're either on team A or B, but not both. In our seeking, we'll either resemble the people of the world or we'll demonstrate the nature of a child of the kingdom.

- How might seeing yourself as God's child inspire you to stop being anxious?

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said seek first His kingdom?

- Specifically, is there some aspect of worldly seeking and worrying that God is encouraging you to leave behind to seek kingdom things?

NOTES

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. How would you answer someone who asked you how, specifically, they could store up treasures in heaven?

2. What do you think about when you are free to think about anything you want to?

3. How does chronic worry demonstrate a lack of faith in God?

4. What effect does a lifestyle of anxiety have on a person emotionally and physically?

5. Verse 34 speaks of our concerns for the future. What is the difference between planning for the future and worrying about the future?

6. In what areas has the Holy Spirit nudged you to place your trust firmly in God's hands and not worry about the outcome?

7. It's common to hear someone describe the power that anxiety has in their life. In what practical ways can a Christian exalt the power of God over anxiety?

THE WAY OF SEEKING

Seeking good for ourselves, seeking good for others, and even seeking out the sin, the problems and the complications in our won lives in order to remove them is all part of walking in the *Way of Jesus*.

This last chapter begins with an often-quoted and rarely-understood phrase about *judging*. Even those who don't read the Bible seem to know this verse - and seem to have an opinion about what it means!

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:1-5 in your journal.

- Mark the words judge/judgement/measure with a blue underline
- Mark the contrasting words speck/log with an orange underline
- Mark and "H" over hypocrite

Living in community with people is tricky! People have a tendency to be complicated, and even misbehave from time to time. *The Way of Jesus* shows us how we are to behave toward people who misbehave.

(v. 2) What two words seem to be used as synonyms in this verse?

Slivers can sometimes be tough to find because they are usually fairly tiny. In our house, we've been known to get out the magnifying glass so our tweezers can find those nasty little stickers that really get under our skin (so to speak.) I imagine specks are fairly difficult to locate as well, you have to be really looking to find them!

(v. 3) What somewhat humorous problem does the person have who is making judgements?

(v.5) What did Jesus say should be the remedy?

(v. 1-2) What reason did Jesus give for refraining from judging others?

Jesus used the word hypocrite again, which we previously learned meant a play actor - someone acting a part that is not genuine. The use of this word helps us realize that judgements we're to refrain from cannot mean the mere distinguishing from right and wrong. It also cannot mean discernment between good and bad. If that were the case, we would HAVE to be play acting since we would need to pretend we didn't notice someone who was obviously sinning - we would HAVE to be a hypocrite.

Let's use other Scriptures to help us understand more about making a proper judgement or having proper discernment:

John 7:24

Romans 2:1-3

1 Corinthians 6:1-3

Philippians 1:9-10

James 4:11-12

What commonalities do you find with today's verses and Matthew 5:7?

Write a short summary about what judgement looks like for one following the *Way of Jesus*:

The command to judge not is not a requirement to be blind but rather a plea to be generous. - John R.W. Scott

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:6 in your journal.

Yesterday's passage contained one of the most frequently quoted sentences from the Bible and today's verse is one of the strangest. It's a bit startling to hear Jesus refer to people as dogs and pigs. Let's try to discover what it does mean by eliminating what it doesn't mean.

(v.7) Based on what you might know about cleaning and unclean animals in the Jewish diet, who might be the people referred to as dogs or pigs?

(v.7) What do you think pearls might be a symbol of?

Read Matthew 28:19-20 and summarize the command given:

This could lead some to think that all evangelism is good evangelism, whereas Jesus' words here help us understand there comes a time for discernment to be applied to sharing the valuable message of hope. Even Jesus himself was silent on some occasions, and told his disciples to turn and symbolically shake the dust from their feet if met with an unreasonably hard heart. (Mark 6:11)

Read Acts 18:5-6 Explain how the Apostle Paul used this principle with Jews in Corinth:

Read Colossians 4:5-6 Explain how you might put into practice the Apostle Paul's exhortation in your life:

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:7-11 in your journal.

- Double underline the phrase *Father who is in heaven*.

Our daily interaction with people requires a big dose of discernment. There is no better place to receive what we need than to head straight to our heavenly Father.

The Way of Jesus means that we are invited to.....

(v.7) _____ and it will be given, _____ and you will find
_____ and it will be opened to you. (v.8) For everyone who asks
_____, the one who seeks _____, and to the
one who knocks it will be _____.

As we follow the *Way of Jesus* we find that we're presented with both an invitation and a responsibility to press in to God's benevolence and His resources for everything we need for our daily lives and interactions. And God will not disappoint us!

The *Way of Jesus* should open up the path for us to think of God as our *Father in Heaven* - not just our creator, not just a higher power, not just the law-giver - but someone with whom we have a parent/child relationship - someone we run to for advice and insights as we're navigating the twists and turns of our relationship and our needs.

From (v. 9-11) summarize the analogy between human parents and their children, and God with His children:

(v. 9-11) Explain why Jesus was certain we could rely on our Father in Heaven to provide what we need in life:

Read the following verses and note additional insights on seeking God, wisdom and discernment:

1 Kings 3:9-12

Proverbs 28:5

James 1:5

List three requests that you can be sure God will always answer:

1)

2)

3)

LESSON 4

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:12-14 in your journal.

- Mark contrasting words you find in orange (narrow/wide, etc.).

Today's passage begins with another well-known verse. We often call it the *Golden Rule*. There are many variations of the Golden Rule - even Confucius is credited with having said, "Do not do to others what you would not wish done to yourself." But Jesus put this rule into a positive tone. Why is that significant? Because it becomes active - proactive!

If I said don't do harm to anyone today, it might be fairly easy for you to keep to yourself and just do nothing. (After all, we know how to quarantine these days.) But, if I said do good to someone today, you would have to proactively live in such a way as to bless someone else.

I think this is the heart of that command - walk in the *Way of Jesus* and leave a blessing behind you!

(v.12) Do you have a relationship that's strained or broken? How can you apply this simple directive this week to begin a repair?

(v.13-14) List all the opposites or contrasting words that you see in these two verses:

These sentences focus on *entering*. If you diagrammed the first sentence of v.13 it would simply say YOU ENTER. The message is that everyone, as they travel through life, will make decisions about which path they choose to enter through.

- In what sense is the gate of Christianity narrow and the road hard?

- In what ways is the world's gate wide and the path easy?

Read Joshua 24:14-15. This is part of a speech Joshua made to Israel about the choice set before them as they entered the land of God promised to them. In what ways were their choices at that time similar to your choices today?

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandment and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it."
Deuteronomy 30:15-16

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. Share an every-day example of one profitable judgement, and one hypocritical judgment:

2. In what ways could throwing our pearls before swine actually damage our own faith?

3. V.7 says "Ask and it will be given to you." Is that a universal promise? Why or why not? Explain using at least one other Scripture.

4. Have you had an answer to prayer after a long season of asking, seeking, knocking? Explain:

5. Think of a time you have been the recipient of the rule of love and share with your discussion group how it impacted you.

6. We've all heard variations of the statement 'there are many ways to God.' Why do you think people bristle at the idea of there being only one gate to life that is relatively narrow and hard and few find it?

THE WAY OF WISDOM

Life is full of decisions. Remember the 35,000 choices we make each day? Well, it seems that Jesus wrapped up his sermon highlighting the importance of those decisions and the role that spiritual wisdom plays in following Christ.

It began with the choice between the broad road and the narrow road. Now, in these final days of study we'll consider more choices:

- Whether to be influenced by true teachers or false;
- Discerning between good fruit or bad;
- Becoming a talker only or one who does the works of God;
- Building your foundation on the solid rock or on shifting sand!

LESSON 1

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:15-20 in your journal.

- Mark every occurrence of fruit, good fruit, bad fruit in red.

False prophets and disingenuous people are nothing new. They've been among us since Jesus' day and even long before. They will continue to be around until Jesus returns. So, we should understand how to recognize them in order to avoid their influence.

(v.15) Explain how it is that false teachers/prophets can present themselves so deceptively:

(v.16) How are we to recognize a false teacher or prophet?

(v.17-18) How can the quality of fruit give us insight into the health of a tree?

LESSON 2

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:21-23 in your journal.

- Mark the words say and does with a box.

Each day we will choose whether we will merely say we are a Christian and lean on all the churchy things we do to reinforce that idea; or whether we will actually do the will of God. Doing good things, positive things, Christian things isn't bad or empty; but Jesus made the distinction here between merely doing Christian things and doing the will of God.

(v.21) Note the contrast in Jesus' description as He separates people into two categories:

- First category - *says* to me, 'Lord, Lord'
- Second category - *does* the will of my Father

(v.22) Circle the word that describes the amount of people in the first category and write it here: _____

(v.22) During their lifetime, how do you think these normal church-goers felt about their activities (done on God's behalf)?

What are some modern activities that could be substituted for the phrases "prophecy and cast out demons" that people might engage in to please God from the flesh?

(v.23) Jesus explained that something was clearly missing from their lives - knowing God and being known by Him. After all, what could be more terrifying than Jesus saying depart from me, I never knew you?

The *Way of Jesus* is a way of wisdom. We're not just born with wisdom, we need to seek it along the way, and then do something with it. From the Scriptures given below, identify the two words that become very useful in our Christian life as we seek to please God:

Romans 10:17 - Faith comes by _____ the Word

James 1:22 - Be _____ of the Word

Reading the following passages and note anything relevant to truly knowing God and honoring him with your life, your words, and your actions:

John 10:27-30

Ephesians 3:17-21

1 John 4:16-19

LESSON 3

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:24-27 in your journal.

These last red-letter words of Jesus present our final challenge in wisdom -will we become listeners of Godly instruction without putting into practice, or will we apply the truth and make it our foundation for life as we follow the Way of Jesus!

(v. 24-26) Identify the actions of each person in this parable:

- Wise man:

- Foolish man:

- Describe the difference in time/effort there may be in building on top of sand, as opposed to digging down to rock:

- Describe the elements of nature that came against each house:

- How did the storm reveal the true difference in construction when normal observation made them appear very similar?

- How does this analogy play out in our lives with the type of foundations we have chosen? (Don't just write a Sunday School sort of answer, but really consider what this means for your life. In what area do you need to take the time to dig a deeper foundation?)

Lesson 4

READ and WRITE Matthew 7:28-29 in your journal.

Well, you have now officially written out the entire Sermon on the Mount in your own hand. All that is left is a brief afterword describing how people react to all the things Jesus had taught.

- What was their response?
- What characteristics did you notice in this teaching that made Jesus seem like someone who had authority?
- What do you think the responses of the religious people (the scribes) had been?

We certainly want to be counted among the people who respected Jesus' authority. None of us wants to be in the same category as merely religious people who only pay attention to the outward tedious rules and don't understand the matters of the heart!

The *Way of Jesus* should change us and mold our character to resemble Jesus - to act more like Jesus and serve more like Jesus. There was a popular song recorded years ago by the Imperials:

*You're the only Jesus that some will ever see,
You're the only words of life, some will ever read
So let them see in you, the One in whom, is all they'll ever need!*

How inspiring! We all understand our weaknesses and sin but rather than allowing ourselves to be identified by our sinful nature - let's run daily to the ONE who has power to change us into HIS likeness.

Jesus called us to be light of the world...

...someone might see God's light shining through us.

Jesus called us to be salt of the earth...

...someone could be rescued from the decay of the world by us.

Jesus called us to be a city on a hill....

...someone may see God's glory shine through out deeds.

Jesus called us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us!

...someone may need the softening of our gracious response

Thank you for joining us as we yield ourselves more to walk in
The Way of Jesus!

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHTS & DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think board gates and false prophets are so appealing to people today?

2. Online Bible studies are readily available in today's culture. Do you think most women take the time to investigate the author/teacher to inspect their fruit before sitting under their ministry?

3. Have you come across more false teachers that seemed like wolves or more that seemed at first to be like sheep?

4. Why is it so easy for Christians to mistake church activity or ministry activity for actually doing the will of the Father?

5. What type of storms have you endured in your life that have revealed areas where you had hastily built upon sand? Explain the way in which God revealed this to you:

6. Share one area of renewed wisdom or discernment in your life as a result of studying these chapters.

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