



*Sermon
on the
Mount*

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A Journey Through the Sermon on the Mount: Living and Loving like Jesus

About a year ago, I had the privilege of teaching a class to some women who had just come out of incarceration and/or addiction. They were in a program to experience life change, and during the first few moments of our time together, I asked:

“If I were to ask you how to enter the Kingdom of heaven, what would you say?”

I wrote their answers up on the white board as they shouted things like:

“Stop getting high”

“Stop dressing like this”

“Stop swearing”

“Don’t do _____”

“Stop hanging out with those kinds of people”

In just a few minutes, I was able to hear what was really in their hearts regarding “getting into Heaven.” It’s all about what you do and don’t do, how you look and how you act, whom you associate with and whom you don’t.

Now most of us might not say we need to “stop getting high” to get into heaven, but what would you answer to that question? How do you enter into heaven? I think if we really searched our hearts, though we may “know” the right answer, deep down our list would be somewhat similar:

“Stay away from certain behaviors”

“Perform religious duties”

“Be a good person”

“Don’t cuss, drink, or have sex outside of marriage”

What if I told you that Jesus told us none of these things were a requirement to inheriting the Kingdom of heaven? What if I told you that Jesus actually was so upside-down in His thinking; he said we enter the Kingdom through being poor, humble, grieving, hungry and thirsty? What if I told you that Jesus detests religious practices and thinks what you do in secret matters more than what you do in public? What would you do if I said that true worshippers, true followers, are willing to enter in to the most messy of relationships with the most scandalous of people so that they might get to know God?

As we journey through the Sermon on the Mount, as we follow Jesus and listen to His teaching, we will have to unlearn as much as we learn. We will have to undo the false narratives we’ve all been taught about God and His expectations for His people, and be willing to learn the true way— Jesus’ way —into the Kingdom. We will simply learn to live and love like Jesus by spending time with him these next few weeks.

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Tips for Studying the Bible

Read the entire passage (Matthew 5-7) a few times before starting.

Read it in another translation too. If you usually read out of ESV, try reading a different version like NIV.

Use these 3 steps when studying the bible:

Step 1: Observation--What does this passage say?

Step 2: Interpretation--What does this passage mean?

Step 3: Application--What am I going to do about what the passage says?

We have left a small section at the beginning of each week for notes. Before answering any questions, take time to mark your observations, interpretations, and applications for the chapter.

Ask Good Questions

Who? Who is speaking?
What? What is being said?
Where? Where is this happening-in what context?
Why? Why is this instruction being given?
How? How does this apply to me-what application can I make?

Pray

Pray that God would give you wisdom and insight, and courage to obey what the text says.

Week 1: Day 1
Matthew 5-7

Memory Verse: *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied”. (Matthew 5:6)*

The Sermon on the Mount is known as Jesus’ manifesto. It is Jesus’ longest recorded sermon, the overarching message to His disciples and the crowds listening and watching from a distance. It is known as the place of His teaching the “upside-down Kingdom” where He reverses our thoughts about how we can approach God and have a relationship with Him. This 3-chapter message is much like a Discipleship 101 course. So before we start taking it apart, and learning verse by verse, let’s read it in its entirety.

1. Read Matthew 5-7. Record notes and questions below.

Notes	Questions

2. Who is Jesus addressing in this sermon? How are the groups of people different? (Use a commentary or bible dictionary if needed).

Which group do you most associate yourself with? Why?

3. One of the most significant verses in the Sermon on the Mount is Matthew 5:17. Why is this significant?

4. What does Matthew 6:33 tell us to seek? What are some of the things you are currently seeking?

Are they different from what's listed in this verse? Does something in your life need to change to better align with this verse? If so, write out one step you can take to make that change.

5. Is there a verse from chapters 5-7 that sticks out to you? Why? Write it out down below.

6. What are you hoping to get out of this study?

7. Spend some time in prayer committing these next 7 weeks to the LORD, thanking Him for what He's done in your life and asking for a teachable heart. Use Psalm 139:23-24 as a guide if needed.

Day 2: Matthew 3-4
The Call

Now that we have the big picture of what Jesus was trying to teach us in Matthew 5-7, let's back up a few chapters to bring a little color into the picture. Who is Jesus? Who are the disciples? How did this all get started?

1. Read Matthew 3-4. Write down the progression of Jesus' ministry below. (observation)

	Jesus' Location	Jesus' Action
3:13-17		
4:1-11		
4:12-17		
4:18-22		
4:23-25		

2. List who is present at Jesus' baptism in verses 16-17? What is this evidence of?

3. Notice in Matthew 4:1-11, shortly after Jesus is baptized, He is tempted in the wilderness. How does He overcome temptation?

When you are tempted, how do you overcome temptation? Is it similar to Jesus' ways? Why or why not?

Write down some ways you can defeat temptation as Jesus did.

4. Matthew 4:12-16 tells us that some of this fulfills prophecies from Isaiah. Read Isaiah 9:1-7. How did Jesus fulfill some of these Old Testament prophecies?

5. What was Jesus' message in Matthew 4:17? Use a dictionary to write down the definition of "repent" below.

Repent:

Why is this significant?

6. List some of the ways the two brothers responded to Jesus' call to "come and follow me" from Matthew 4:18-22.

7. Notice how Jesus begins His ministry. Look at the first message He goes out proclaiming: REPENT. Do not miss this! THIS is where Jesus starts His ministry. He starts with repentance. Does your life with Jesus start with repentance? Have you repented of your sin? Or are you still trying to earn God's favor? Take time now to write out a prayer of confession and repentance to the LORD. Talk to someone this week about your need for the gospel if you haven't already.

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die" –Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Day 3: Matthew 5:1-8
Blessed

1. What do you think it means to be blessed?

Now use a bible dictionary and look up the word “blessed”. According to Jesus, what does it mean to be blessed? **If you don’t have a bible dictionary, visit www.blueletterbible.com for a definition.*

2. Read Matthew 5:3-12. This section of scripture is called the beatitudes. Record in the box below the beatitude and use a bible dictionary to define what each of these beatitudes means.

v. 3 poor in spirit	spiritually bankrupt, coming to the end of yourself
v.4	
v.5	
v.6	
v.7	
v.8	
v.9	
v.10-12	

3. How is what we read in the beatitudes different than your definition of being blessed?

4. If you remember from chapter 4, Jesus starts His ministry by calling out to “repent”. Can you receive the blessings from the beatitudes apart from repentance? Why or why not?

5. Take some time today to catch up or go back and complete any questions you may have missed or go deeper in areas where you’re still curious. Pray for what you’ve learned so far to sink deeply into your heart.

Day 4: Matthew 5:3-4
Poor in Spirit and Mourning

I can remember throughout my life people telling me “Don’t you know Jesus died for your sin?” to which my response would be, “First of all, I’m not a sinner, and second of all, what does His death have to do with my life?” Oh the irony now in asking what Jesus’ death has to do with my life.

I realize now that it wasn’t until I saw my sin for what it was is the reason why I didn’t see my need for a Savior. Until I realized I had nothing to offer God, I couldn’t understand my need for God. These next three verses are absolutely critical in understanding who God is, and who we are in comparison.

1. Read Matthew 5:3-4. What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”?

In His study book “Studies in the Sermon on the Mount”, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “We cannot be filled until we are first empty.” Being poor in spirit is recognizing you are spiritually bankrupt or empty. It’s recognizing that the only thing you have to offer God in regards to your salvation, is sin. When we try to approach God full, full of our own righteousness and our own list of “good deeds”, we are doing the exact opposite thing He has asked of us, which is to come to Him empty.

2. Read Psalm 51:16-17. What is it that God does and does not delight in?

Why is this posture of heart important for inheriting the Kingdom?

In Matthew 5:4, Jesus says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”. Many people quote this during funerals or when someone is in pain, and it can bring comfort. But in this context, Jesus is saying the one who mourns over their sin is blessed. Until you see your sin for what it is against a Holy God, your heart will remain proud with self-righteousness rather than humble with gratitude.

When we think of sin, we tend to think of murder or crimes. We don’t think of selfishness, choosing our way or our own understanding over God’s. That’s what sin is; it’s choosing anything that is not God and His kind of life. At the core, sin is selfishness, self-seeking, self-gratifying, self-centered.

3. Read Romans 3:10-26. What does this passage say about us? God?

Us	God

Again, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “It is an essential part of the gospel that conviction must always precede conversion; the gospel of Christ condemns before it releases.”

5. Have you ever mourned, grieved, or cried over your sin? Write about the time you first recognized your sin and saw your need for a savior.

6. How is mourning over your sin different from feeling guilty for your sin?

7. Read Romans 8:1 and 1 John 1:9. What does God promise to those who recognize and confess their sin?

Write out a prayer of confession if needed for your sin and then read these two verses over your life as a reminder that what you confess, you can leave at the feet of Jesus. You are forgiven and purified.

Day 5: Matthew 5:5-6
Meek, Hungry, and Thirsty

1. Read Matthew 5:5-6. What does it mean to be meek? Use a bible dictionary to write down the definition.

Meek:

This week, we've learned that God says the ones who are poor in spirit (empty, spiritually bankrupt) and mourning their sin are the ones who receive the Kingdom. Why would the next verse reference being meek?

Most of us think "meek" means timid, or shy, maybe even gentle. However, in this context Jesus is showing us that people who are meek are humble. They see themselves for who they are, and they see God for who He is. If you are spiritually bankrupt and aware of your sin, you will have no response but to bow low and posture your heart in reverence to God.

Meekness is not a soft-spoken voice, but a humble, reverent heart. Meekness is not the opposite of boldness; it's the opposite of pride.

2. In today's culture, is it an honor to be considered meek? Why or why not?

3. Read Matthew 11:28-30. What are some of the characteristics Jesus lists of Himself?

Has your perspective on meekness changed after reading this beatitude? If so, how?

4. In the next beatitude, who does Jesus say are the blessed?

"Blessed are those who _____ and _____ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

What is righteousness? Use a bible dictionary or commentary if needed.

5. Read John 6:22-40 and John 4:7-15.

What does Jesus refer to Himself as in these passages?

6. What are some of the things you hunger and thirst for? How are they different than righteousness?

7. When was the last time, if ever, you tried going even a day without food or water? This is the spiritual discipline of fasting. If you can (or if you are willing) try fasting one day this week. Write down how you feel physically. Notice every time you hunger or thirst for something. Fasting is meant to take our physical need and point us to our spiritual need. Record your experience physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually below. How does going without food and water for a day compare/contrast to going without spiritual food and water (Bread of Life/Living Water) for a day? What happened to you physically when you fasted? What happens spiritually when you don't feast on the Bread of Life and Living Water?

“Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish His work.” (John 4:34)

Week 2: Day 1

Memory Verse: *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)*

1. Read Matthew 5-7 again. What do these chapters say about God, about us, and how we are to live?

Who is God?	Who are we?	How are we to live?

2. Write out one thing you learned from last week’s study/teaching on Matthew 5:1-6.

Week 2: Day 2
Merciful & Pure in Heart

Last week we learned about where the gospel takes root: in poverty of spirit, grief, humility, hunger & thirst. This week we'll learn how the gospel bears fruit through our attitudes and actions with others.

1. Read Matthew 5:7-8. Write down the definition to the word “mercy” below.

Mercy:

Share about a time you were shown mercy or you showed mercy to someone else.

2. Read Luke 7:36-50. Notice in this passage there are 3 main characters: Jesus, the Pharisees, and the sinful woman. Observe their interactions and conversations. Fill in the chart below.

	How do they interact with Jesus?	How Does Jesus respond?
Pharisees		
Sinful Woman		

3. What does it mean to be pure in heart? Look up the word “pure” in a bible dictionary and record the definition below.

Pure:

4. Are you able to be “pure in heart” without first being poor in spirit?

Is it possible to be pure in heart without the help of God?

5. Read Ezekiel 36:26-27 and Jeremiah 31:33. What do these verses say in regards to the heart?

Who does the work in the heart?

6. Read Psalm 51. Record the verses below that coincide with Matthew 5:7-8, being merciful and pure in heart.

7. Spend some time in prayer regarding your heart. Are there areas of your heart you need to surrender to God? If so, take some time this week to surrender and preach the gospel to yourself. Remind yourself of the truth that you are forgiven and loved by God, filled with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Week 2: Day 3
Peacemakers

1. Read Matthew 5:9-10. Record these beatitudes below.

2. What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

3. In verse 9 it says “blessed are the peacemakers” followed by verse 10 “blessed are the persecuted.” Why would a peacemaker be persecuted?

We tend to think of a peacemaker as someone who doesn't speak up or ruffle feathers, someone who tries to “keep the peace”. However, in this context, a peacemaker is not one who is silent, but is someone who brings peace. A peacemaker is one who speaks a ministry of peace, a gospel of peace.

3. What is the gospel of peace?

4. Read John 14:27. What are the 2 types of peace Jesus is contrasting in this verse? How is worldly peace different from the peace that God gives?

In His book “The Cost of Discipleship”, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, “The peacemakers will carry the cross with their Lord, for it was on the cross that peace was made. Now that they are partners in Christ’s work of reconciliation, they are called the sons of God as he is the Son of God.”

5. What is this ministry of reconciliation (peacemaking) Jesus is referring to? Use 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 and Romans 5:1 to guide your answer.

6. Have you ever been a peacemaker? Have you ever invited someone to share in the gospel of peace? Share about your experience.

7. Spend some time today praying for those in your life who need peace. Write their names and a prayer down below, asking God for opportunities to be a peacemaker in their lives.

Week 2: Day 4
Persecuted & Reviled

1. Read Matthew 5:10-12. Remember, the need for peacemaking comes because of the presence of enmity or hostility. Why would preaching the gospel lead to persecution?

2. List some of the things Jesus mentions in verse 11 that might happen when you speak on His behalf. Have you or someone you know ever been reviled or persecuted? Share about the experience below.

3. Look up the word *persecution* and write the definition below.

Persecution:

It's important to stop and really meditate on what this word means. In America, we often think if someone teases us for being a Christian or our favorite reality TV star gets silenced for making remarks about homosexuality, it's persecution. Persecution is different from ridicule or slander.

Read the story of Stephen in Acts 7. List some of the ways he was persecuted, His response in persecution, and the outcome of His persecution.

How was Stephen persecuted?	What was His response?	What was the result?

After reading Stephen's story how has your understanding of persecution changed?

4. In verse 12, what does Jesus tell us to do when persecuted? Where should our focus remain in the midst of persecution?

5. Take a moment now to visit www.opendoorsusa.org/pray/ and pray for some of those being persecuted around the world for their faith. Or if you know of missionaries overseas being persecuted, write their names below and pray for them.

Week 2: Day 5
Salt & Light

1. Read Matthew 5:13-16. Record what Jesus says about salt & light below.

Salt	Light

2. List some ways salt can be useful. (All you chefs out there can teach us a thing or two.)

3. Salt can be a preservative or something you use to season your food and add flavor.

When is a preservative needed? What does it do to food?

Does your life add flavor to those around you?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. Write down any verses or phrases that remind you of or are similar to what we've read so far in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-16).

5. Read Colossians 4:2-6. List some ways Paul tells us we are to interact with non-believers.

6. We are called to be peacemakers, and salt and light to those around us. How can you be intentional through Inclusive Community this week with those around you, especially those who have not yet been reconciled through peace? Write down some ways you can be salt & light at your workplace, in your home, neighborhood, or around friends/family.

7. I hope you are starting to see a pattern in Jesus' ministry. He tells us that to truly understand the Gospel, we must start with humble hearts. To truly live as He lived as salt and light, we must be first transformed by the gospel of peace.

Take some today to summarize what you've learned so far in the Sermon on the Mount.

Week 3: Day 1
The Law

Memory Verse: *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Matthew 5:17)*

We have to stop and ask ourselves, what is Jesus doing in these verses? Is He restating the Old Testament Law? Adding to it? Creating a new law? Telling us to disregard the law completely?

1. Read Matthew 5:17-48. Record notes, observations, and repeating words/phrases below.

2. Look up the word “fulfill” in a bible dictionary and write the definition below.

Fulfill:

Before we get the wrong idea about Jesus and His disregard for the law, He clarifies its significance. How does Jesus show His relationship to the law and its significance in our lives in verses 17-20?

3. Read Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 6:5. Fill in the chart below with the commandments listed in Exodus and Deuteronomy in comparison to the Sermon on the Mount.

Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 6:5	Matthew 5: 21-48

What are some similarities between the Ten Commandments and Sermon on the Mount?

4. In verse 19, what does Jesus say about those who relax or keep commandments?

5. If Christ came to fulfill the law, does the law have any significance for us today? Why or why not? Use Romans 7:7-25 to help guide your answer.

Week 3: Day 2

Anger

1. Read Matthew 5:21-25. Why is Jesus starting each of these sections of law with the statement “You have heard that it was said . . .”? What is He doing here?

2. List the 3 things Jesus compares to murder in verse 22.

3. Is anger a sin of the heart or a sin of action?

Why is Jesus addressing not just what we do to another, but how we feel about others?

4. Read Proverbs 29:22 and James 1:19-21. What do these verses say about anger?

5. In verses 23-24, Jesus shows us our anger affects more than just the person we’re angry with. What is Jesus teaching us in this lesson here? What other relationship is affected when we’re angry with our brother?

Is there someone you are angry with? Have you considered going to that person to pursue reconciliation? If so, write down an action step you can take this week to be reconciled with that person.

Week 3: Day 3
Lust

1. Read Matthew 5:27-30. What does Jesus compare to committing adultery?

Why is this significant?

2. List what Jesus says our response to lust and adultery should be?

Why is He telling us to take such extreme measures?

3. Read Job 31:1-11. What do these verses say about lust?

What did Job do in verse 1 to keep from committing adultery?

I write this in tears as I sit in the ashes of watching another marriage be destroyed by lust. Lust, like any other sin, starts in the heart. It will continue to grow until it is brought into the light. While sin may grow in the heart, it can be stopped in the mind. We know sinful desires turn into sinful thoughts, and sinful thoughts turn into sinful actions.

4. Read the following passages and record what they say in regards to helping keep our hearts and our thoughts pure.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5	Philippians 4:8	Psalm 119:9	Romans 12:1-2

5. While this passage is referring to men who lust, I know that it's not just a man's issue. Have you ever struggled with lust? What action steps can you start taking today to help walk in freedom from lust?

Remember, lust is not merely a physical issue. Covering up your eyes or not looking at certain things won't always remove the sin of the heart. Remember to preach the gospel to yourself and find others in your life who can hold you accountable and offer grace.

*This study is not an in-depth study on the theology of sexual immorality or divorce. If these affect you, and you need to talk to someone more in depth, please let your Life Group leader or one of the teachers know. We'd love to support you and come alongside you, or at least point you to someone who can. We also have a wonderful counseling center. You can find more info here: <http://thewellcommunity.org/counseling-center>

Week 3: Day 4
Oaths & Retaliation

1. Read Matthew 5:31-42. Write down any notes, questions, or observations you have about Jesus' instructions on divorce, oaths, and retaliation.

2. Did you notice Jesus' teaching on divorce is wedged between His teaching on lust and oaths? Why is that significant?

3. Read Matthew 19: 1-9. List some of the things Jesus says about divorce.

Why do you think the marriage covenant is so serious to God?

4. In verse 33, Jesus tells us not to swear falsely. What does it mean to swear falsely?

5. Read James 5:12. What does it mean to let your “yes be yes and your no be no”? According to this verse, what is the result of not keeping your word?

Are you known for keeping your word? What are some ways you may need to grow in integrity?

6. List the ways Jesus is telling us to treat those who have wronged us in verses 39-42.

7. When someone does something to hurt you, what is your reaction or response? How can you grow to be more like Jesus in your response to others whom you feel entitled to retaliate against?

Week 3: Day 5
Love Your Enemies

1. Read Matthew 5:43-48. List some of the ways Jesus tells us to respond to our enemies.

2. In verses 46-47, summarize what Jesus is saying.

3. It's easy to love those who love us or are like us. How often do you spend time with people who aren't like you? What are some obstacles that keep you from interacting with people who are different from you, maybe even people you don't like or would be considered an enemy? As if the Old Testament law wasn't hard enough to keep, Jesus adds to it here, telling us it's not merely the action that makes us guilty, it's the thought, it's the desire in the secret place of the heart that makes us guilty before God. Just as we are already feeling crushed under the weight of never being able to measure up, Jesus goes ahead and ends this chapter with a final thought.

4. Write out Matthew 5:48

_____ therefore must be _____, as your _____ is perfect.

5. What are we supposed to do with that? Is perfection ever something we can attain? If so, can we do it in our own strength?

I don't know about you, but verse 48 crushes me. It makes me realize when I rely on my own strength or my own obedience to be perfect and attain righteousness, I'll never measure up. It drives me to a place of despair, hopelessness, inadequacy, never measuring up, and an impossible standard I'll never meet.

It makes me feel like I have absolutely nothing to offer God . . .

like I'm spiritually bankrupt . . .

poor in spirit.

This verse, this entire section of the law leads me right back to Matthew 5:3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

God shows us our need, fulfills the law, and offers His perfection. Our only response should be humility and a desire to live a life of gratitude from this moment forward.

Spend some time in response to Chapter 5 through worship and prayer.

Week 4: Day 1
Beware of Practicing Your Righteousness

Memory Verse: *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:1)*

1. Read Matthew 6:1-18. Record any notes/observations below. Circle repeating words and underline repeating phrases in your bible.

2. These verses are Jesus’ principles for our spiritual/religious life. In verse 1, what does Jesus warn us about doing?

3. What are the 3 religious practices he tells us to be careful of doing to be seen?

4. Fill in the chart below with what Jesus warns about in regards to religious practices being done in order to be seen.

Giving	Praying	Fasting

5. How is doing things for public recognition different from obeying publically? Where is the reward for things done in order to be seen? What is the reward for doing things in secret?

6. Can we do “good things” with wrong motives? Why or why not?

7. While we may not go out on the street corners to pray, if we search our hearts, I’m sure we can find religious practices we keep. Are there religious practices, things you do in order to be seen? If so write them below. How do these verses change your perspective?

Week 4: Day 2
Giving

1. Read Matthew 6:1-4. What is Jesus warning us not to be like in verse 2?

Look up the word “hypocrite” and write the definition below.

Hypocrite:

“Hypocrites originally referred to Greek actors who wore different masks to play various roles. Jesus criticizes the religious leaders, most notably the Pharisees, for a particular form of hypocrisy: doing the right things for the wrong reasons. To give to the needy was one of the pillars of piety, but the religious leaders gave to the needy in order to be praised by others.” (ESV Study Bible)

2. How does he tell us to give according to verses 3-4?

3. How does your giving or serving others compare to what Jesus lists in these verses? Do you give/serve in order to be seen or is it something you do in secret?

4. Now is a good a time to stop and do a heart check. Is there any area of hypocrisy in your life? Are you living one way to be seen and praised by others, and living another way in secret?

5. Are you Sacrificially Generous? Do you give away your time, talent, and treasures? Are there ways you can or need to grow in this area?

6. While most people may not need “charity”, there are people in need all around us we can give to. Who are those in need around you? Where you live? Work? Play?

7. Spend some time in prayer this week and talking with your group about the needs you see around you. Write down a few ideas below for how you can be an Intentional Blessing, in secret, to someone in need this week.

Week 4: Day 3
Do NOT pray like this

1. Read Matthew 6:5-14. What words and phrases are similar to those in Jesus' teaching on giving?

It was said that there was a Rabbi who would pray from corner to corner, daily, reciting the same prayer in one spot, moving over another step, reciting the same prayer again, moving over another step, reciting the prayer, etc. He would do this over and over, from corner to corner, until he arrived back where he started.

That is the kind of prayer Jesus is referring to here, the kind of prayer that is more worried about the meticulous place or the exact words, the kind that is more like superstition and OCD than it is like a relationship.

2. When you pray, are you more worried about what you say and how you say it, than who you're praying to and why?

3. I believe one of the biggest lies we tell each other as Christians are these 3 little words: "Praying for you". When you tell others you're "praying for them", do you really pray? Or is it something we all say in order to be seen as a caring, loving, praying person?

4. Where does Jesus tell us to pray? Who is our audience, who is your heart supposed to be oriented to in prayer?

5. Chances are, if you've ever been to a prayer gathering, you've heard phrases like, "Father we just" and "traveling mercies." In verse 7, Jesus tells us, "do not heap up empty phrases". Empty phrases are mindless, mechanical repetition of words or phrases that don't flow from an earnest, humble heart. List some "empty phrases" you may have heard, or even use, during prayer.

6. According to verse 8, what does our father already know before we pray? Why do we pray if He already knows what we need?

7. What are some obstacles that keep you from praying? How can you begin to pray less like what's listed in verses 5-8 and begin to pray more like Jesus?

Week 4: Day 4
Instead, Pray Then Like This

1. Read Matthew 6:9-14. Write out the Lord's Prayer (v.9-13).

How does Jesus tell us to start our prayers? Why is this significant?

2. Look up the word "Abba". Write the definition below.

Many people use the word "Abba" synonymously with the word "daddy". While Abba was the word Jewish children would use for their father, daddy may not be the best translation. There is a reverence here that Jesus is teaching about. While God, through Jesus, is completely accessible, there is still an aspect of reverence when we pray. That is the beauty and mystery of prayer. We can pray like we're talking to our earthly father or friend, yet the posture of our heart is to be full of worship of the Creator and Savior of the universe.

3. When you pray, how do you usually start prayer?

Why do you think Jesus is teaching us we are to start prayer thinking of the Father rather than ourselves?

4. In verse 10, Jesus talks about His Kingdom again. Write out verse 10. What observations do you have from this verse? We don't have enough time to go into a study on the Kingdom of heaven, but read Matthew 13. List some ways Jesus describes the Kingdom of heaven.

5. Read Matthew 5:11 and Proverbs 30:7-9. What are the things mentioned in Proverbs 30:7-9? How do they relate to Matthew 5:11?

6. Look up the following verses on temptation. Write out your observations and insight below.

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 1:13-15

7. Forgiveness is the heart of Jesus' death on the cross. List some ways Jesus talks about forgiveness in verses 12-15. How does our forgiveness of others affect our relationship with God?

Week 4: Day 5
Fasting

1. Read Matthew 6:16-18. Write down any thoughts/observations about these verses below.

2. Write the definition to the word “fast” below.

Fast:

Fill in the chart below with your observations on fasting based off of these scriptures.

Scripture	Observation (Purpose or result of fasting)
2 Chronicles 20:3	
Ezra 8:21-23	
Psalm 35:13	
Joel 2:12-13	

3. What were some of the other actions/feelings listed in these scriptures alongside fasting?

Did you notice that one of the things listed with fasting was mourning? We often fast and end up feeling more proud or self-righteous because we stayed off of Facebook for a week or didn't eat for a day, rather than mourning our sin. In most of the scriptures, we see a sense of mourning or grieving over sin and wanting to seek God's face above all. Again, think back to Matthew 5:4. Who are the blessed according to that verse?

4. Read Acts 13:2-3 and Acts 14:23. What is the purpose of fasting in these verses?

When you are unsure of what to do or where to go, do you fast and seek God? Why or why not?

4. Reflect back on Matthew 5:6, do you remember what Jesus tells us to hunger and thirst for? What are some ways you currently seek comfort or satisfaction apart from Jesus? Have you considered fasting from these in order to hunger and thirst more for God?

5. While many of us think fasting is abstaining from food, there are many other ways to fast in order to refocus on God. We can fast from food, TV, etc. List some things that consume much of your life that you may be able to fast from in order to hunger more for God.

6. In summary, fill in the chart below comparing how to and how not to practice righteousness, give, pray, and fast.

	How NOT to	How to
Practice Righteousness		
Give		
Pray		
Fast		

7. There are quite a few spiritual disciplines listed here: secrecy, giving, praying, and fasting. Which of these spiritual disciplines would you like to grow in? List one way you will practice one of these spiritual disciplines this week.

Week 5: Day 1
Do Not Be Anxious

Memory Verse: *“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)*

1. Read Matthew 6:19-34. List at least 5 observations you made from these verses.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2. Write down any repeating words and phrases from these verses.

3. Summarize this section of scripture in one word or a short sentence.

Week 5: Day 2
Storing up Treasures

1. Read Matthew 6:19-21. What is Jesus comparing and contrasting here?

List some examples of what “earthly treasures” and “heavenly treasures” might be.

Earthly Treasures

Heavenly Treasures

2. How much of your time or money goes to consuming earthly treasures as opposed to treasures in heaven? List some ways you may be storing up treasures on earth as opposed to treasures in heaven.

3. As usual, Jesus is not merely rebuking the action of buying things; He is rebuking the heart. If our hearts are after “stuff”, financial gains, the perfect body, a spotless house, dream vacation, designer bags, etc. then we might be missing the point of what He wants to do with our time, talent, and treasure.

What does Jesus tell us is the heart of the matter in verse 21?

4. Read 1 Timothy 2:9-10 & 1 Peter 3:3-4. What is Paul addressing in both of these passages? What phrases are repeated here?

Does any of Paul's admonition of modesty have to do with how low cut our top is or short our shorts are?

Paul is addressing the immodesty of materialism. His admonition for daughters of God is to not be merely consumed with expensive clothing and jewelry. Notice what he tells us our focus should be in 1 Peter 3:4 and Matthew 6:21. The hidden person of the_____.

5. While braided hair and pearl earrings may not be as materialistic now as in biblical times, what are some things that would be comparable in today's culture?

*Please note, Paul and Jesus are addressing the heart. It is not wrong to own nice things, but if it is our sole ambition or greatest concern, then we need to take that to the LORD. My husband gave me pearl earrings on our wedding day, and I love them! Don't miss the point here. It's always a heart issue with Jesus.

5. I don't think "earthly treasure" just refers to material possessions. It can be chasing after a career and neglecting God, spending more time on the perfect body rather than cultivating a spiritual life, wanting a relationship to satisfy us instead of finding satisfaction in Christ.

When you evaluate your greatest desire, your greatest treasure, is it truly Christ and His kind of life? You may need time to process what is deep in your heart. Take time today to really evaluate your heart. Confess, repent, pray, and worship if needed.

Week 5: Day 3
Serving Two Masters

1. Read Matthew 6: 22-24.

When I went to Israel with a group from The Well, we spent days traveling the land, with our final destination being Jerusalem. We would spend our last 3 days in the city of the great King (Matt. 5:35). The first morning in Jerusalem, I woke up with pinkeye. I could hardly see out of my right eye. I went to change my contacts, opened the new contact and it was split in two. I was about to step foot in the most meaningful city in the world, and I only had one good eye! My vision was impaired, which made the sights a little harder to see.

In verses 22-23 Jesus uses an analogy to relate our physical health and vision to our spiritual health and vision. If our perspective on financial pursuits and material possessions isn't healthy, then our perspective on storing up treasures in heaven won't be either. Fill in the chart below with insights from these scriptures on our possessions, the source of our money, and how we are to steward what we've been given.

1 Chronicles 29:10-14	Psalm 24:1	Malachi 3:8-12	Psalm 50:10-11

2. Why would Jesus start talking about our eyes in the middle of a section on money and possessions?

3. In Jewish literature the “eye” would be similar to saying the “heart” or referencing the inner life. Pause for a moment right now and reflect on your inner life. How’s your heart? In 3 words or short phrases, describe your heart at this very moment.

4. Look up the word “devoted” and write the definition below.

Devoted:

Why is it significant to use the word “devoted” when referencing serving two masters?

5. Is Jesus the master of your life or are you divided between Him and another master? Take some time to evaluate your heart and loyalty. Confess to a friend this week if there is something of greater devotion in your life than Jesus.

4. How does Jesus compare and contrast His love for us to the lilies of the field? The birds of the air?

5. What are the reasons Jesus gives to help us when we are feeling anxious?

6. Are you prone to worry? What are some of the things you can do in times of worry or feeling anxious that can remind you of God's love? His truth?

My friend has a picture of lilies of the field and birds of the air tattooed on her feet, to remind her of this verse and help her meditate on God when she is feeling anxious. While you may not get a tattoo on your feet, we can certainly tattoo this on our hearts. Take some time to memorize this section of scripture in addition to your homework this week.

Week 5: Day 5
Seek First the Kingdom of God

1. Read Matthew 6:33. Write out the scripture below.

Why spend a whole day on just one verse? Because THIS is the verse, the verse that sums up the Sermon on the Mount, and the verse that sums up much of Jesus' message.

But seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness . . .

It's easy to seek God, maybe even His righteousness, but is it what we seek FIRST? In all honesty, it's not always what I seek first. It's easy sometimes to slap God on to the end of my week or last bit of my day, but seeking first? Not always. If I'm honest, I'm more likely to seek first my own agenda, my own comfort, my own happiness, my own preference above seeking first His Kingdom.

2. What are some of the things you seek after above God?

3. In context, this verse comes after the many verses on worry. Why is this significant?

4. While anxious thoughts and worry may preoccupy much of our thought life, what does Jesus say can remedy that according to this verse?

When you evaluate your fear, worry, and anxiety, is it rooted in seeking your Kingdom or God's Kingdom? Explain.

5. Go back through the Sermon on the Mount and count how many times you see Jesus mention:

_____ the Kingdom of God

_____ righteousness

I think if we're honest, all too often we live more for the Kingdom of self and pleasure instead of the Kingdom of God and righteousness. We worry because we're not really sure if God is taking care of everything we need. We live in fear when we lack control. We store up treasures on earth because we forget about heaven. When facing trials we pray, "God get me out of this" not "God, do what's best for your Kingdom".

What do you seek first? God's Kingdom or your Kingdom? Do you live for your own desires or for the righteousness of God?

Week 6: Day 2
Judging Others

Read Matthew 7:1-5

1. What does it mean to judge? Use a bible dictionary to define below.

Judge:

2. Does Jesus tell us not to judge? Is it ever okay to judge someone else? In what context?

3. What is a hypocrite? Use a dictionary if needed.

4. What instructions does Jesus give us prior to judging another?

5. Are there areas in your life where you are living in hypocrisy? If so, write them below. Take some time to repent and confess to the LORD and begin to walk in the light.

Week 6: Day 3
Dogs, Pigs, and Pearls

1. Read Matthew 7:6. What animals does Jesus mention in this verse? Why are they significant?
*You may have to do a little digging or read a commentary for help.

2. What do the following passages have to say about dogs, pigs, and pearls?

Dogs (Psalm 59:14-15, Proverbs 26:11, Philippians 3:2, Revelation 22:15)

Pigs (Leviticus 11:7-8, Mark 5:11-13)

Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)

How do dogs & pigs contrast to pearls?

3. Read Proverbs 9:7-8. Summarize these verses below.

How does this proverb compare to what Jesus is saying in Matthew 7:6?

4. Look up the word “holy” and write the definition below.

Holy:

5. According to these verses, will everyone who hears about Jesus embrace the Gospel? What are we to do if they continually reject or mock the Gospel message?

6. Is there someone in your life you want to know Jesus? Have you been trying to force-feed Jesus? Write out a prayer for your relationship with them below.

Week 6: Day 4
Ask, Seek, Knock

1. Read Matthew 7:7-11. List the 3 things Jesus tells us to do in verses 7-9, and the result that comes from doing them.

2. Do you go to God with your needs? Why or why not?

3. According to verse 11, why can we go to God with our needs?

4. Read Luke 18:1-6, the parable of the persistent widow. What does this parable teach us about prayer? How does that compare/contrast to what is found in Matthew 7:7-11?

5. Read James 1:5-8. What do these verses say about prayer?

According to verse 6, how are we to ask?

6. These passages teach us to have both faith and persistence in prayer. Is there a circumstance where you have lost faith or persistence in prayer? If so, write it below and share with someone. Often, we need others to encourage us and pray for us when we are weary.

Week 6: Day 5
The Golden Rule

1. Read Matthew 7:12 and write it below.
2. Where else in scripture do you find Jesus talking about the Law and the Prophets?
3. Read Matthew 22:34-40. What does Jesus say sums up the Law and the Prophets?
4. According to Jesus, loving God and loving others sums up the entire Law and Prophets. Treating others how you want to be treated sums up the entire Law and Prophets. How well are you doing at loving God and loving others? What are some of the things that keep you from loving God and loving others? Write them below.
5. Write down the name of someone you struggle to love well. If you treat them how you want to be treated, what are some of the things you need to start or stop doing to them in the name of love?

Week 7
Matthew 7:13-29

Week 7: Day 1
The 2 Gates

Memory Verse: "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built His house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24)

1. Read Matthew 7:13-14 List some ways the 2 gates are different.

Wide Gate	Narrow Gate

2. Are there things in today's culture that would seem like wide gates or narrow gates? List some examples below.

3. What does Jesus mean when he says, "the way is hard that leads to life"?

4. Have you experienced hardship as a Christian? How so?

5. Read John 10:1-10. What does Jesus refer to Himself as? How does this relate to these verses?

What does Jesus, as the narrow gatekeeper, promise us at the end of verse 10?

6. Jesus tells us the way is hard but He promises us life abundant. What is abundant life? Are you living in abundant life now? Why or why not?

7. What are some ways you are tempted to follow the path to the “wide gate” as opposed to the “narrow gate”? Do these verses help you to understand the temptation a little better? What can you do today to fight temptation and stay on the path to the narrow gate?

Week 7: Day 2
The 2 Trees

1. Read Matthew 7:15-20 and list observations below.

2. What is a false prophet?

3. What are some of the results of a healthy tree vs. a diseased tree according to these verses?

4. Read John 15:1-11. Compare and contrast these two passages.

Matthew 7:15-23	John 15:1-11

What does Jesus say will happen to trees that don't bear good fruit?

5. What is “good fruit”? Read Galatians 5:22 for a reference of the fruit of the Spirit.

6. What kind of fruit do you bear? What does that say about your roots?

Are you deeply connected to the True Vine in this season? What’s one way you can deepen your roots in Jesus in order to bear good fruit?

7. Read Matthew 7:21 again. According to this verse, who is it that enters the Kingdom?

This verse was absolutely terrifying for me. I can remember a very specific time in college while we were at the beach, I was drinking a margarita and started chatting with friends. Someone brought up God and I mentioned being a Christian. They jumped up in shock and said “REALLY?! Since when??” I remember being so offended that she would even ask that! “Of course I was a Christian, I was born in America!”

I realized that she had no other response but to be shocked, because absolutely nothing in my life looked like I was a Christian. Bars were my sanctuary, and getting drunk and making people laugh was my idol. Nothing in my life looked like I knew Jesus at all.

I had spent my life knowing about God, but not really knowing God. Jesus tells these people to depart from him because they never really knew him. We can do many things for God without really knowing God. We can fill our calendars with church activities and “good deeds” and miss the whole point.

It is easy to fall into the pit of either pretending or performing, and missing God because of it. We can pretend we know God by going to church and reciting memory verses, or like the false prophets, we can perform by doing “mighty works” in Jesus name. Both of these, if we aren’t connected to the True Vine or we don’t know Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, are meaningless.

When you reflect on your life right now, are you busy doing things FOR God and not spending time WITH God? What needs to change in order to know Jesus and stop pretending or performing?

Week 7: Day 3
2 Foundations

1. Read Matthew 7:24-27. What illustration does Jesus use to compare the wise man and the foolish man?

2. What is the difference between rock and sand? What are the implications for that on our spiritual life?

3. What is the result of the wise man who builds on rock contrasted to the foolish man who builds on sand?

Wise Man	Foolish Man

4. Read Matthew 16:13-20. What is the rock Jesus refers to here?

What is the result of Peter's confession?

5. If you can, download or listen to the song "On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand" and worship the LORD today. Delight in His presence, and use this song as a guide to enjoy Him.

Week 7: Day 4
Astonishment and Authority

1. Read Matthew 7:28-29. What was the response of the crowds after Jesus was done teaching?

2. According to verse 29, why was His teaching so different?

3. There is another place in scripture where Jesus is referred to as having authority. Read Matthew 28:18-20 and write out your observations below.

4. According to Matthew 28:18-20, what kind of authority does Jesus have? From where?

Out of His authority, and with His abiding presence, what does he tell us to do in verse 19?

5. Remember back to the beginning of Matthew 5:1. Who was with Jesus as he went up on the mount?

What is a disciple?

6. Jesus' longest sermon, His greatest teaching, was given in these 3 chapters to His disciples. If we are commanded to "Go and make disciples", how important is the Sermon on the Mount for us? Why are these 3 chapters significant to being and making disciples?

7. The Sermon on the Mount is Discipleship 101. It is the place Jesus teaches us about Himself, His kind of life, and the Kingdom of Heaven. Are you growing as a disciple of Jesus? Are you helping others grow as disciples? What is one way you can grow or make disciples in your season of life right now?

Week 7: Day 5
Wrap-Up

1. Reread the entire Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7.

Summarize the sections of Sermon on the Mount with a few words or a sentence below.

The Sermon on the Mount	
Matthew 5:1-12	
Matthew 5:13-16	
Matthew 5:17-48	
Matthew 6:1-18	
Matthew 6:19-34	
Matthew 7:1-12	
Matthew 7:13-29	

2. List 3 things the LORD taught you through this study.

3. What was the most encouraging part of this study for you?

4. What was the most challenging part of this study?

5. How will you live differently because of studying Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount?

My hope and prayer as we wrap up our time here in the Sermon on the Mount is that this is only the beginning of growing as disciples. I hope that through this study we have learned to:

Hunger and thirst for righteousness
Rest in Christ's fulfillment of the Law
Forsake our religious practices
Seek first His Kingdom
Ask, seek, and knock
Enter in the narrow gate
Bear good fruit
Stand on Christ the solid rock
and
Go in His authority.

Hunger. Thirst. Rest. Forsake. Seek. Ask. Enter in. Bear. Stand. Go.

That's discipleship.
That's Christ and His kind of life.
That's life and life abundant.
That's the Sermon on the Mount.

