

USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Matthew 1–7
- Context for Sermon on the Mount

MATTHEW 1

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group what this chapter is about, the main subjects or events. Tell them to look at their map as a visual aid for this part of the discussion.

The genealogy of Jesus the Messiah is given in verses 1-17.

Verses 18-25 tell about Jesus' birth.

He was born of the Holy Spirit.

He was named Jesus because He will save His people from their sins.

His birth fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophets.

He was called Immanuel, meaning "God with us," and fulfilling Scripture.

MATTHEW 2

Ask how they summarized this chapter. What are the events?

The magi / wise men went to Herod and asked about the King of the Jews so they could worship Him. Since Herod was threatened by that question, he asked the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah was to be born. He also determined the exact time of the birth from the magi / wise men, and asked them to let him know when they found the Child so he could also worship Him.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea as prophesied by Micah the prophet.

Again the text connects Jesus' birth with fulfillment of Scripture.

The magi / wise men found Jesus the Child and worshiped Him, but were warned not to tell Herod where He was.

Joseph was directed to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt because Herod would try to destroy Him; this also fulfilled Scripture. Herod killed all of the little boys two years old and under who had been born in Bethlehem and the surrounding area—he didn't want to worship Him, but to destroy the King of the Jews because he thought of himself as the king of the Jews.

In verse 18 it says that what happened fulfilled what Jeremiah had said, again it was written in Scripture of the Old Testament.

At the end of the chapter, Jesus was in Nazareth of the Galilee region.

MATTHEW 3

You could ask who the main character of this chapter is and the main points about him.

John the Baptist preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
This also fulfilled prophecy spoken by Isaiah.

He confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees about the wrath to come and their lack of repentance.

He baptized Jesus who said that it was to fulfill righteousness.
Then there was testimony from heaven that Jesus is God’s Son.

MATTHEW 4

Ask your group what they learned from observing this chapter, especially verses 12-25.

This chapter gives more of the historical setting for the Sermon on the Mount.

Verses 1-11 detail Jesus’ 40-day fast and temptations by the devil.
He consistently resisted the temptations according to the Scriptures, which He quoted to the devil.

Then in verses 12-25 the beginning of Jesus’ ministry is recorded.
Leaving Nazareth, He settled in Capernaum, again fulfilling Scripture. And from that time He preached the same message as John, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

He called His disciples and went throughout Galilee teaching in synagogues and healing. He proclaimed the good news of the kingdom and crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, and even beyond the Jordan River followed Him.

He proclaimed the good news of the kingdom in saying that it was at hand. The good news for His audience of Matthew 4 would have been that the kingdom had come to them. And in this chapter He taught, as John had, that repentance was necessary.

Ask what they learned from their word study on “repent.”

metanoeo, “to change one’s thinking, to turn about”;¹ to think differently²

¹ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 5 (Matthew 3:2).

² James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996). G3340.

Help them to relate the meaning of “repent” to John’s and Jesus’ message, secondly to the timing, the coming of the kingdom. They also need to understand the relationship of repentance to Jesus’ teaching in the “Sermon on the Mount,” Matthew 5–7.

John and Jesus were calling people, primarily Jews, to a new way of thinking. The kingdom of heaven was at hand, and the Jews needed to change their thinking about it. Repentance was necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven.

At this point, you might also discuss the location and audience of Matthew 5–7.

Matthew 4:25, 5:1, and 7:28 all mention the crowds who followed Jesus. Not only did His disciples hear His teaching, but so did the primarily Jewish crowds. He taught them on a mountain in the region of Galilee, hence “Sermon on the Mount.” All of Matthew 5–7 is one teaching by Jesus.

MATTHEW 5

Tell your group to look at their Outline of Matthew 5–7 as a visual aid for the rest of this discussion. What is Matthew 5 about?

Those who are blessed

Jesus made statements about the Law.

Verses 1-16

What is repeated? Who are these verses about?

Jesus taught about those who are blessed
the salt of the earth
the light of the world

Verses 17-20

What are these verses about? What did Jesus teach?

This describes Jesus’ relationship to the Law.

He said one has to be righteous, more than the scribes and Pharisees, to enter the kingdom of heaven

dikaiosune, “be put right with, be in a right relationship with”¹
“in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God”²

¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), GGK1466.

² James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001). G1343.

Righteousness was necessary to enter the kingdom, but not the “righteousness” they had seen demonstrated by the scribes and Pharisees. The religious are not necessarily the ones who are truly part of the kingdom of heaven.

The transition from the blessed, the salt and light, into the “You have heard . . . but I say to you . . .” is what Jesus gave in verses 17-20. This is the explanation of what it takes to enter the kingdom of heaven. The whole sermon is an explanation of true righteousness, a righteousness which has to be more than what the scribes and Pharisees exhibited.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law. He didn’t do away with the commandments, but fulfilled them and explained the heart of the Law. He taught how they also could fulfill the Law.

You might draw a heart and note what verse 20 says next to it.



*Righteousness
to enter
kingdom of heaven*

Verses 21-48

What are these verses about?

Jesus mentioned several points heard by the Jews from the Law. He then told the heart of that law or statement. He explained true righteousness, a new way of thinking for the Jews.

You might ask what your group learned from marking “kingdom” and “righteousness” in this chapter.

The kingdom belongs to the poor in spirit.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed and will be satisfied.

Those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness are also blessed and belong to the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever annuls / relaxes a commandment and teaches others the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever keeps / does and teaches the same will be great in the kingdom.

To enter the kingdom of heaven, one must have righteousness that surpasses / exceeds the scribes and Pharisees’ “righteousness.”

The Father in heaven sends His sun and rain on the righteous and unrighteous (ESV—the just and the unjust). Both reside on the earth.

How does the end of this chapter relate to verse 20?

Jesus called His disciples and the crowds to hold the perfect heavenly Father as their example, not the scribes and Pharisees. He called them to be perfect like Him.

MATTHEW 6

What is the flow of thought from Matthew 5 to 6?

Jesus continued to teach and gave a warning regarding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

They practiced their “righteousness” outwardly to be noticed by others. That was to be their only reward, none from the heavenly Father.

What is the subject in verses 1-18?

Their outward “righteousness” consisted of giving to the poor / needy, praying, and fasting in such a way that could be seen by everyone. They were righteous in men’s eyes. True righteousness does these things in secret where only the Father can see. These are the ones who have reward from Him and are righteous in His eyes.

Ask your group about ways some people practice their righteousness before men today.

Verses 19-34

What are these verses about?

Jesus then taught a list of things not to do, a contrast to what was being done.

This was a change of thinking for the Jews who were used to performing acts according to the Law, but did not obey from the heart.

Don’t store / lay up treasures on earth but in heaven.

Don’t worry / be anxious about your life, but seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. The heavenly Father will take care of His own on earth.

You might ask your group why people worry / are anxious.

MATTHEW 7

Verses 1-6

What is the continuing thought from chapter 6?

Don’t judge others according to your own measure of judgment.
Don’t give what is holy to dogs.

NOTE: You can encourage your group that they will study the meaning of those statements later, and they can understand how the meanings relate to situations in their lives.

Verses 7-11

What did Jesus teach in these verses?

Those who ask, seek, and knock receive from the heavenly Father. This is continued from the end of Matthew 6. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. He knows what is needed for life; just ask Him instead of focusing on the earthly life.

Verse 12

What is this verse sometimes called? What is Jesus saying?

In “the golden rule,” Jesus said the Law and the Prophets taught how to treat people. He again got to the heart of the Law. Righteousness from the heart, not outward show for men.

Help your group to consider these things; maybe ask if they need to change the way they think.

Verses 13-27

What are these verses about?

2 gates, 2 trees, and 2 houses

Beware of false prophets. The true prophets of the Old Testament spoke accurately about Jesus. Jesus gave the accurate interpretation of the Law. Then He gave a warning about the false.

The way to life is narrow.

False prophets can be known by their fruits—bad trees, bad fruit.

Not everyone who says they know the Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who live obediently to the Word of God. Relate this to 5:20.

Verses 28-29

What was the result of Jesus’ teaching?

Those who heard were amazed at the authority with which He spoke.

Encourage your group to continue to study this teaching of the Lord so their lives can be more and more conformed into His image. They will learn how to be obedient from the heart.

You might ask them to think about this question, “Do you really want to be righteous?”

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis:

- Poor in spirit
- Those who mourn

REVIEW

Ask your group what they remember from the first lesson. Who did Jesus address Matthew 5–7 to?

Not only did His disciples hear this teaching, but so did the crowds who followed Him.

They were primarily a Jewish audience.

The scribes and Pharisees were mentioned in the teaching, indicating that this was to religious people, or at least to those who were around the extremely religious.

Jesus had called them to repent, change their thinking, as had John the Baptist.

What is the Sermon on the Mount about?

Righteousness to enter the kingdom of heaven
Righteousness from the heart

There is a diagram at the end of this lesson's guide which shows a door to the kingdom and those who enter it. You can use this as a visual aid if you want.

Ask your group what they think about the various views presented in the lesson.

Give time for them to briefly discuss these views, then ask which they agree with.

This guide holds to the last view.

Since Jesus taught about the righteousness which was necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven, it seems that He was teaching all Christians what that righteousness really is.

At the end of the teaching, 7:24-27, He called the people to act on His words or to be obedient to them.

In the Beatitudes, He stated that those who are poor in spirit "are" blessed; those who mourn "are" blessed, etc. Those who are blessed are those who are acting on His words, those who believed what He taught. He spoke of present tense blessing.

Also in Matthew 5:3 and 10, He said that the blessed already have the kingdom of heaven. So they are the ones who have that "surpassing / exceeding righteousness." They are the ones acting on His words.

All believers will enter the kingdom of heaven, be comforted, be righteous, receive mercy, see God, and be persecuted. The blessed are the sons of God, His children, those who are saved, all Christians.

THE BEATITUDES

What is Matthew 5:1-12 about? Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson.

These verses are commonly called “the Beatitudes.”

NOTE: The Holman Bible Dictionary says “ ‘Beatitude’ comes from a Latin word meaning ‘happy’ or ‘blessed.’ ”¹

Ask what they learned from their word study on “blessed.”

The blessed “are,” present tense blessing.

makarios, which can mean “blessed” or “happy,”² “possessing the favor of God”³

A root word, *mak*, means “large” or “lengthy.”⁴

“That state of being marked by fullness from God.”⁵

“The express symbol of a happiness identified with pure character.”⁶

Challenge your group to consider that the Beatitudes are the description of Christian character by asking them what relationship they think the Beatitudes have to salvation.

POOR IN SPIRIT

Now ask what they learned from the word studies on “poor” and “spirit.”

The poor in spirit are blessed, and they have (are part of) the kingdom of heaven.

“poor,” *ptochos*—comes from *ptōssō* meaning “to crouch, cower like a beggar”

Ptochos is “poor and helpless... utter helplessness, complete destitution.”⁷

¹ Lawson Hatfield, “Beatitudes,” *Holman Bible Dictionary*, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), p. 159.

² R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G3107.

³ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), p. 937, G3107.

⁴ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1985), p. 70 (*makarizo*).

⁵ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), p. 937, G3107.

⁶ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume I* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1930), p. 39.

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), p. 1253, G4434.

“spirit,” *pneuma*—the common word for spirit in the New Testament

Together those words can mean one who is utterly helpless spiritually.

How can such a one as that be blessed?

Ask what your group learned from their study of the cross-references in the lesson.

Psalm 34:18

This psalm was written when David fled from Saul who had tried to kill him.

David knew the Lord saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 51:17

David also wrote this psalm, but it was after his sins of adultery and murder (Bathsheba and Uriah) and also after he confessed his sin to the Lord.

A broken spirit is a sacrifice to God. David’s heart was broken because of his sin.

Isaiah 57 and 66

The contrite (same as crushed in Psalm 34) and lowly of spirit are the ones with whom the Lord dwells. He is the only One who can revive the spirit.

He looks to the one who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at His word.

Luke 18:9-14

The tax collector in this parable is a good illustration of one who is poor in spirit.

He recognized that he was completely helpless spiritually.

All he could do was call out for the Lord to be merciful to him, the sinner.

Because of that he went home a justified man, but not the Pharisee.

His righteousness surpassed / exceeded that of the Pharisee.

Relate this understanding of “poor in spirit” to what your group studied in the lesson about how one becomes righteous. Ask about the cross-references.

Romans 3:10, 23; 7:14-18

There is none righteous; all have sinned.

Nothing good dwells in the flesh.

1 Timothy 1:15; Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 4:17-21; Romans 7:24-25

Jesus came to save sinners. He came to the sick, to call sinners.

He paid the debt for sin on the cross.

He preached the good news to the poor.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He became sin for sinners, so that they could become righteous.

Romans 4:5-8

The one who believes in Him is credited / counted with righteousness and forgiven of sins.

Romans 8:2-4

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets free from sin and death.

The law is fulfilled in those who walk by the Spirit.

Romans 10:1-10

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for believers.

Salvation results in righteousness, but it is by faith, not by keeping the law.

Relate this to Matthew 7:13-14.

The poor, crouched, in spirit enter through the small narrow gate.

That is why they have the kingdom of heaven—they entered through the right gate.

They knew that they could not do it on their own; they recognized their helpless state.

You might ask your group how being poor in spirit relates to initial salvation and if it relates to the continual process of salvation.

When someone comes to the Lord, as Jesus taught by the parable, poor in spirit, then that one is rescued or delivered or saved by God.

The person who believes in Jesus' death and resurrection is credited / counted with righteousness and forgiven of sins.

That one then lives his Christian life in continual poverty of spirit realizing that the believer still cannot help himself. It is God who continually helps believers as they walk by the indwelling Spirit.

Not only did Jesus fulfill the law, Matthew 5:17, but He made the way for all believers to fulfill the law—by the Holy Spirit who lives within each one.

THOSE WHO MOURN

Ask what your group learned about those who mourn and how that relates to the poor in spirit and being righteous.

pentheo means “to mourn for, lament,”¹ “be sad...grieve over”²; sorrow of heart

¹ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1985), p. 418.

² James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), GGK4291.

Luke 7:36-50

The woman was grieving, mourning over her sin as she stood behind Jesus kissing His feet, wiping them with her hair and anointing them. She believed in Him, and her faith saved her.

She was poor in spirit and mourned over her sin. She was blessed and entered the kingdom of heaven. There was comfort for her and all who mourn over their sin.

Revelation 21:1-5; Isaiah 61

A time is coming in the future when He will comfort those who mourn.

James 4:6-10

Sinners should be miserable / wretched because of their sin, mourn over it and weep about it. The humble, the lowly or poor, receive grace, blessing, from the Lord. God resists the proud, like the Pharisees were.

Those who are poor in spirit, recognizing their helplessness, come to God.
They are the ones who mourn over their sin.
They receive blessing from Him and comfort as they enter the kingdom.

Ask your group what they learned about mourning over the sin of others.

1 Corinthians 5, sin in the church

Mourn over it; don't tolerate it.
Remove it from the midst of the church. Judge those inside the church.
It spreads.

Give time for them to discuss any relevant application.

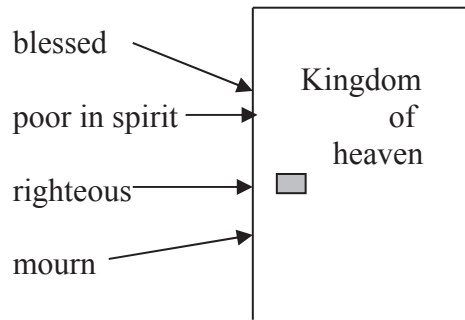
Ezekiel 9, sin in a country or community

Those who sigh and groan over the sin around them will be spared in the day of judgment. Sin is abomination to God.

Relate this to Romans 15:4.

It's warning for believers.

This is a discussion which might leave your group sitting quietly and thinking.
This might change the way some of them think.



**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- Blessed are the gentle / meek

REVIEW

You could begin by asking for the main statement in Matthew 5–7.

Matthew 5:20, to enter the kingdom of heaven one must have a righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, the religious of Jesus' day.

You might also ask how the first two “beatitudes” relate to that statement.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, those who see themselves as beggars regarding spiritual condition.

True believers come to God with this attitude of being a beggar seeking initial salvation. But the whole life of a believer continues in this poverty of spirit realizing that it is the Spirit of God indwelling Who possesses the riches of life. Those led by the Spirit are the sons of God, the ones who are part of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Those who mourn over their sin are also blessed in God's eyes; they'll be comforted. Mourning because of one's own sin shows that this one has truly repented of sin and turned to God. This is part of initial salvation, but also ongoing in a believer's life—mourning over his own sin and the sin in the church and country.

A beggar needing to be saved, one who mourns because of sin—these are blessed of the Lord. They are citizens of His kingdom of heaven on earth and they are comforted by His Spirit within, but there will be the culmination of comfort when there is no longer sin on this earth.

Poor in spirit and mourning are part of the life of true believers whose righteousness exceeds the outward keeping of the law.

GENTLE / MEEK

Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson as they discuss what they learned about this beatitude. What does the word “gentle / meek” mean?

Praus can mean “mild” or “humble”¹

¹ James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996) G4239.

Vine's says it is "an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God...in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting...meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power...the Lord was 'meek' because He had the infinite resources of God at His command...equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all."¹

Rogers and Rogers cited R. Leivestad, "The humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself in a patient submissiveness to offense, free from malice and desire for revenge."²

John MacArthur says, "Meekness is the opposite of being out of control. It is not weakness, but supreme self-control empowered by the Spirit."³

"The word was used in extra biblical literature to refer to the breaking of an animal. Meekness means power put under control."⁴

NOTE: In this discussion there might be times of silence while your group is thinking about what has been said or learned. Don't be discouraged if there are more silent times than usual because really understanding the Beatitudes has a significant impact on people. These lessons and discussions can be deafening in their conviction.

Ask what they learned from the Old Testament passages and listed as characteristics, benefits, and exhortations of the gentle / meek. Give time for any relevant application discussion.

Numbers 12:3

Moses was the most humble / meek man on earth in God's view.

The context of this chapter tells how he didn't take up his own defense when his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, spoke against him for marrying a Cushite woman. They were also jealous that the Lord spoke face-to-face with Moses.

Psalm 25:9

The humble are led by the Lord in what is right and taught His way.

Psalm 37:11

This is the verse Jesus quoted regarding this beatitude.

The context was not fretting about evildoers, but trusting in the Lord instead.

The humble / meek are blessed as they can submit to God, trust in Him, even though there are the evildoers all around them. Eventually the gentle / meek, not the evil, are the ones who will inherit the earth or the land.

¹W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Publishers, 1985), p. 401.

²Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., Cleon L. Rogers, III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 9.

³John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville, Tennessee; Word Bibles, 1997), p. 1399.

⁴John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7* (Chicago, Illinois; Moody Press, 1985), p. 171.

In Psalm 37 the meaning was Israel inheriting the land of promise. Verses 9, 11, 22, 29, and 34 all mention inheriting the land.

Ask what they learned from the cross-references about inheritance.

Jesus said those who are blessed are part of the kingdom of heaven, and they will inherit the earth.

Revelation 5:8-10

At a time in the future, believers will reign on the earth, a kingdom and priests to God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

It parallels Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5; those who are saved inherit the kingdom of God.

There is a description of the unrighteous who will not inherit God's kingdom. They are immoral sexually, idolaters, covetous, drunkards, revilers, thieves, and swindlers.

Believers were once those things but have been washed, justified through Christ.

Lead your discussion back to the other Psalms.

Psalm 45:4

This is about the King / king riding victoriously for the cause of truth, meekness, and righteousness.

Psalm 76:9

In judgment God will save the humble of the earth.

Psalm 147:6

He supports / lifts up the afflicted / humble, but brings down the wicked.

Zechariah 9:9

This is a prophecy of Jesus, humble and mounted on a donkey.

Ask what they learned about from the New Testament passages.

Matthew 5:5; 11:29 and 21:5

Jesus described Himself as gentle, even though He is the King.

He said that those who take His yoke and learn from Him will find rest for their souls. The gentle, the meek, find that rest.

Matthew 21:5 is the quote from Zechariah 9:9. Jesus fulfilled it.

1 Peter 3:4 and 15

Peter, who learned from Jesus, wrote that wives are to have a gentle and quiet spirit.

Believers should be ready to make a defense with gentleness and reverence / respect to anyone who asks about the hope within.

1 Corinthians 4:21 and 2 Corinthians 10:1

Paul asked a church that needed correction if they wanted him to come in a spirit of gentleness.

He dealt with them in the meekness and gentleness of Christ.
He was meek / humble with people when face to face.

Galatians 5:23 and 6:1

Part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit is gentleness. The Spirit is within believers, and His fruit is character qualities.

Believers are to restore other believers in gentleness.

Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12 and 1 Timothy 6:11

All of these letters tell believers that gentleness is a way of life for the Christian.

Walk worthy of the calling . . . with humility and gentleness.

Put on a heart of . . . humility and gentleness / meekness.

Pursue gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:25

Paul exhorted believers to correct opponents with gentleness. The desire of the believer should be the repentance of the opponent.

Titus 3:2

Be peaceable (ESV—avoid quarreling) and gentle.

James 1:21 and 3:13

Another one who learned personally from Jesus about being gentle was James, His half-brother. He said to receive the Word in humility / meekness as it is able to save souls.

He also exhorted believers to demonstrate their good behavior in deeds of wisdom's gentleness / meekness. Reach out to others in gentleness.

So those who learned gentleness / meekness personally from Jesus exhorted others to submit in gentleness / meekness, receive God's Word in humility / meekness, and behave wisely in gentleness / meekness toward others.

Relate this to the Sermon on the Mount, blessed are the gentle / meek—believers who have the Holy Spirit within produce His fruit in their lives.

Ask your group how they see the characteristics of gentleness / meekness lived out in a believer's life. Also give time for any other application discussion.

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis:

- Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
- The merciful
- The pure in heart

REVIEW

You can begin by asking your group what the main statement in Matthew 5–7 is.

Jesus said that to enter the kingdom of heaven one's righteousness had to surpass / exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

How did Jesus begin this teaching?

With the Beatitudes, the character of those who are part of the kingdom
He taught about those who are blessed

There is a simple chart at the end of this guide which shows the beatitudes studied up to this point. You can use this as a visual aid for this discussion.

Poor in spirit—those spiritually helpless, beggars
But they are blessed because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

They are the opposite of the scribes and Pharisees who practiced “righteousness”
to be noticed by men.

Initially this one recognizes that there is nothing he or she can do to bring about
salvation. Only Jesus can save. But believers are also spiritually destitute in that they
can't live righteously apart from the Spirit within.

Mourn—because of sin, especially individual sin
But they are blessed because they'll be comforted.
Comforted when they come to the Lord in salvation and continually comforted by Him in
the Christian life. The ultimate comfort will be when there is no more mourning.

Gentle / meek—those who accept all as coming from God and demonstrate that to others
in a gentleness of life, fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is strength under control.
They also are blessed because they'll inherit the earth.

When one comes to the Lord poor in spirit to become a citizen of the kingdom of heaven,
mourning over sin comes. These are directly related to repentance.
That one submits in gentleness / meekness to Him as a result of repentance.

HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER / FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

What is the next beatitude or blessed statement?

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
They'll be satisfied.

How does this relate to the previous beatitudes?

Those who have seen their own spiritual poverty before God and have mourned over their sin will be hungering and thirsting after the righteous life that can be lived out only when the believer submits to the control of the Spirit, gentleness.

Hunger and thirst represent the absolute needs one has for life; without food and water a person cannot live.

These are people who have that kind of hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God, not an outward show for the praise of men. That's the righteousness which surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Ask what your group remembers from the word study on "righteousness" from Lesson 1.

That which is right in God's eyes
The one who is righteous lives according to God's standards.

Believers will desire righteousness like necessary nourishment. And God says that those who do will be filled.

Ask what they learned from the cross-references they studied.

John 7:37-39

Jesus said for the thirsty to come to Him and drink, continually.
The blessed keep coming to Him because of the Holy Spirit within.
He satisfies the hunger and thirst; the Spirit leads in righteousness.

This is how believers can be satisfied, the righteousness of Christ filling their lives. All the believer does should be a result of the Spirit flowing from that one's life: works of righteousness, fruit of the Spirit.

At the time Jesus made this statement in John, the Holy Spirit had not come to permanently indwell all believers. He didn't come until after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 2).

Philippians 3

This was written after the Holy Spirit had come to permanently indwell all believers.

Paul valued knowing Christ Jesus above all else and counted everything else as loss in comparison. He understood that righteousness can come only through faith in Christ and spoke of being conformed to His death. Believers die to self, and God's Spirit controls—His righteousness in and through them.

Psalms

David was one who hungered and thirsted for righteousness. The one he sought—thirsted for, yearned for, stretched out His hands to—was the Lord, to dwell in the Lord's house all his days. His focus was the Lord, in whom he put his trust, to whom He sang praises; He meditated on all the Lord had done.

Isaiah

Isaiah saw the holiness of the Lord and, mourning over his own sin and the sin of his people, he confessed it, desiring to be righteous. As a prophet, he spoke to Israel for the Lord, calling them to seek the Lord, call upon Him, and forsake their wickedness.

Jeremiah 9

When one recognizes his or her spiritual poverty, that one can only boast in the Lord, the one who exercises righteousness. It is in Him alone that people can be righteous as He is.

Exodus 33

Moses was another example of one who hungered for righteousness. He desired to know God's ways so that he would know Him, and he didn't want to go forward unless the Lord was leading. As with Moses and the Israelites, it is God's presence in believers' lives that makes them different from the world.

Give time for your group to discuss relevant application.

Like David, Christians are to dwell in the presence of the Lord and meditate on His Word; then they are to walk by the Spirit in obedience, an internal righteousness from the heart, not self-righteousness like the Pharisees. Theirs is the righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.

True hungering and thirsting after righteousness is unconditional. The person who knows spiritual poverty, has mourned over sin, and is controlled by God will seek God's righteousness no matter the circumstance and no matter the cost.

THE MERCIFUL

Ask your group what they learned from their study of this beatitude.

Those who are merciful are “not simply possessed of pity but actively compassionate.”¹

¹ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1985), p. 404.

2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 2:4-7; Luke 6:35-36

God, the Father of mercies, is rich in mercy.
Believers are called to be merciful like He is.

Those who do not know God can do merciful acts, but it is the ones who have God dwelling within who can extend true mercy as their Father does.

Believers who have been forgiven by God can extend His mercy to those who have wronged them, even to their enemies. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus called Christians to love and pray for their enemies. Their debts are forgiven as they forgive their debtors.

Matthew 18

The parable illustrates the point that mercy forgives. The master showed mercy; he felt compassion and acted on it by releasing his slave and forgiving his debt. The slave, though, didn't show mercy on his fellow slave.

NOTE: As your group discusses this parable, don't let them try to give a spiritual meaning to every detail.

Matthew 5:7; James 2:13

It is the merciful who will receive mercy.
Those who show no mercy will receive a merciless judgment.

Give time to discuss application.

THE PURE IN HEART

Who are the pure in heart? Ask your group what they learned from their study of the definitions for "pure" and "see," the related verses in Matthew 5, and cross-references.

The basic meaning of pure is "to make pure by cleansing from dirt, filth, and contamination . . . The Greek term was often used of metals that had been refined until all impurities were removed, leaving only the pure metal. In that sense, purity means unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated. Applied to the heart, the idea is that of pure motive—of single-mindedness, undivided devotion, spiritual integrity, and true righteousness."¹

"See" means "to gaze . . . with wide-open eyes, as at something remarkable."²

The blessing is that the pure in heart will see God. As believers know and follow God more and more, they "see" Him, who He is, at a deeper level and will one day see Him face-to-face.

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1985), p. 204.

² J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (electronic ed.) (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G3700.

Verses 21-47 give illustrations of righteousness from a pure heart, not just outward following of rules.

Verse 48 says believers are to be perfect as is their Father in heaven, 100% pure.

Psalm 15 and Psalm 24 describe those with a pure heart.

- Walks in integrity / blameless
- Works / does righteousness
- Speaks truth in his heart
- Doesn't take a bribe against the innocent
- Clean hands
- Pure heart

Give time for your group to share with one another the impact that being "pure in heart" has on their lives.

End the discussion focused on how they can "see" their heavenly Father . . . get to know Him through His Word, grow in their hunger and thirst for His righteousness, and thereby show mercy to others.

Visual aid

Blessed **are**

poor in spirit

mourn

gentle/ meek

hunger, thirst for righteousness

merciful

pure in heart

kingdom of heaven **is** theirs

comforted

inherit the earth

satisfied

receive mercy

see God



*enter the
kingdom*

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis:

- The peacemakers
- Persecution
- Salt and light

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group about each of the previous beatitudes they've studied. Give them a brief time to discuss each and how they relate.

The Beatitudes present the character of those who enter the kingdom of heaven, the truly saved, real Christians.

As a visual aid, you can draw the first stick figure on the last page of this guide.

THE PEACEMAKERS

Ask what they learned about this beatitude.

Before one becomes a son of God, one is at enmity with God. Unbelievers are God's enemies. Those who are not righteous from the heart consistently live in rebellion to God.

Jesus equated God's children, the blessed who enter His kingdom, with peacemakers.

You might need to ask how Christians become peacemakers.

Isaiah 9:6

A Son, God's Son Jesus, was given. He is the Prince of Peace.

Romans 5:1, 10

The Prince of Peace died for His Father's enemies so that they might have peace with Him. Reconciliation with God came through the death of His Son. Those who are blessed, the righteous, justified, and saved no longer live in enmity, but peace.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Jesus not only reconciled believers to God, but He also gave them the ministry of reconciliation—He called Christians to be peacemakers.

The word / message of reconciliation has been committed to those who have experienced it. Tell others about the peace they can have with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Since believers have peace with God, they are to be ambassadors for Christ who appeal for Him to the world. They are no longer to live for themselves but for Christ. It is His love which controls them to give the life-saving message to the hostile world. The hostile can become righteous.

Look at no man based on what he is in the flesh—all the world is God’s enemy.
But all can become a new creature by faith.

This discussion might cause your group to share how they have evaluated themselves in light of their study. If they do, that can help another one to do the same.

Some might mention other references in Matthew 5–7 which they saw as related to being peacemakers, such as 5:23-25, 44-47, and 7:12. Let them discuss as they mention each one.

THE PERSECUTED

Ask what your group learned about this from their study.

The world, God’s enemies, persecutes His children.

The persecution comes because the “blessed” are righteous and the world is unrighteous. The other reason, given in Matthew 5:11, is because of Jesus. The world put Him on the cross, and it hates those who follow Him, John 15:18-20 and Philippians 3:10. They hate the Light / light, fearing their deeds will be exposed, John 3:16-21.

The new creation, the Christian, becomes a target for the hatred and persecution of the world in which he lives. But peace with God is worth persecution from the world. There will be great reward in heaven, even though there will be persecution on earth. Romans 8:16-18 says basically the same thing—the glory to be revealed far outweighs the sufferings of the present.

If no one mentions it, be sure to ask about what form of persecution Jesus specifically talked about in Matthew 5.

Insults / reviled
Falsely say / utter all kinds of evil against you because of Him

Many times believers think that if they are not beaten or put into prison, then they are not being persecuted.

A question in the lesson: “Is persecution for righteousness something that only a few Christians should experience?”

Jesus indicated that all who are part of the kingdom of heaven will be persecuted.

Give time for your group to discuss application at any relevant point in this discussion.

Ask what they learned from the cross-references.

John 15:18-20

Since the world hated and persecuted Jesus, it will also persecute those who follow Him. The slave is not greater than his Master.

Philippians 1:27-30

Suffering for Jesus' sake has been granted along with believing in Him. Believers can expect suffering.

2 Timothy 1:8; 3:12

Paul, imprisoned for the gospel, called Timothy to join with him in suffering according to God's power. All Christians will be persecuted because of their godly lives.

1 Peter 2:19-25

Christians have been called to follow Jesus' example, even though it means suffering for doing what is right. When He was reviled, He didn't do the same—that's an example for all believers to follow.

Jesus also didn't threaten those who were persecuting Him, another example.

He took the sins of others and entrusted Himself to His heavenly Father. Christians have the same heavenly Father.

1 Peter 3:14-17

Peter wrote what Jesus had spoken—the blessed will suffer for the sake of righteousness. Here, the instruction is not to fear intimidation or be troubled by persecution.

Sanctify Christ in your hearts; be ready to make a defense, with gentleness and reverence / respect; and keep a good conscience.

Again the persecution mentioned here is verbal—slander and reviling. In contrast to this, Jesus in Luke 6:26 says, "Woe...when all men / people speak well of you."

1 Peter 4:12-19

Peter repeated in verse 14 that the blessed will be reviled. They're blessed because of their relationship with God. Persecution is proof that one belongs to God's household.

And again he said not to be ashamed at suffering, but he added that believers are not to be surprised by it either. Not only are Christians not to be ashamed, but they can also rejoice over the result of their testing.

Like Jesus did, believers are to entrust their souls to their faithful Creator. They do this in living a righteous life. Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

You can ask how this study of the Beatitudes has ministered to your group. Give time for them to briefly share.

SALT AND LIGHT

How do verses 13-16 relate to Matthew 5:1-12?

The beatitudes in verses 1-12 describe who a righteous person is—a believer. The believer’s function in the world is to be salt and light.

To illustrate this, you might draw another stick figure that’s stepping out into the world with hands reaching out.

Ask your group what they learned from their study.

In the Bible salt is used literally and figuratively; the immediate context of each use tells how it is to be interpreted in that particular passage. Jesus compared Christians to salt.

Food is seasoned with salt to make it taste better, a flavor enhancer. Compared to the amount of food, it takes a very small amount of salt to season it. Like salt believers are to be seasoning to those with whom they come in contact.

Colossians 4:6 compares seasoning with salt to knowing how to verbally respond to people with grace.

Luke 14:34-35 and Mark 9:49-50 also tell of Jesus using illustrations of salt. Salt is good only when it is still salty; otherwise, it’s useless. The verses in Mark 9 are difficult to understand, but the immediate context suggests the fire of judgment as the meaning of being salted with fire.

You don’t need to spend much time discussing the Old Testament passages on salt. Literal uses include Lot’s wife and the offerings being seasoned with salt. Abimelech sowed salt on the city he razed. Elisha did a miracle of throwing salt into the water spring to purify the waters—that could also be symbolic.

NOTE: Holman Bible Dictionary says about the covenant of salt, “Salt was often utilized in covenant making probably as symbolic of that which preserves and prevents decay. The hope was that the covenant thus enacted would endure (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5)”¹

Believers are to be to the world a purifying source, preserving by offering the seasoned message of salvation to those who persecute them for their righteous lives.

Ask about light from Matthew 5 and the cross-references, how it relates to the rest of what they studied, and how it relates to their lives.

The “blessed” are light in the world; therefore, they are to let that light shine to glorify the heavenly Father. A Christian’s good works are light to those who see them.

¹ Trent C. Butler, general ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), p. 312.

1 John 1 says that God is Light, and there is no darkness in Him.

In the Old Testament the LORD said He, His Word was a light to one's path. He would also make His Servant a light to the nations, salvation to all. The LORD is an everlasting light.

In Matthew 4 the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in Jesus; the people saw a great Light. They were in great darkness, Matthew 6, because they had not obeyed the light of the Word of God, and when He came He brought to them great Light.



Jesus is the Light of the world as He shines in the darkness. He calls people to believe in Him, the Light. Then when they do and become the "blessed," they represent Him as light in the world.

Paul said that when one is saved, he turns from darkness to light. Then that one is to walk as a child of Light, not as formerly when he was darkness.

A changed life—light to the world, living as Jesus lived, 1 John 1:7.

End your discussion by asking for any other application from Matthew 5:1-16.

THOSE WHO ENTER THE KINGDOM

poor in spirit			<i>salt</i>
mourn			
gentle/ meek			
hunger & thirst for righteousness			
merciful			
pure in heart			
peacemakers			
persecuted for righteousness			

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis:

- Matthew 5:17-20
- The Law

REVIEW

You could begin by asking how 5:17-20 fits into the context of the rest of Jesus' teaching. How do these verses relate to Matthew 5:1-16?

Jesus began His teaching with the character of true believers, teaching about those who are part of the kingdom of heaven. His first statement had to do with recognizing one's poverty of spirit and ended with those blessed ones being persecuted for righteousness.

Believers will live righteously.

They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, having an effect on those who persecute them, showing others the righteousness of the heavenly Father.

Then Jesus made statements about His relationship to the Law and the Prophets; He came to fulfill them.

What did Jesus talk about in Matthew 5:17-20?

The Law and the Prophets and the kingdom of heaven

He said He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets—what God spoke through Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament. Jesus didn't come to abolish what was spoken by God earlier.

Verse 18 says all will be accomplished.

Then verse 19 is a warning about annulling even one of the least commandments and teaching others to do the same.

The one who keeps and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom.

Verse 20 is the key verse of the sermon. To enter the kingdom one must have surpassing / exceeding righteousness; not like the scribes and Pharisees.

At the end of this guide there are two lists you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

THE LAW

What Law was Jesus talking about?

Exodus 20

God literally spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel at Mount Sinai. The people heard what He said and were so frightened at the voice of God that they ask for Moses to be the one to speak to them. So the LORD gave Moses the rest of His Law to speak to His people. Moses also wrote what the LORD told him, which is Exodus through Deuteronomy.

Exodus 24

The people of Israel entered into a covenant with the LORD to keep His Law, be obedient to Him, His Words. That is sometimes called the “old covenant.”

Deuteronomy 6:24-25

If Israel obeyed God’s law, then it was righteousness for them. The Lord set the standard for righteousness and laid it out in specific details in His Law.

Romans 7:12

The Law is holy. God’s commandment is holy, righteous, and good.

Psalms 19:7

The Law is perfect. It restores the soul and makes one wise.

NOTE: The Prophets are also part of the Old Testament. There are prophecies relating to Israel’s future and the coming of Messiah.

Why was the Law given?

Galatians 3:24

The Law was given to Israel as a tutor / guardian to lead them to Christ, their Messiah.

Galatians 3:19 says the Law was added because of transgressions. Not only does it define God’s standard of righteousness, but also sin, Romans 7:7. Sin is lawlessness, breaking God’s Law, 1 John 3:4.

What was the problem with the Law?

Romans 3:19-20; 8:3 and Galatians 2:16; 3:11, 13; James 2:10

The weakness of the Law was man’s flesh—he didn’t keep the Law, the whole of it. Therefore, the Law could not justify or make perfect any man. If one failed in even one point of the Law, then he broke the whole.

Through the law comes the knowledge of sin, but it can’t make a person perfect, holy, righteous before God.

The righteous man shall live by faith. Jesus fulfilled the Law to be perfect, holy, and righteous before God. He became a curse for us and redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

God condemned sin in the flesh by sending Jesus to keep the Law and die for others who didn't. Therefore, faith in what He did is what justifies one—makes him perfect, holy, and righteous.

THE NEW COVENANT

How does it relate to the Law, to Matthew 5:17-20, and to the lives of your group?
Ask them what they learned from their study.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied of a new covenant which God would make with Israel and Judah, and it would not be like the old covenant which they broke.

Jeremiah said that man's problem is his heart—it's wicked and sick (Jeremiah 17:9). So for man to be righteous before God, something had to be done with his heart.

The promises of the new everlasting covenant are:

God will write His law on man's heart, His law within man, one heart and one way to fear Him always, a new heart. God takes out the old wicked, sick heart and gives a new one.

From the least to the greatest, all can know God.

He will forgive iniquity, remember sins no more—cleansing.

He will give a new spirit. He will put His Spirit within to cause man to keep His law, statutes, ordinances / rules.

Matthew 26 and 1 Corinthians 11

Jesus' body and blood were offered to bring in the New Covenant. He was the covenant sacrifice. His death brought forgiveness.

Hebrews 8-10

Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant—the old, first, had a weakness, man's flesh. He brought in the second covenant, the New Covenant, which made the first obsolete.

His blood brought eternal redemption and cleansing of the conscience to serve God. Those who are part of the New Covenant receive the promise of eternal inheritance—the kingdom of heaven.

The Law was only a shadow of the good to come, it couldn't make perfect. The New Covenant brings sanctification, holiness, through Christ's death once for all.

What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the New Covenant?

1 Corinthians 6:19

The Holy Spirit within believers is part of the promises of the New Covenant.

Colossians 1:27

It is Christ Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, who is in believers.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The Spirit is given as a pledge / guarantee of our inheritance, in the kingdom of heaven.

Romans 8:1-4

Because of the Holy Spirit, believers don't come under the Law's condemnation. Jesus fulfilled the Law and set free those who have faith in Him. They're set free from sin as well as the Law.

Relate verse 4 to Ezekiel 36:27. The Spirit is given to all believers to cause them to walk in the law of the Lord, fulfilling the requirement of the law.

Romans 6:1-4

Christians, true believers, don't continue in sin. There is a baptism, identification, with Him into His death which brings death to sin. But there is also an identification, union, with His resurrection which brings new life.

Believers can walk in newness of life because of the Spirit within leading them to keep His Law written on their hearts.

Colossians 2:6-3:4

Verse 6 tells believers that they are to walk, live, in Christ by the leading of the Spirit within—Christ in you.

Christians are made complete in Christ, 2:10. There is no need for anything else. He brought in the New Covenant; He fulfilled the Law, He gives new life which is pleasing to the Father. The righteous are to live by faith, not by trying to keep a law.

Relate 2:11-15 to Romans 6:1-4; 8:1-4. Believers died with Christ and rose with Him. Transgressions of the Law are forgiven, cancelled. He paid the debt.

Set your mind on heavenly things, not the things of earth.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

Lead your discussion back to Matthew 5:20. How can a person have righteousness that surpasses / exceeds what the scribes and Pharisees did?

The only way for one to have surpassing righteousness is through the New Covenant which Jesus inaugurated in His own blood. The Holy Spirit leads believers to be and do what is right in God's eyes.

To enter the kingdom of heaven one has to be part of the New Covenant.

This could be life-changing for some in your group. There might even be one who is trying to enter the kingdom by works, by keeping some set of rules. Understanding the truths of this lesson can set free those who are trying to be saved by a law or those who are saved and trying to be righteous by keeping man-made laws. Freedom comes when one is saved and then walks by the Spirit.

THE LAW

old covenant

perfect, holy, righteous, good

tutor / guardian to lead to Christ

obsolete

NEW COVENANT

Jesus' blood inaugurated

Law written on new heart

Holy Spirit within

fulfill requirement of Law

walk in newness of life

everlasting inheritance

forgiveness of sins

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis:

- Matthew 5:21-48

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about Matthew 5:1-20.

The Beatitudes describe the character of those who enter the kingdom of heaven. It's the character of all true believers.

To enter the kingdom one must have a righteousness which surpasses / exceeds that of the religious leaders of the day, the scribes and Pharisees.

That righteousness was based on the Law, but under the new covenant and not the old. God's Law is written on the hearts of true believers, and they can obey it by the work of the Holy Spirit within them.

Jesus did not do away with the Law but fulfilled it so that God's standard of righteousness was met.

Then in verses 21-48, He interpreted the heart of the Law by giving specific instances and how they relate to true believers, those in His kingdom.

MATTHEW 5:21-26, MURDER

You might ask your group what the command is and what they learned about it from Matthew 5 and other cross-references.

God spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel at Mount Sinai, and one of the commandments said, "You shall not murder."

He told them more about the true meaning of the commandment. They should not be angry with a brother, insult a brother, or even call him a good-for-nothing or a fool. If they did, it was breaking this commandment and they were guilty / liable for judgment, the court / council and hell.

The cross-references from the Law in Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy all state that if one murdered someone, the penalty was death. But in Deuteronomy 19 it tells about the cities of refuge for the manslayer who unintentionally killed another person. He could go to one of the cities and escape the avenger of blood, who would try to kill him outside of a city of refuge.

Jesus said that if a believer is angry with his brother, then that one is guilty. He brings anger into proper perspective, God's perspective.

Anger which leads to verbal attacks against another comes from the same root as the hate which leads to murder. If one has a new heart under the new covenant, then that heart of stone has been replaced, and he has the Spirit of God within to give the self-control and love which is needed in all situations.

Jesus was pointing to the heart of the matter, the heart of the Law, the righteousness which surpassed / exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees.

John 3:16 and Romans 5:6-10

God loves the world. He demonstrated that love in sending Jesus to die for helpless, ungodly, sinners, enemies.

How do verses 23-24 relate to believers now?

It's the responsibility of a Christian who knows that a brother has something against him to go to that brother to be reconciled before making an offering.

What is the illustration in verses 25-26? Why is it there?

This presents what is to be done when an opponent has something against someone. Make restitution, and make a friend out of the opponent.

Give your group time to discuss application.

MATTHEW 5:27-32, ADULTERY

What are these verses about?

Jesus defined adultery as looking, lusting. He said it was committing adultery in the heart. Proverbs and Matthew 15 also show how the heart is the source of sins.

But the new covenant gives a new heart to true believers.
The Spirit of God within leads and guides in the ways of God.

How did Jesus say to control adultery in Matthew 5:29-30?

Self-control; He was not telling them literally to mutilate themselves. But He said to get rid of whatever is causing the sin. Self-control is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He indwells believers to control their eyes and hands.

Ask what they learned from the cross-references about controlling the mind.

2 Corinthians 10 instructs believers to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ; this is possible because of the Spirit and the Word of God.

Job made a covenant with his eyes that he would not look, gaze, lust after a woman. He did this before the next temptation presented itself.

Philippians 4 says Christians can direct what they think about. Keep thoughts to things that fit the list in verse 8.

Give a little time for your group to discuss how this relates to them.

What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:31-32? Discuss the cross-references also.

They had heard that a certificate of divorce had to be given to the wife who was sent away, divorced. Jesus said that divorce, except for unchastity / sexual immorality, caused adultery.

Malachi 2:13-16

These verses show God's heart concerning divorce. He hates it and even calls it dealing treacherously. The ESV says it's faithlessness and violence for a man to divorce the wife of his youth.

Luke 16:18; Matthew 19:7-9

Relate Luke to Matthew 5, especially the "exception."

In Matthew 19, the Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce. He responded that Moses had allowed divorce because of the hardness of their hearts, but it was not that way from the beginning. In other words, from the creation of Adam and Eve, God intended for marriage to be permanent. But in the Law allowances were made for divorce because of man's hard heart.

1 Corinthians 7:10-16

Verse 10 is directed to Christians; don't divorce.

But if a wife leaves / separates, divorces, she is to stay unmarried or be reconciled.

Verses 12-16 are for believers married to unbelievers.

If the unbeliever wants to stay married, then the believer is not to divorce.

But if the unbeliever divorces, then the believer should let him or her leave.

And that believer is not under bondage regarding divorce and remarriage.

This is the only other "exception" in the Bible.

NOTE: Encourage your group to study the Precept Upon Precept course Marriage Without Regrets if they need to know more about marriage and divorce.

MATTHEW 5:33-37, VOWS

What is this about?

Jesus quoted from the Law about not making false vows (ESV—swear falsely). Vows to the Lord have to be fulfilled. So it's better not to make any oaths. Don't swear by anything. Anything beyond yes or no is evil.

Hebrews 6:13-18

God swore by Himself to Abraham when He promised blessing to him. It was to stress the importance of that promise, to show the unchangeableness of His purpose. Since it's impossible for God to lie, He didn't need to make the oath, but He did it to make a point.

Men usually swore by someone greater than themselves, and when they did, the confirmation of the oath ended disputes. But Jesus said to say only yes or no.

Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

To make a vow and not keep it profanes the Lord's name and also makes one guilty of sin.

Jesus said to let yes mean yes and no mean no; there's no need for a vow if one means what he says. And also there's no cause to pay the consequences of not keeping a vow.

James 5:12

Don't swear an oath, so that one doesn't fall under the judgment if he does not keep the oath.

Give your group a little time to discuss how not making vows relates to them. Some might not have been aware that they should not.

MATTHEW 5:38-42, EYE FOR AN EYE

Ask what they learned from their study of these verses.

God stated in the Law that just restitution should be made for injury done to a neighbor. No pity was to be shown, and the punishment was to be just.

The result would be that others would hear and fear doing the same evil thing.

Jesus said to go beyond that just penalty and do kindness to the one who was trying to harm you. He brought the Law back to being a matter of the heart. He taught how to live under the new covenant with a new heart and the indwelling Spirit. In order to do this, one must die to self—meekness, power under God's control.

Give time to discuss application.

MATTHEW 5:43-48, LOVE

How different was what Jesus said from what the Jews had heard?

Something had been added to what the Law actually said, “and hate your enemy.”

He explained that to love one’s enemies and persecutors was necessary for one’s righteousness to surpass / exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus said the heavenly Father sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. He contrasted this with the hated tax collectors and the Gentiles or unrighteous people who loved those who loved them.

How does Jesus’ teaching here summarize the rest of what He said about the Law?

Love is the fulfillment of the law.

Compare this with the other Scriptures in Romans and Luke.

Feed your enemy. As far as possible with you, be at peace with all men.
Never take your own revenge. Overcome evil with good.

Love does no wrong.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

A true neighbor is the one offering help to the needy.

Give your group time to discuss how Jesus’ teaching relates to them. Help them to evaluate how they live their lives on a daily basis. Help them to examine if their righteousness surpasses that of the religious.

You could close your discussion by asking them how they can be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. They should base their answer on everything they’ve studied.

MURDER	ADULTERY	VOWS	EYE FOR AN EYE	LOVE
Anger “You good-for-nothing” “You fool” all guilty	From the heart “looking”	Make no oath “Yes” or “No” beyond that is evil	Don’t resist Give more	Neighbor Enemies, persecutors

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 8**

Lesson emphasis:

- Matthew 6:1-18
- Give, pray, fast

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask if your group noticed a difference between the emphasis of Matthew 6 and that of chapter 5.

Jesus moved from the heart of the Law to the practice of it.

He told in Matthew 5 of the character of true believers and their relationship to the Law; then in this chapter He helps them understand what He meant in 5:20.

To enter the kingdom of heaven one's righteousness must surpass / exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. The blessed ones are the possessors of the kingdom.

MATTHEW 6:1-4, GIVE

Ask your group what the subject of these verses is and what they learned about it.

Give to the poor and don't make a big deal out of it when you do.

That's what the hypocrites, scribes and Pharisees, did to be honored by men.

Jesus said they had their reward—honor from men.

Verses 3 and 4 tell the right way to give, secretly.
The heavenly Father who sees the secret things will reward you.

Giving to be noticed or known by men has only that temporal reward.

But when true believers give without making a show of it, then they will have reward from the one who notices it, their heavenly Father.

At the end of this guide are three simple lists which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

What do the cross-references say about giving?

Acts 2 and 4 tell of the beginning of the church after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to permanently indwell all believers.

They shared all of their possessions with each other so that none of them had needs. Those who had property sold it to take care of the others who had nothing. The result was that there was not a needy person among them.

This is a pattern for all believers from that time on, for all churches from that time.

2 Corinthians 8

Give with liberality / generosity for the support of other believers, the saints.

Giving beyond one's ability does not mean that a believer should go in debt to give to another, but it is the grace and abundance of giving liberally. Compare verses 3 and 12.

Verse 9 is the pattern—Jesus. He was rich and became poor so that believers could become rich, spiritually rich.

Verses 13-15 stress the equality resulting from the gracious work of giving to supply the needs of believers. Relate this to Acts 2 and 4. The principle is to use what you have to help meet the needs of other believers.

The churches of Macedonia are an example of what a believer's attitude is in giving; they gave of their own accord, begging, requesting for the favor of supporting the saints.

2 Corinthians 9

Bountiful giving is the subject—giving cheerfully, not grudgingly. God loves for His children to give in such a way as this; it's a ministry.

Again this chapter stresses the support of other saints, supplying their needs.

One gives a liberal contribution to another, and that one prays for the first. And all praise God for His indescribable gift.

At this point, you might review by asking to whom believers are to give according to Matthew, Acts, and Corinthians. And why.

Jesus taught about giving to the poor.
Paul taught about giving to supply the needs of other believers, saints.

You could ask what else believers are encouraged to give to according to 1 Corinthians 9 and Galatians 6.

Believers are also to give to support those who proclaim the gospel.
Those who sow spiritual things are to reap material things from those they teach.

1 Corinthians 9:12

Paul and Barnabas did not use their right to this when ministering to the Corinthians so that they would not cause any hindrance to the gospel. But it was their choice.

Philippians 4:15-19

The Philippian church had shared with Paul when he needed it while proclaiming the gospel. He was amply supplied by their gift and assured them that God would also supply all of their needs in Christ.

Give time for your group to discuss how to apply what they learned about giving.

MATTHEW 6:5-15, PRAY

What did Jesus teach about prayer? How do the cross-references add to it?

Again Jesus mentioned the hypocrites, those religious before men / people.

The hypocrites are those who pray in public to be seen by men / people, and that is the only reward they will ever have for it.

Jesus contrasted them with true believers praying in secret. But that doesn't mean believers should never pray together, hearing each other. Praying in secret is stated as a contrast with verse 5.

Jesus also gave instruction to pray to the Father. Biblical prayer is led by the Spirit, addressed to the Father in the Son's name.

Jesus said not to use meaningless repetition / empty phrases in prayer, which is just what the "Lord's Prayer," Matthew 6:9-13, has become to many people reciting it.

He told the people listening to His teaching to pray in this way / like this. So this is a pattern, not the only words to use in prayer. It was never intended to become a repetition, but the way for His followers to pray, a model.

In Luke 11:1-4 Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, and His answer was the "Lord's Prayer." It's a pattern for prayer.

How did Jesus begin this prayer?

The way to pray begins with praise and worship and is directed to the Father.

It is a privilege of true believers to be able to call God "Father."

In Matthew 5, He is the Father in heaven, and verse 48 says He is perfect. He's the perfect Father.

Matthew 6 says He sees what is done in secret and rewards those who are obedient to Him, those who are true believers, those whose righteousness is from the heart. Verse 6 says He is in secret.

He knows what is needed before asking.
He forgives, or not.
He feeds the birds of the air.

Asking why to praise Him, you can lead your group to cross-references.

Psalm 100, Exodus 33, and Proverbs

These talk about God's name.

His name is to be blessed.

Thanksgiving is added to praise as the way to come into His presence in prayer.

Give praise to His glory and His name, which is a strong tower for the righteous.

How does beginning prayer with praise affect the rest of the prayer?

It puts the focus on God, who He is, and that He is able, rather than the focus being a list of needs or wants.

What other topics are part of what Jesus taught about prayer in Matthew 6:10-13?

“Your kingdom come”

Believers, those who have faith in Jesus Christ, are part of the kingdom. But this request seems to be for the fulfillment of the kingdom when Jesus comes as King of kings.

Paul explained in Acts and 1 Corinthians that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom. Those who repent and are sanctified are the ones who are part of the kingdom.

To say “Your kingdom come” is stating that His kingdom is more important than anything happening on earth. It is focusing on the eternal and spiritual aspect of one's life.

In prayer, begin with the focus on the Father, then on His kingdom.

“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

Pray according to the will of the Father. Knowing God's Word and being led by the Holy Spirit are the only ways to know His will in prayer.

Jesus was our example in this, “Father . . . yet not My will, but Yours be done,” submission to God.

“Give us”

This is petition as well as intercession.

Ask in prayer according to the holy Father's will for what will further His kingdom.

James talks about the heart of asking, asking for something and not receiving because the motive was for personal pleasures.

Jesus also taught persistence in petition in Luke 11.

“Forgive”

Confession is needed for effective prayer. Forgiveness is also a vital part of doing God’s will. If one is unwilling to forgive, then that one is not doing God’s will. Matthew 6:15 says we will not be forgiven if we don’t forgive others.

Temptation

Prayer for protection and guidance

God does not tempt believers to do evil. Christians are tempted as their flesh is weak, but they can endure temptation.

This statement in the pattern for prayer is not blaming God for temptations. It’s asking for protection in the temptation.

“For Yours is the kingdom”

NOTE: This is in the NASB, but not the ESV. Both versions have a similar footnote about this part of verse 13. It is not in early manuscripts.

The pattern for prayer ends with praise just as it began. The focus in the whole prayer is on God, His name, His kingdom, His will, His power and glory. That’s the key to prayer, tuning in to the fact that it is about Him and not us.

Ask your group how they think this can help them in their prayer life. Give time for application discussion.

MATTHEW 6:16-18, FAST

Ask your group about the last subject in this lesson.

Fasting is a subject with which some believers are unfamiliar.

As with giving and praying, Jesus said it’s something to do in secret, not just before men / people. Don’t do things that draw attention to your fasting like neglecting your appearance. The Father notices the fasting in secret.

Isaiah admonished Israel for their fasting. They were doing what Jesus said not to do in Matthew 6. It was not for God that they were fasting, but themselves.

Isaiah 58

Fasting involves humbling oneself before the Lord. It’s to loose the bonds of wickedness, undo the bands / straps of every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.

The Lord told Israel through Isaiah that if they would do what is right and then fast and call on Him, He would answer them.

2 Chronicles 20:3

Fasting is connected with seeking the Lord. Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah, and a great army had surrounded them. As a result of what he saw, he was afraid but sought the Lord and proclaimed a fast in all of Judah.

Ezra also speaks of fasting in connection with seeking the Lord for guidance and protection.

Psalm 35 connects fasting with prayer and humbling oneself.

Daniel, Jonah, Joel, Zechariah, and Jesus in Matthew 9 all associate mourning with fasting.

Acts also associates fasting with prayer.

Therefore, fasting seems to be functional in the areas of seeking the Lord in prayer for guidance or protection, either a personal fast or a called fast for a group of God's people.

But there is also the aspect of mourning associated with fasting. Many times when a person is in deep mourning, there is an involuntary fast because there is no interest in eating, but it also may be a deliberate fast.

Give some time for your group to share what they learned about fasting which is relevant to their own lives.

To end, you might give your group some time to talk about how these three practices fit into the Christian life.

With all three, Jesus does not say if you do these things, but when you do these things. These seem to be a normal part of the believer's life, part of practicing righteousness.

If the motive in giving, praying, and fasting is to please God and bring glory to Him, Christians won't parade their righteousness before men, and their thoughts won't be of self-congratulation for what they've done.

GIVE	PRAY	FAST
<p>To the poor</p> <p>Secretly</p> <p>To support the saints</p> <p>To support those who proclaim the gospel</p> <p>And God will supply all your needs</p>	<p>To the Father in secret not meaningless repetition</p> <p>Like Jesus taught Praise God's will Petition Confession Praise</p>	<p>Not to be noticed In secret</p> <p>To seek the Lord</p> <p>Humble self</p> <p>Mourning</p> <p>With prayer</p>

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 9**

Lesson emphasis:

- Matthew 6:19–7:5
- Treasures, worry / anxiety, judging

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about the flow of thought in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus began describing those who are blessed.

Then He told about the requirement of righteousness to enter the kingdom.

He described that righteousness as being more than an outward appearance like the supposedly righteous people of the day, the scribes and Pharisees.

Then He used some illustrations from the Law and showed how true righteousness was more than what the Law said.

Those who practice their righteousness to be seen by people will have no reward from the Father in heaven, no inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

He presented illustrations of this also: giving, praying, and fasting.

MATTHEW 6:19-24

In Matthew 6:2, 5 and 16 and 7:5, what did Jesus call those who wanted to be seen as righteous by men? Ask your group about the definition.

Hypocrites

hypokrites—“one who answers...an actor”;¹ “one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who...speaks or acts under a feigned character”²

At the end of this guide, there is simple visual aid which you might use to list the main points of your discussion.

¹ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G5273.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G5273.

What is Matthew 6:19-24 about?

Treasures: on earth or in heaven

If one practices his righteousness only to be seen by men, then he has only stored up treasures on earth and his reward is to be seen by men.

But if one is practicing true righteousness before the heavenly Father, then that one is storing up treasures in heaven.

One's focus in life is where he stores up his treasure,
either on earth for the temporal or in heaven for the eternal.
Again it's a matter of the heart.

And it's impossible to place equal value on both; no one can serve two masters.

There has to be a clear eye, focus, to see how to live with a truly heavenly or eternal perspective, to understand what is important and what's not, from God's viewpoint.

There is no security for the earthly treasures, wealth / money.

wealth / money—*mamōnas*—“Wealth, the personification of riches. Mammon, the comprehensive word for all kinds of possessions, earnings, and gains, a designation of material value, the god of materialism.”¹

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about this.

1 John 2:15-17

If one loves the world or the things of it, then that one has not been truly saved.

Loving the things of the world is materialism and the focus is self.

He doesn't have God's love within himself.

The world is passing away and so are the things, treasures, of the world.

The one who is obedient to God's will lives forever; compare this to Matthew 7:21.

2 Corinthians 4:18

This verse describes God's perspective.

The things which man sees on earth are the temporal / transient things of the world.

But the unseen things are the eternal, treasures in heaven.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Here is another warning to lay aside every encumbrance / weight in running the race of salvation. Believers should fix their eyes on, or focus on, Jesus—eternal perspective.

Look to the heavenly, not the earthly; endure as He endured.

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G3126.

Hebrews 11:24-27

Moses is an example of one with that clear eye, storing up his treasure in heaven. He was the son of Pharaoh's daughter in the eyes of the world and could have taken advantage of all the treasures of Egypt as Pharaoh's grandson. But he chose instead to consider the reproach of Christ as the greater riches. He also endured, as though seeing the unseen.

1 Timothy 6:6-12

No one can take anything out of the world when that one dies. Food and clothing are needs, and with the provision of those one should be content in life.

Some people love money, have as their goal in life to get rich. This love produces temptations, snares, foolish and harmful desires leading to ruin and destruction.

Verse 10 does not mean that the ones who wandered away from the faith lost their salvation, but that they never really had faith. Their love was always for the world, riches, wealth.

Believers are to flee the love of money and desires to get rich.
They're to pursue righteousness . . . take hold of the eternal.

Galatians 1:10

Seeking the favor of men or that of the perfect heavenly Father who sees the secret things and rewards with the heavenly?

If one is a servant of Christ, then he cannot be a servant of riches or a pleaser of men.

Give time for your group to discuss personal application at any point in this discussion.
Lead your discussion back to Matthew 6.

Verses 25-34

What is the emphasis of these verses, and how does it relate to verses 19-24?

In these verses Jesus said again, "Do not . . ."

Don't worry / be anxious, which is closely associated with storing up treasures on earth, serving the wrong master, practicing righteousness only to be seen by men.

If one truly trusts the heavenly Father to provide, the focus will not be storing up earthly riches.

Jesus taught that those who are part of the kingdom of heaven are not to worry about what they eat, drink, or wear.

It's repeated that the heavenly Father knows the needs of His children on earth. He provides for the birds to eat and how the flowers are clothed. His children are far more important to Him than birds and flowers.

Believers should not worry / be anxious about how long they'll live.
They should not worry / be anxious about what will happen tomorrow.

Worry / being anxious shows little faith, verse 30. It is a trust issue.

Ask about verse 32.

The Gentiles—people who are not Jews, part of Israel—seek these things.
But Jesus said to seek first the Father's kingdom and righteousness.

He also mentioned the Gentiles in verse 7.

The Gentiles didn't have God's law or standard of holiness. They didn't know God.
For Jesus to compare the people of Israel with the Gentiles was a great offense to them.

If they are seeking the Father's heavenly kingdom, then they'll not worry about their earthly provision from Him. If they are seeking His righteousness, He'll take care of their needs on earth so that they can do what is righteous.

Give time for your group to discuss how these things Jesus taught are applicable to their lives.
Ask what they learned from the cross-references.

Philippians 4:19

God will supply all a believer needs. He is able, and He will.
Relate this promise to Matthew 6:33.

NOTE: Paul thanked the Philippians for the gift they had sent to support him. This promise follows that in the context of Philippians 4.

Philippians 3:7-9

This is stating in different words to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
Here it is stated as counting as loss, worthless, the things which used to be viewed as gain for the surpassing value of knowing Christ.

Having true righteousness through knowing Him is the single goal of one who is truly seeking God's kingdom first. One with this goal is looking to the eternal.

Psalms 27:4-8

One thing asked, seek His face above all else.
It's the same thing Paul desired.
It's what Jesus said to do—seek first His kingdom and righteousness.

Luke 10:38-42

Mary chose the good thing, to sit at Jesus' feet, listening to His Word. That's how to seek the face of the Lord, to seek first His kingdom and righteousness. This is contrasted with being distracted and anxious.

MATTHEW 7:1-5

Ask your group what these verses are about. How do they relate to Matthew 5 and 6?

Don't judge / judge not

Jesus first mentioned the Law and Prophets, teaching that He didn't come to abolish but to fulfill what they had written in God's Word.

He then taught about one who would annul / relax a commandment and teach others to do the same, contrasting that one with those who keep the commands and teaches others to do the same.

Then He started teaching how true believers will have a righteousness which surpasses / exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. He continued doing that through Matthew 7:5.

He first gave illustrations of keeping the Law from the heart, then He gave some examples of practicing righteousness before men, as hypocrites do, or practicing it as before the Lord God.

He then presented several "Do not's" for those whose righteousness surpasses / exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 7:1 is a statement which is quoted by almost everyone in the world who does not want to be judged. It's mostly taken out of context when quoted.

"judge"—*krino*, "select, choose"¹;
"distinguish, discriminate between good and evil...to form or give an opinion after separating and considering the particulars of a case"²

Verse 2 says to consider the standard / measure of judgment one is using. The scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, were using their own standard of judgment. Jesus taught to use God's standard of judgment.

The hypocrites were judging their brothers, other Jews, when they themselves were guilty of greater offenses against God. They missed the heart of the Law. They were only pretending to be righteous.

They didn't have a clear eye, 6:22-23, to see themselves, much less make a proper opinion or judgment regarding someone else.

Jesus was not negating all judgment, but hypocritical condemnation of others.

¹ J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (electronic ed.) (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996). G2919.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G2919.

To end this discussion, ask your group if what they've studied in the Sermon on the Mount has reached their hearts. You can give some time for sharing.

Visual aid

Don't store treasures on earth

Store in heaven

Reward from heavenly Father

Don't worry / be anxious

Heavenly Father knows needs

Seek first His kingdom, righteousness

Don't judge

By earthly standard

Use His standard

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 10**

Lesson emphasis:

- Matthew 7:6-29

REVIEW

Since this is the last part of Jesus' teaching, you could ask for a brief summary of what your students remember from the whole and how it fits together.

For a visual aid, you might use something like the simple diagram at the end of this guide.

5:20 is the main statement which summarizes all that Jesus taught.

He began with who was truly the blessed, those who really were part of the kingdom of heaven, their character.

Then He moved to explanation of the Law. One who is part of the kingdom of heaven obeys the Law from the heart, not just externally.

In Matthew 6, Jesus taught about the practicing of the Law.
It's to be done for the heavenly Father's sight, not to be noticed by men.

In all of that, Jesus was telling what He meant by righteousness surpassing / exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees. He gave illustrations of what they did and how true righteousness, the kind necessary to enter the kingdom, was different.

In 6:19, Jesus began to tell several things which those who are true believers should not do. That carried into chapter 7 with not judging by one's own standard, which the scribes and Pharisees also did.

MATTHEW 7:6

What are the last things Jesus said not to do?

Don't give what is holy to dogs
Don't throw your pearls before swine / pigs

What do these statements mean?

Jesus spoke of what is valuable, special, pure, clean.

Those things are not to be thrown out to those who have no care for them.

Dogs and swine / pigs don't value the holy or pearls. It means nothing to them.
It could be just the cause for them to turn on the one giving and tear him to pieces.

So this is a time when judgment is to be made.

There are those with whom believers come in contact and with whom the holy should not be shared. It would not be considered valuable to them, and would give cause for attack.

In Jesus' time there were wild dogs roaming the city streets and countryside. They were scavengers, hungry, ready to attack for food. The wild boar was a vicious animal, also. Pigs, in general, were unclean to the Jews.

Philippians 3:2

Dogs were associated with evil workers, false circumcision—those holding to a legalistic standard of what they considered to be righteous, like the scribes and Pharisees.

Revelation 22:14-15

The lake of fire will be outside of the new Jerusalem in the new heaven and earth.
In it will be the dogs and other wicked, evil people who never entered the kingdom.

2 Peter 2:22

Dogs and sows are related to false teachers in this passage, a good parallel to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7 although a little different in context.

Give your group time to discuss the application of this.
How do the other cross-references on Day One relate to application?

Matthew 10:11-15

Look for the worthy, those who receive the message of truth.
This takes discernment. Look for the worthy to share the gospel with.

Acts 18:1-6

Paul left the Jews who didn't want to hear the truth and went to the Gentiles.

Titus 3:10-11

Again, use discernment and wisdom. Watch out for those who only want to cause division. They're not worthy.

MATTHEW 7:7-12

What are these verses about?

Ask, seek, and knock

These commands and the results are stated twice each.
To live a righteous life, believers are to be asking of their heavenly Father.

When they receive from Him what they ask, then others will see and glorify Him.

How can one discern who is a dog or a sow? One way is to ask the Father for wisdom.

Keep on seeking from the heavenly Father; keep on knocking—it's a privilege, but also a responsibility of the believer. The heavenly Father desires for His children to find and for things to be opened to them as result of seeking Him and His kingdom.

Ask, seek, knock, by faith; believing that He will answer according to His Word. The scribes and Pharisees were trying to be righteous by keeping an external law, but true righteousness comes from faith in Christ Jesus, Romans 3:22. It's from a relationship.

Verse 12 connects the believer's relationship with his heavenly Father with the relationship he should also have with other people. True righteousness is extended toward others. What is received from the Father—things, security, love, kindness—is to be extended to other people.

Jesus again taught how to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. He fulfilled 5:17-20, and His true followers are to do the same. The scribes and Pharisees had no care for others except to be noticed by them and to judge them. He wanted them to know that the original intent was righteousness from the heart, not just keeping the letter of the law.

The “therefore” of verse 12 seems not only to relate to verses 7-11, but to all that Jesus taught from 5:17–7:11. The one with righteousness from the heart will treat others the way he wants to be treated.

Matthew 22:35-40

The greatest commandment is to love God.

The second is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus says that the whole Law and Prophets depend on these commandments.

You might ask your group how these things apply to them. Give time for sharing.

MATTHEW 7:13-29

How do verses 13-14 relate to Matthew 5:20?

It's about entering the kingdom.

Relate this also to 7:21.

The way to enter the kingdom of heaven is through the narrow, small gate which leads to life—few find it. It's by faith, not works.

Many take the wide gate to destruction in trying to work their way into the kingdom.

What are verses 15-23? Ask your group what they learned from their study.

Jesus gave a warning. Beware of false prophets. Relate this to 6:1.

He warned His followers of following the wrong prophets, teachers.

The false have an outward appearance of being a believer, but are really like ravenous wolves trying to devour the true sheep.

Jesus said one can recognize them by their fruits. He taught from Matthew 5:1 up to this point what a true believer is like. The “false prophets” should be evaluated by all of the Sermon on the Mount.

They don’t produce good fruit because they cannot. They don’t have the heart for it; they don’t have the source for it. Their righteousness is the same as that of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about false prophets and fruits.

Jeremiah 5:31 and 23:16-40

Israel loved what the false prophets said, but it didn’t help them in the end. They offered vain hopes and said no disaster was coming. But just judgment was coming.

2 Peter 2

Peter said that just like there had been false prophets among the people of Israel, there will also be false teachers among true believers. This whole chapter is a warning and tells what will happen to the false.

The false teachers twist words and many follow them in sensuality.

Ezekiel 34:1-12

This is a prophecy against the shepherds, leaders, of Israel. They cared only for themselves, so God was against them. He would take care of His sheep.

Matthew 3:7-12

John the Baptist described fruits of repentance. It’s evidence of repentance. Wrath is coming on all who don’t repent.

Lead your discussion back to Matthew 7:21-23 and ask what your group learned.

Many will not enter the kingdom of heaven because they chose the wide gate to destruction. But some of them did amazing things in Jesus’ name:

Prophecy

Cast out demons

Perform many miracles / mighty works

But these things are not indicative of righteousness.

practice, *ergazomai*—“*be engaged in or with*”¹

lawlessness, *anomia*—“In most cases in the NT it means not the absence of the Law, but the violation of Law, i.e., transgression or lawlessness.”²

Those who practice lawlessness can do these things. That’s why they can appear to be sheep, true believers. But Jesus said He doesn’t know them.

Give your group time to discuss how these things apply to them.

What are verses 24-27 about? Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson.

The wise man

Hears Jesus’ words and acts on them

His words about doing the Father’s will and entering His kingdom

The foolish man

Hears Jesus’ words but doesn’t act on them

Headed for a great fall—won’t enter the kingdom

Give time for your group to discuss which kind of person they are.

Verses 28-29

Ask your group what they learned from the word study. Why was this the reaction to Jesus’ teaching?

“amazed / astonished”—*ekplesso*, “to be exceedingly struck in mind”³

Jesus taught with authority. He is God; He had the authority to teach as He did. He taught the truth, what true righteousness is and how to enter the kingdom of heaven.

It was foreign teaching to those who had been used to hearing from the scribes who only had the external keeping of their laws.

This teaching receives the same reaction from many in modern times. They are truly amazed / astonished that this teaching is in the Bible.

You might end your discussion by giving your group an opportunity to share how God has used this study in their lives.

¹ James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996). G2038.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1994), p. 186. G458.

³ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1985), p. 25.

Righteousness —————> enter kingdom

Do Father's will
Act on Jesus' Words

