SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MBC Course #1

Student Workbook

The Context of the Sermon on the Mount

Chapter 1
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 1

Objective: To understand the context of one of Jesus' greatest sermons, the Sermon on the Mount. (Text: Matthew 4:23–5:12)

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

—Matthew 4:23-24

The Sermon on the Mount is considered to be one of Jesus' most important discourses and one of His most foundational teachings, considered to hold the essence of Jesus' teaching. Even many who are not Christians believe this sermon is one of the most important messages ever taught. There is perhaps no passage in the Bible that is quoted more and understood less than this teaching in Matthew 5-7.

Many people had followed Jesus because of His teaching, preaching, and healing. He preached the Sermon on the Mount when a crowd had gathered around Him near the Sea of Galilee. He went up on a mountain and invited some of His disciples to go with Him. This divided the multitude into two groups: those at the bottom of the mountain, who represented all the problems of humanity, and those at a higher level who wanted to be part of His solution to the problems. Jesus began to teach and train His followers so they could go into the world with His message and in His strength.

1. True or false? None of the other gospels mentions Jesus teaching on a mountain.

2. True or false? After preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples.

3. True or false? In Jesus' time, those with physical and mental problems were put away in institutions, hidden from everyday life.

4. True or false? The Sermon on the Mount can be considered "the first Christian retreat."

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus respond when He saw the multitudes?
   a. He grew discouraged and depressed.
   b. He grew proud because of His popularity.
   c. He was bothered by so many asking for attention.
   d. He began training followers to meet their needs.

6. Who did Jesus preach to in the Sermon on the Mount?
   a. The entire multitude
   b. Only the hurting and hungry people at the bottom of the mountain
   c. Only the disciples who came to a higher level
   d. Only to Matthew, who wrote all His words down

7. Why did Jesus teach a select group of followers?
   a. So they could impress others with their knowledge
   b. To train them to be a part of His answer for the world
   c. To test His message to see if it was popular
   d. Because His message is not meant for everyone

8. Which of the following were important parts of Jesus' ministry?
   a. Preaching
   b. Healing
   c. Training
   d. All of the above

9. What kinds of problems did Jesus address?
   a. Mental
   b. Physical
   c. Spiritual
   d. All of the above

What kind of disciple or "deputy" of Jesus do you want to be? Would you rather be one of the many who hears Jesus or one of the few who joins with Him to be part of the solution?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for His Word and for the teaching of Jesus, and for His mission to meet the needs of all people. Ask Him to teach you how to be part of His solution for the world.

Going Deeper

1. Why were so many people following Jesus to this mountain? What were their needs/desires?
_____
_____
_____

2. Why was Jesus seated teaching His disciples when there were so many other people there?
_____
_____
_____

3. What was the strategy of Jesus when He taught the Sermon on the Mount? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What kinds of problems did Jesus address with this teaching? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What are the principle differences between those who are "part of the problem" and those who become "part of the solution"? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Summarize your personal application or "takeaway" from this lesson. _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Considering your personal issues and relationships, how can you become one who really "hears" and becomes part of the solution? _____
_____
_____
_____

The Content of the Sermon on the Mount

Chapter 2
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 2

Objective: To introduce the context and content of the Sermon on the Mount. (Text: Matthew 5; 6; 7)

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

—Matthew 5:1-10

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the key teachings of the Bible. Jesus preached this sermon on a mountaintop in Galilee when He challenged people who professed to be His disciples to be strategically placed between the love of God and the pain of the hurting people in the world. He challenged His disciples to partner with Him and be conduits of His love. He concluded His sermon with a call to commitment. It changed the lives of many who heard it. He appointed 12 of those people to be His apostles, or "sent ones." Those apostles lived and died for Jesus as they made disciples for Him all over the world.

1. True or false? Being a disciple of Jesus is the easiest way to live.

2. True or false? Jesus taught with authority, not as the scribes taught.

3. True or false? Jesus began His teaching by talking about the attitudes we should have.

4. True or false? The Beatitudes force us to look inside of us.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. The Gospel of Matthew most strongly emphasizes Jesus as _____.
   a. King
   b. Preacher
   c. Priest
   d. Holy man

6. Which of the following do we see in the Sermon on the Mount? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. The crisis of becoming a Christian
   b. The comfort of being a Christian
   c. The character of being a Christian
   d. The challenge of being a Christian
   e. The danger of being a Christian

7. Where does the Sermon on the Mount cause us to look?
   a. Inside of ourselves
   b. Up to God
   c. Around at the world
   d. All of the above

8. Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount to the disciples for whose primary benefit?
   a. For the select few disciples
   b. For Himself and His own popularity
   c. For the multitudes at the bottom of the mountain
   d. For the religious leaders of the time

If Jesus called you to the top of the mountain to hear His teaching, would you go with Him? In what ways can you do that now through the teaching of His Word?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He loves the world so much that He has a solution for the world's problems. Ask Him to help you do what would be impossible without His help—to have the attitudes and character Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

Going Deeper

1. What is the crisis involved in becoming a Christian? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What does the Sermon on the Mount say about the character of the Christian? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. To what does Jesus compare the believer who applies His teaching in the Beatitudes? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Pastor Woodward teaches that the application of Matthew chapters 5 and 6 calls for an "in-look, an out-look (around-look), and an up-look." Explain the terms "in-look, out-look, and up-look." _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Show how this perspective changes the believer into "part of the solution rather than part of the problem." _____
_____
_____
_____

6. What can you learn from these verses that will make you salt and light to those around you?
_____
_____
_____

7. How does commitment to the golden rule make a person part of the solution? _____
_____
_____
_____

I Can't, but He Can

Chapter 3
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 3

Objective: To understand the first beatitude and what it means to be "poor in spirit." (Text: Matthew 5:1-3)

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

—Matthew 5:3

Jesus begins by teaching His disciples eight attitudes—called, the "beatitudes," or "blessed attitudes," because each one is introduced by the word "blessed." Jesus is promising to bless the disciple who has each of these attitudes. This word "blessed" can actually mean "happy," "spiritually prosperous," or "in a state of grace." Each attitude also includes a promise that describes the form in which this blessing will come into the life of that disciple.

These eight blessed attitudes profile the mind-set or way of thinking that affects the behavior of a disciple of Jesus. The context in which He teaches these attitudes makes the statement that this outlook on life will make His disciples part of the solution and answer of Christ to all the suffering in the world that is represented by the multitude at the bottom of the mountain.

The first beatitude relates to that question the religious leaders asked John the Baptist: "What do you say about yourself?" (John 1:22). Without the correct attitude toward ourselves we will never be one of our Lord's solutions. Scholars tell us the words "poor in spirit" can also be translated as "broken in spirit." That means this attitude is describing brokenness – which is something we see in the lives of those God calls and equips for special ministry.

1. The first beatitude is "Blessed are the ____ in _____ for theirs is the _____ of _____."

2. True or false? Jesus is trying to teach his disciples to sell what they have and become poor.

3. True or false? The promise of this beatitude is the same promise we have for accepting Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

4. Which of the following attitudes are examples of being "poor in spirit"? *(choose all that apply)*

a. Trying to please God by showing Him how good we are
b. Seeking higher positions in church
c. Confessing sins to God and others
d. Choosing positions of service instead of status
e. Holding others' sins against them

5. Name a biblical character who is a good example of being "poor in spirit."

_____

6. According to Philippians 2:5-11, our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Read the passage below and then underline the attitudes in the list that describe Jesus.

Success oriented	Self-centered
Servant-like	Strong-willed
Proud	Obedient
Humble	Ambitious
Aggressive	

> *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
>
> —Philippians 2:5-11

7. Being "poor in spirit" is described in one word as humility. Read the following scriptures and choose the one correct answer in each question:

1 Peter 5:5-7— To whom does God give grace?

a. The proud
b. The hard-working
c. The sincere
d. The humble

Romans 12:3—How should we think of ourselves?

a. Highly
b. Soberly
c. Accusingly
d. We shouldn't think of ourselves at all

> *5 All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*
>
> —1 Peter 5:5-7
>
> *By the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*
>
> —Romans 12:3

Is there some area of your life that does not reflect being poor in spirit? What is that area? Describe how you can become "poor in spirit" in this area.

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for sending Jesus to us in the form of a servant. Confess that you can't be that kind of servant on your own, but He can help you. Ask Him to help you have Jesus' humility in your heart and to give you opportunities to serve others.

Going Deeper

1. What is meant by "poor in spirit"? Is that the same as being poor? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. How did Moses acquire the first "beautiful attitude – poor in spirit"? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. How did Peter acquire the first "beautiful attitude – poor in spirit"? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. How did the Apostle Paul acquire the first "beautiful attitude – poor in spirit"? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Is there some area of your life that does not reflect being poor in spirit? Describe that area and how you can become "poor in spirit" in that area. _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Explain how the first beatitude illustrates Pastor Woodward's first Spiritual Secret, *"I can't but He can, and I am in Him and He is in me."* _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Have you come to experience this reality in your life? How? _____
_____
_____
_____

Ministers of Comfort
and
Recipe for Rest

Chapter 4
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 4

Objective: To understand the second and third beatitudes and learn what it means to mourn and to be meek. (Text: Matthew 5:1-5)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

—Matthew 5:4-5

Believers sometimes have the misguided opinion that their faith is weak if they show signs of mourning. This beatitude not only supports mourning—it links it to a blessing. Mourning a loss is normal and there are things God wants us to learn from the loss. We must let God use our mourning to move us in three ways. First, mourning helps us ask the right questions about life. Second, it helps us to seek God's answers. Third, it also helps us to accept the blessing God has provided including our salvation.

Being meek is not the same as being weak. A powerful horse that is tamed is very gentle or meek to his handlers and ready to use that power when needed. Jesus called himself meek or gentle in Matthew 11:29, yet he certainly was not weak. In Numbers 12:3 the Bible describes Moses as the meekest man who ever lived, yet he was strong enough to lead hundreds of thousands of people, through many trials for 40 years, to the Promised Land. Meekness is power under control—yielded to the Master's will. Meekness is the discipline of our will. In the Greek of the New Testament, disciple and discipline come from the same root word. To be a disciple requires discipline—living under the yoke of the Father (Matthew 11:28-30).

1. The second beatitude is "Blessed are those who _____ for they will be _____."

2. When Jesus speaks of mourning, he means
   a. Grief over death
   b. Grief over sin
   c. Grief over the condition of the world
   d. All of the above

3. True or false? Mourning indicates a lack of faith.

4. True or false? Mourning caused Job to ask the right questions about life and then to seek God's answers.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. Psalm 23 gives answers for us in facing death and eternity. Read Psalm 23 and answer the following questions. If the Lord is your shepherd…

Who is your shepherd? _____
Who provides for you? _____
Who restores your soul? _____
Who leads you on the right path? _____
Who is with you even in death? _____
Who comforts you? _____
Who prepares a place for you? _____
Who anoints your head? _____
Who blesses you to overflowing? _____
Who will you live with forever? _____

> *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*
>
> —Psalm 23

6. In light of this psalm and other scriptural teaching about death and resurrection, how should a believer feel about the death of a believer? How should you feel about your death? Underline your answers. Then put a check mark beside feelings an unbeliever might have.

Hopeful	Anxious	Fearful	Confused
Comforted	Loved	Secure	Calm
Abandoned	Peaceful	Discouraged	Lost
Terrified	Faithful	Protected	

7. The third beatitude is "Blessed are the _____ for they will _____ the earth."

8. Meek is another word for _____

a. Weak-willed
b. Passive
c. Tamed
d. Shy

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

—Matthew 11:28-30

9. Read Matthew 11:28–30. Who does Jesus invite to take His yoke?
    a. Those who are weary and burdened
    b. Those who are strong
    c. Those who will work for Him
    d. Those who want to run their own lives

What burdens are too heavy for you to bear? How does the yoke of meekness make your burden light and your life easier no matter how great your challenges are?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for the hope He gives us even in the face of death. Thank Him for His invitation to give Him our burdens and take the yoke of Jesus upon us. Ask Him to shepherd you in every situation in life and to help you live with the right attitudes toward Him and others.

Going Deeper

1. Can you be a minister of comfort to hurting people without ever hurting? Why or why not?
_____
_____
_____

2. What comfort have you experienced that would equip you to comfort others who may be suffering what you did? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. How does mourning help align our values with God's values? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Explain how suffering/mourning might lead a person to a) ask the right questions, b) listen to God's answers and c) believe God's answers. _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Relate a personal experience with suffering and its outcomes in your life. _____
_____
_____
_____

6. How can you be part of Jesus' answer and solution for people who are suffering? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. How do the first two beatitudes complement each other as a "couplet"? _____
_____
_____
_____

8. Define in your own words the term "meek" as it is used in Matthew 5. _____
_____
_____
_____

9. What burdens are too heavy for you to bear? What areas of your life give you most stress?
_____
_____
_____

10. How does the yoke of meekness make your burden light and your life easier, no matter how great your challenges? _____
_____
_____
_____

11. In what way is Jesus' burden light? How does His yoke make the burden light? _____
_____
_____
_____

12. What is the meaning of "spirit-filled"? _____
_____
_____
_____

13. What are Jesus' conditions for finding "rest"? _____
_____
_____
_____

14. What does it mean to be "spiritually prosperous"? _____
_____
_____
_____

Exceptional Righteousness

Chapter 5
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 5

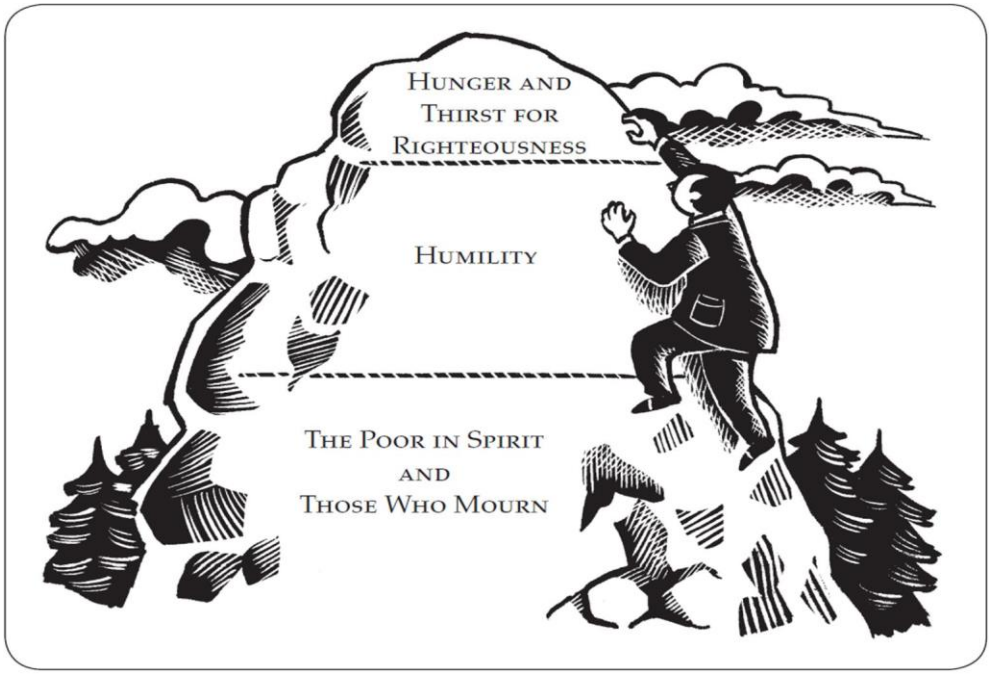
Objective: To understand the fourth beatitude and learn what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Text: Matthew 5:1-6)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
—Matthew 5:6

When we are meek, seeking God's leadership, we develop a hunger for righteousness—the desire to live our lives with the goal of pleasing God. We want to know what is right and do what is right. What you do and how you act are important to God. We are called to do what is right—not just what is expedient. That is what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

We now see a pattern emerging in the beatitudes. They come in pairs. We mourn while we are learning to be poor in spirit, and when we become meek we will hunger and thirst for righteousness. To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to zealously desire to know what is right—especially what is right for us.

The promise that accompanies this beatitude is that we will be filled with the righteousness for which we hunger and thirst. This also means that we will be filled completely with the Holy Spirit of God. It is He who is true righteousness and who causes us to know what He wants us to do.



1. The fourth beatitude is “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after _____ for they will be _____.”

2. True or false? A desire to do what is right implies a desire to correct what is wrong.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

3. What promise does Jesus give to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?
   a. They will no longer sin.
   b. They will become more righteous than others.
   c. They will be filled, or satisfied.
   d. They will be rewarded for their works.

4. What kind of righteousness is Jesus talking about?
   a. God’s justice and values
   b. Doing what is right
   c. Personal integrity
   d. All of the above

5. Jesus gives us direction on ordering our priorities in Matthew 6:33. According to this verse, what place should righteousness have in our lives? _____

6. Read 1 Peter 2:24. According to this verse, why did Jesus die for our sins?
   a. For our righteousness
   b. So we would die to sin
   c. Both a and b
   d. Neither a nor b

7. Read Isaiah 61:3. According to this verse, why are we called to be righteous?
   a. So others will want to be righteous too
   b. So we can be confident before God
   c. Because God commands obedience
   d. So God will be glorified

8. Read Psalm 4:5. In this verse, what is righteousness linked with?
   a. Trust
   b. Obedience
   c. Worship
   d. Diligence

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

—Matthew 6:33

[He] Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

—1 Peter 2:24

"That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

—Isaiah 61:3

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

—Psalm 4:5

What are the things in your life which keep you from seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? What are your challenges to living a righteous life? What does God want you to do with these challenges?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for His righteousness, purity, and justice. Ask Him to develop hunger and thirst for righteousness in you and to satisfy you fully.

Going Deeper

1. Explain what Jesus meant when He said, "Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What kind of "righteousness" did the Pharisees have? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What kind of "righteousness" is Jesus advocating? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What is the promise of the fourth beatitude? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Pastor Woodward talks about the temptation to do the "expedient thing" rather than the "right thing." What are some areas in your life where you are tempted to take the easy way, rather than seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. What would the "sacrifice of righteousness" mean for you? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. What are the things in your life that keep you from seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? _____
_____
_____
_____

Channels of Love
and
The Catheterized Heart

Chapter 6
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 6

Objective: To understand the fifth and sixth beatitudes and learn what it means to be merciful and to have a pure heart. (Text: Matthew 5:1-8)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

—Matthew 5:7-8

The word "mercy" means "unconditional love." When David writes in Psalm 23:6 that mercy will follow him all the days of his life, the word he uses for "follow" actually means "pursue." God's unconditional love will pursue David all of his life. This is the kind of love for others that we must have too, if we are to be like God.

When we are merciful, our motives are often questioned. That's because people show love with all sorts of motives, many of them selfish. Unconditional love is hard to understand, especially for people who have never seen it before. When we love unconditionally, as God loves us and not from selfish motives but because the risen Christ lives within us, we become channels of His love. Our motives are pure.

1. The fifth beatitude is "Blessed are the _____, for they will be shown _____."

2. True or false? Jesus desires that His disciples will become channels of unconditional love.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

3. What does God's mercy mean for us?
   a. He withholds from us punishment we deserve.
   b. He loves us as long as we obey Him.
   c. He gives us blessings we do not deserve.
   d. He waits until we are perfect to bless us.

4. Read Lamentations 3:22-23. How often is God's mercy and compassion renewed?
   a. Every day
   b. Every week
   c. Every month
   d. Every year

5. Read 1 John 4:16. What word does John use to describe God?

a. Judgment
b. Righteousness
c. Holiness
d. Love

> *Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.*
>
> —Lamentations 3:22-23
>
> *We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*
>
> —1 John 4:16

6. From the following list, underline the characteristics of a disciple who is "merciful."

Loving	Eager to bless
Self-righteous	Forgiving
Judgmental	Selfish
Patient	Prejudiced

7. The sixth beatitude is "Blessed are the _____ for they shall _____."

8. True or false? Disciples of Jesus expect something from others in return for their mercy.

9. Read 1 John 1:7-9. According to these verses, how are our hearts cleansed?

a. By hard work
b. By confessing our sins to God
c. By performing a ritual
d. By resolving to avoid sin

> *If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
>
> —1 John 1:7-9

10. How does someone who is pure in heart see God? *(choose all that apply)*

a. God will work in that person's life.
b. God will draw that person closer to Him.
c. God will show that Jesus lives in that person.
d. That person will recognize God's love in others.

Would others describe you as “merciful”? How can you be more merciful? What motives do you have in your relationships with others? Are they truly an expression of Jesus’ pure love?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for His mercy and confess any sins to Him that you need to confess. Ask Him to cleanse your heart and to give you opportunities to show His mercy to others.

Going Deeper

1. What was Jesus' strategy in the Sermon on the Mount? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Why can the second set of four beatitudes not be learned and practiced in isolation? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Explain the difference between conditional and unconditional love. _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Which people in your life do you love conditionally? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Which people in your life do you love unconditionally? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. What would enable you to love more people, especially acquaintances in the workplace, unconditionally? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. What difference would that make to them? To you? _____
_____
_____
_____

8. What is the logical division between the first four and second four beatitudes? _____
_____
_____
_____

9. What does “pure in heart” actually mean? _____
_____
_____
_____

10. How does the word *catharsis* relate to the beatitude “*pure in heart*”? _____
_____
_____
_____

11. Why do the merciful need a pure heart to pass God’s love to others? _____
_____
_____
_____

12. How can you make sure your love is the real, unconditional love of God? _____
_____
_____
_____

13. In what ways has God shown His unconditional love to you? _____
_____
_____
_____

14. In Psalm 51, David cries, “Create in me a new heart, O God.” Why is this necessary in order to channel the unconditional love of God to others? _____
_____
_____
_____

Ministers of Reconciliation

Chapter 7
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 7

Objective: To understand the seventh beatitude and learn what it means to be a peacemaker. (Text: Matthew 5:1-9)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

—Matthew 5:9

Mankind is alienated from God. That's why those who are disciples of Christ—have been to the top of the mountain—must come back down with a purpose. If we have been reconciled with God—made right in our relationship with Him—it makes sense that God would use us to help others be reconciled with Him. He will also help us find reconciliation in our own relationships and use us to help others find reconciliation in theirs. The seventh beatitude speaks to the mission of those who are part of God's solution.

1. The seventh beatitude says, "Blessed are the _____, for they shall be called _____."

2. True or false? Everyone who has been reconciled with God can be a minister of reconciliation.

3. True or false? Being a peacemaker means helping people reconcile with God, but it has nothing to do with helping them reconcile with each other.

4. True or false? Only pastors and other ministers are capable of helping people find peace with God.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and then choose one correct answer for each of the next 4 questions.

5. What compels us to share God's message of salvation with others (verse 14)?
   a. His commandments
   b. His love
   c. Our guilt
   d. Our talents and abilities

6. How does God reconcile the world through Christ (verse 19)?
   a. He teaches us how to please Him.
   b. He tells us that there is no such thing as sin.
   c. He tells us that sin is not a big deal.
   d. He doesn't hold our sins against us.

14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. 16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

—2 Corinthians 5:14-21

7. Whose responsibility is it to give this message of salvation (verse 19)?
    a. God will do it Himself or send an angel.
    b. It's in the Bible; people can find it if they want to.
    c. We are the messengers.
    d. Only a few chosen people who are good at speaking are given this mission.

8. How would you describe Paul's attitude in verse 20?
    a. Casual
    b. Zealous and enthusiastic
    c. Angry and judgmental
    d. Apathetic and uncaring

9. What are some effective ways to be an "ambassador" of Christ, or a minister of reconciliation, for others? *(choose all that apply)*
    a. Share the gospel with others.
    b. Go to church regularly.
    c. Demonstrate God's love and mercy.
    d. Point out people's sins and tell them they must do better.
    e. Be patient with people who do not understand God.
    f. Plead with people to understand how important their relationship with God is.
    g. Do not spend any time with sinners.

10. Why do you think ministers of reconciliation will be called sons of God? *(choose all that apply)*
    a. They are obedient and do His work.
    b. They resemble Him.
    c. They are born of His Spirit.
    d. They have earned His favor.

What are you doing to reconcile others to God? Is there someone you need to be reconciled to? If so, what does God want you to do about it? What are you doing to help people reconcile with one another?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He sent Jesus to reconcile us to Him and is not counting our sins against us. Ask God to help you be His ambassador and to give you opportunities to lead others to Him. Ask God to help you reconcile with anyone you need to be at peace with.

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean that God has been reconciled to man? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is the miracle of reconciliation? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What is the ministry of reconciliation? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What are you doing to reconcile others to God? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Is there someone that you need to be reconciled to? If so, what does God want you to do about it? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. What can you do to help people reconcile to each other? Are you actively working to help others to be reconciled? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Why do you think ministers of reconciliation will be called sons of God? _____
_____
_____
_____

Persecuted Peacemakers
and
Promises, Promises

Chapter 8
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 8

Objective: To understand the eighth beatitude and learn how to respond to persecution. (Text: Matthew 5:1-10)

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

—Matthew 5:10

There is a reason the beatitude about peacemakers is followed by a beatitude about persecution. Those who become ministers of reconciliation often suffer painful consequences because they have identified themselves with Jesus Christ. Being a peacemaker may put Jesus' disciples in the middle of dangerous fighting. Sometimes they even lose their lives. The disciple who has the "beautiful attitudes" confronts people with a model of what they should be. When people in the world are confronted with a true disciple, they can acknowledge that this is how they should live, or they can attack the disciple who is like Jesus. Very often, they do the latter.

1. The eighth beatitude says, "Blessed are those who are _____ for righteousness' sake, for theirs is _____."

2. True or false? This beatitude applies to anyone who is persecuted for any reason.

3. True or false? If someone loses his life for Jesus' sake, he is truly demonstrating that Jesus is his King.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

4. Read Acts 5:40-41. How did the apostles respond to persecution?

a. They fled in fear.
b. They fought back.
c. They decided to obey the rulers.
d. They rejoiced for the privilege of suffering for Jesus.

> *When they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*
>
> —Acts 5:40-41

5. Read 1 Peter 4:12-14. According to verse 12, Christians should consider persecution to be:

a. Strange and unusual
b. A sign of God's judgment
c. A normal and expected part of the Christian life
d. Easy to handle

6. According to 1 Peter 4:14, suffering is a sign of what?

a. The presence of God's Spirit in your life
b. God's anger for your sins
c. That you are not getting along with the world as you should
d. The absence of God's Spirit and blessing in your life

> *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*
>
> —1 Peter 4:12-14

7. Why do you think the world attacks those who model the attitudes of Jesus? *(chose all that apply)*

a. Those who model Jesus confront others with what they should be like.
b. The attitudes of Jesus do not fit into the world's systems and cultures.
c. The attitudes of Jesus are self-righteous and naturally offensive.
d. Sin and righteousness are always in conflict with each other.
e. The attitudes of Jesus are intolerant and prejudiced.

What is your natural reaction to persecution? Can you think of ways to demonstrate God's character when you suffer? How?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He blesses those who are persecuted for His sake. Pray for those brothers and sisters who are suffering persecution for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus that they will remain faithful and strong. Ask Him to help you model the attitudes of Jesus and to give you strength when others reject you for being one of His followers.

Going Deeper

1. Explain why the first four beatitudes are called the coming attitudes, and the second four the going attitudes? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Pastor Woodward talks of four spiritual laws:
   I can't but He can, and I am in Him and He is in me,
   I don't want to but He wants to, and I am in Him and He is in me,
   I am not but He is, and I am in Him and He is in me,
   I didn't but He did, because I was in Him and He was in me.

How and why does each of these statements relate to a particular pair of the beatitudes? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Does the eighth beatitude mean that the disciple of Jesus should seek to suffer for Christ? ___
_____
_____
_____

4. Pastor Woodward recommends that we memorize the beatitudes. Have you done so? If not, will you commit now to doing so? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Have you known anyone who hates Jesus? Discuss. _____
_____
_____
_____

6. How do these people naturally react to those who openly identify with Jesus? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Pastor Woodward says, in regard to the Beatitudes, "We need a check-up from the neck up." How can we give ourselves a "check-up from the neck-up"? _____
_____
_____
_____

8. What do the first two beatitudes tell us about how God meets us? _____
_____
_____
_____

9. In what sense (how and why) will the poor in spirit receive the Kingdom of Heaven? _____
_____
_____
_____

10. Why do those who openly identify with Jesus, those who demonstrate the "beautiful attitudes," often suffer painful consequences? _____
_____
_____
_____

11. In what ways can persecution and suffering be a blessing? _____
_____
_____
_____

12. What is your natural reaction to persecution? Can you think of ways to demonstrate God's character when you suffer? How? _____
_____
_____
_____

13. Why does God promise that the meek will inherit the earth? _____
_____
_____
_____

14. Why did Pastor Woodward value night-call as a social worker? _____
_____
_____
_____

The Character and the Culture

Chapter 9
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 9

Objective: To understand the role of the Christian in the culture through four metaphors Jesus used to describe His disciples' witness. (Text: Matthew 5:11-16)

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."

—Matthew 5:13

The Beatitudes were the essence and central part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. With these eight attitudes, He has described a godly character that can change the world. In this next section, He provides commentary and application on His sermon.

After Jesus gives His profile of the beautiful attitudes, He provides us four powerful metaphors to describe what happens when Christians become part of God's solution for the world. Believers become the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a candle on a candlestick, and a city on a hill.

The first metaphor Jesus used for his disciples was that they were like salt. Salt is a preservative that keeps meat from spoiling, and Christians with the attitudes of Jesus are like salt to the world. When disciples with Christ-like attitudes are "rubbed into" the people of the world as salt is rubbed into meat, their influence will keep the world from total corruption. They become a valuable commodity that Jesus uses to transform the culture and society in which they live.

1. True or false? Many people believe that the Beatitudes are the primary teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and the rest is application.

2. True or false? The Beatitudes tell us the values of God's kingdom.

3. True or false? The main purpose of Jesus' teaching was to give people a lot of knowledge, not to show His followers how they ought to live.

4. True or false? The word "Christian" is used often in the Bible.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus relate to the culture?
   a. He always tried to fit in.
   b. He always made sure He did not fit in.
   c. He isolated Himself so the culture would not affect Him.
   d. He came into conflict with the culture and wanted to revolutionize it.

6. Which of the following illustrations did Jesus use to describe those who follow Him? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. Salt
   b. Sand
   c. Lightning
   d. Light
   e. City on a hill
   f. Candlestick
   g. Fish

7. What was Jesus' method for changing the culture?
   a. To give new commandments
   b. To change believers' hearts and send them into the world
   c. To reform governments
   d. To give people more education

8. What uses of salt might Jesus have had in mind with the metaphor of salt? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. A preservative
   b. A something valuable that substitutes for money
   c. An irritation for sores
   d. A cause of thirst
   e. A cleansing agent
   f. A healing substance
   g. A seasoning for food

What specific steps can you take to be more effective “salt” in your community?

Thank God for His ability to change your heart and His desire to send you into the world as His ambassador. Ask Him to use you to impact your culture and the people around you.

Going Deeper

1. When a person has a Christ-like character, what kind of character does he have? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Is Christian teaching meant to adapt to culture or change culture? How? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Explain Jesus' metaphor about salt in Matthew 5:13. Why does He use "salt"? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What needs to be done with "salt" to make it an effective change agent? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What specific steps can you take to be more effective "salt" in your community? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. In what ways did Jesus intend for His people to be a "city on a hill"? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. In what ways might you be an example and a light to others in your community? _____
_____
_____
_____

Salt and Light

Chapter 10
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 10

Objective: To learn how to be part of God's solution—to be salt and light in the world—in our relationships. Text: (Matthew 5:13-16)

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

—Matthew 5:14-16

Salt is a preservative that keeps meat from spoiling, and Christians with the attitudes of Jesus are like salt to the world. When disciples with Christ-like attitudes are "rubbed into" the people of the world as salt is rubbed into meat, their influence will keep the world from total corruption. They become a valuable commodity Jesus uses to revolutionize the culture.

The second metaphor indicates that Christians are the only source of light for multitudes living in darkness. As with the first metaphor, Jesus' words literally mean that "you and you alone" are salt and light. If His disciples do not fulfill their role as salt and light, no one else is left to fulfill it. The people who have Jesus' attitudes are sent into the world as God's solution in order to shine for all to see.

The third and fourth metaphors are related to the second. In effect, Jesus is saying: "Before you became one of my disciples, you were like an unlighted candle. Now that you have become a Christian, your candle is lit. Every time I light a candle, I put it on a candlestick for others to see." Like a city on a hill or bright lamp, those who are truly His disciples will not be able to hide it.

1. True or false? There is no way for Christians to influence the world if they isolate themselves from it and remain "in the saltshaker."

2. True or false? Jesus came into the world to change culture.

3. True or false? Jesus told His disciples that they were light because the world is a place of darkness.

4. True or false? Jesus is not a good example of someone who lived as salt and light.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. When is our role as "salt" most effective?
   a. When we are studying our Bible
   b. When we go to church
   c. In our relationships with other people
   d. In our relationships with other believers

6. From the following list, underline the areas of your culture that you believe are most in need of Christian influence. (Answers may vary)

Moral standards	Economics and business
Marriage	Government
Family relationships	Social relationships
Religion	Education
Entertainment	Culture

7. What do you think it means to be light in the world? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. To share God's Word
   b. To do good works from pure motives
   c. To show off your righteousness
   d. To draw attention to yourself
   e. To have godly attitudes
   f. To show love for others

8. What is the source of our light?
   a. Our own goodness
   b. Other believers
   c. Our inner worth
   d. Jesus living in us

9. Read John 17:14. According to this verse, how are Jesus' disciples different from the world?
   a. They are better people.
   b. They are more talented.
   c. They have been given His Word.
   d. They are not different in any way.

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

—John 17:14

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

—John 15:16

10. Read John 15:16. According to this verse, for what purpose did Jesus choose His disciples?

a. To take care of their own business
b. To associate only with other Christians
c. To judge the world
d. To go and bear fruit

11. When the Bible says Jesus appointed His disciples to go and bear fruit, it uses a Greek word for "strategically placed." As one of His disciples, how does it make you feel that God has strategically placed you where you are? *(choose all that apply)*

comforted	frightened	humbled
purposeful	confident	grateful

In what ways is your life different from the lives of those who do not know Jesus? In which of your relationships do you most need to be salt and light?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for the opportunities He has given you to be light in the darkness. Ask Him to help you shine as brightly as you can and to bear much fruit.

Going Deeper

1. Why does Pastor Woodward say we need to be "salt" before we can be "light"? _____

2. Is your life involved with the lives of others enough to act as salt and light to them? How?

3. In what ways is your life different from those who do not know Jesus? _____

4. In which of your relationships do you most need to be salt and light in the world? _____

5. Are you a "city on a hill" where you work? In what ways might a fellow worker see you as the "salt and light" of Matthew 5? _____

6. Do you know who the other believers in your workplace are? How can you tell? _____

7. Why might your workplace be a strategic place for you to be "salt and light"? _____

The Law of God and the Lives of Men

Chapter 11
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 11

Objective: To understand Jesus' approach to the Law of God and personal righteousness. (Text: Matthew 5:17-20)

"I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

—Matthew 5:20

Many people think Jesus was contradicting the Old Testament in these verses, but He was only confronting the teaching of the religious leaders. He was telling His disciples: "Everything I am teaching you is found in the Word of God, but what I am teaching is in direct conflict with what your religious leaders have been teaching you." He then goes on in the following verses to explain the difference between the letter of the law—the teaching of the Pharisees, and the spirit of the law—the teaching of Jesus. He taught that the Law was to be internal, not merely external; that it was to be vertical (done for God) rather than only horizontal (done for others to see); that it was to be scriptural rather than traditional; and that it was to be real rather than hypocritical.

1. True or false? In order to be part of Jesus' solution, we need to know how to use the Scripture in people's lives.

2. True or false? God gave His Law and His Word because of His love for people.

3. True or false? Jesus' teaching was in extreme conflict with the law of the Old Testament.

4. True or false? Jesus taught that the spirit of the Old Testament law was deeper and more personal than the religious leaders taught.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. What does Jesus says about our righteousness in Matthew 5:20?
   a. It must exceed the righteousness of the religious leaders.
   b. It could not possibly match the righteousness of the religious leaders.
   c. It is not very important to God any more.
   d. It should not be based on the Old Testament at all.

6. Read 2 Corinthians 3:6. According to this verse, what is one of the main differences between the letter and the spirit of the Law?
   a. There is no difference; they are the same.
   b. The letter is easier to follow.
   c. The Spirit is less strict about sin.
   d. The letter kills but the Spirit gives life.

> *[He] also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*
>
> —2 Corinthians 3:6

7. Through the lens of God's love, why was the Law given?
   a. To judge and condemn sin
   b. To urge people to do better
   c. To improve the well-being of people
   d. To make religious teachers feel better about themselves

8. On the following list, underline the religious leaders' wrong approaches to the Law. Then put a check mark by Jesus' right approaches to the Law.

External	Vertical
Scriptural	Internal
Horizontal	Hypocritical
Real	Traditional

Can you see any similarities between the way you approach and apply God's Word and the way the Pharisees did? If so, what are they? What can you do to be more like Jesus?

Thank God that He teaches us righteousness because of His great love for us. Ask Him to develop internal righteousness within your heart as you learn and obey His Word.

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean to apply the law of God through the love of God? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. In what way were the Pharisees violating this principle? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Why did Jesus' teaching conflict with the Pharisees? List some differences between Jesus' teaching and that of the Pharisees. _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Define and describe what is meant by the word "righteousness" as used in Matthew 5:20.
_____
_____
_____

5. What was the difference between Jesus' concept of "righteousness" and that of the Pharisees?
_____
_____
_____

6. Is your application of the Word more like the Pharisees or like Jesus? What can you do to be more like Jesus? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. What is the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law? Why does the "letter kill but the spirit give life" (2 Corinthians 3:6)? _____
_____
_____
_____

The Law of God and Your Brother

Chapter 12
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 12

Objective: To understand how we should relate to other believers when we have the attitudes of Jesus in us. (Text: Matthew 5:21-24)

"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift."

—Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus taught that it is critical for believers to cultivate and maintain strong, loving relationships. The religious leaders in the time of Jesus taught that as long as you did not murder or injure your brother, your relationship with him was acceptable to God. But those who have Jesus' attitude of mercy are to show it; not to do so will affect our private worship. We must make sure we are not alienated from anyone who Jesus calls our "brother." Anger and feelings of disgust toward our brothers and sisters must be addressed if we want to have a relationship with them that is pleasing to God.

1. True or false? As long as our relationship with God is good, it doesn't matter whether our relationships with others are good.

2. True or false? The only thing that matters in our relationships with others is that we not do anything to hurt them. What we feel in our hearts is not important.

3. True or false? According to Jesus, any kind of alienation between brothers and sisters in Christ must be resolved if we are to relate properly to Him.

4. True or false? Whenever Jesus said "You have heard it said . . . but I say to you . . .," He was disagreeing with what the Old Testament said.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. Which situation does Matthew 5:23-24 specifically address?
   a. When we have been wronged by someone else
   b. When we have wronged someone else

6. Read Mark 11:25. Which situation does this passage specifically address?
   a. When we have been wronged by someone else
   b. When we have wronged someone else

> *"Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*
>
> —Mark 11:25

7. In Matthew 5:21-24, where is Jesus telling us to look?
   a. In
   b. Up
   c. Around
   d. Away

8. In Jesus' teaching, who does "brother" generally refer to?
   a. Our siblings
   b. Other believers
   c. People of our own race
   d. Everyone

9. Which of the following was the main point of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:21-24?
   a. We must not murder other believers.
   b. We must never get angry for any reason.
   c. The commandment to not murder does not apply to us anymore.
   d. We must learn to love other believers if we want to have a right relationship with God.

Examine your relationships. Do you have a relationship that hinders your worship? If so, what steps can you take to resolve it?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He seeks a strong, loving relationship with you and that He wants to help you have strong, loving relationships with others. Ask Him to heal any broken relationships you have with other believers and to help you forgive, ask for forgiveness, and take any other necessary steps to reconcile with them.

Going Deeper

1. Why does one's approach to scripture (or philosophy of scripture) make a difference to one's interpretation and application of scripture? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is the difference between "vertical" righteousness and "horizontal" righteousness?
_____
_____
_____

3. What does Pastor Woodward mean by "passing the Word of God through the love of God"? Why does that make a difference in the application? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Is the 6th Commandment, "Thou shalt not murder" simply about homicide? If not, what is the true content and scope of this commandment? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Would Jesus' interpretation convict you? If so, what do you need to do about it? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Give examples of the Pharisees' legalistic interpretation of scripture. _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Now give some examples of legalism from your own experience. _____
_____
_____
_____

The Law of God, Your Adversary, Women, and Your Wife

Chapter 13
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 13

Objective: To understand how Jesus wants us to relate to our adversaries, members of the opposite sex, and our spouses. (Text: Matthew 5:25–32)

"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court."
—Matthew 5:25

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
—Matthew 5:27-28

"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery."
—Matthew 5:31-32

We live in a competitive world. Sometimes our relationship with "competitors," or adversaries, becomes hostile, and they are determined to sue us or even put us in prison. Disciples who are peacemakers do not get angry or try to get even with their enemies. Instead, they determine never to be the source of conflict with adversarial people.

Jesus also taught us how to relate to the opposite sex. As with other sins, Jesus goes to the source: our hearts. If we really want to be part of the solution as salt and light, we must learn how to control our sexual desires.

Jesus' teaching on divorce is an example of how He disagreed with the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees when they quoted the Law of Moses. Divorce and separation is an epidemic in many cultures today, and Jesus taught that divorce was never God's intention for marriage.

1. True or false? Jesus expects us to always let everyone else have their way.

2. True or false? True disciples of Jesus will never have conflicts with anyone.

3. True or false? It is easier to conquer sexual sin before taking a second look, thinking impurely, and nurturing lustful thoughts.

4. True or false? The Beatitudes apply even to our relationship with our husband or wife.

5. If you have a conflict with someone and it is partly your fault but mostly theirs, what do you think Jesus would have you do? _____
_____
_____

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

6. Which beatitude applies specifically to Jesus' instruction regarding our adversaries?
   a. The second beatitude about mourning
   b. The third beatitude about meekness
   c. The fifth beatitude about mercy
   d. The seventh beatitude about peacemaking

7. What do you think Jesus means when He says to gouge out your eye or cut off your hand?
   a. Cut off temptation early.
   b. It is acceptable to look as long as you do not sin.
   c. All your desires are evil.
   d. Do violence to yourself to keep from sinning.

8. Read James 1:13-15. According to this passage, what is the beginning of sin in our lives?
   a. God tempts us
   b. Our own desires
   c. We cultivate temptation
   d. Death

9. According to James 1:13-15, what is the result of sinfulness?
   a. Discontentment
   b. Temporary satisfaction
   c. God's disapproval
   d. Death

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
—James 1:13-15

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
—Ephesians 5:31-32

10. Read Ephesians 5:31-32. According to this passage, what is marriage?
   a. A human institution
   b. Convenient and practical
   c. An illustration of Christ and the church
   d. Purely for cultural and legal reasons

What does your culture think about conflict, about lust, and about divorce? How do these cultural values differ from Jesus' teaching?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He is able to keep us from falling into sin. Ask Him to help you resist temptation in every area of life.

Going Deeper

1. What is the difference between an "enemy" and an "adversary"? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is our Christian responsibility in our relationship with our adversary? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Is thinking about adultery as bad as committing adultery? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What is the source of the sin of adultery? What should be done to combat it? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What is the spirit of the law regarding adultery? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Jesus uses a metaphor of cutting off a hand or plucking out an eye. What is really meant by this metaphor? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. What is meant by "passing the law of God through the prism of the love of God"? _____
_____
_____
_____

8. What was the difference between Jesus' teaching on divorce and that of the Pharisees? Why was it different? _____
_____
_____
_____

9. What is the law of God for populating the world with good people? _____
_____
_____
_____

10. What is necessary for this law to work? _____
_____
_____
_____

11. Why is Satan so eager to destroy this marriage bond? _____
_____
_____
_____

12. Pastor Woodward teaches that infidelity is the only scriptural reason for dissolving a marriage. Why is this so? _____
_____
_____
_____

13. Why is Genesis 2:24 the key to Jesus' command on divorce? _____
_____
_____
_____

14. What does your culture think about conflict, about lust, and about divorce? How do these cultural values differ from Jesus' teaching? _____
_____
_____
_____

The Law of God and Your Word

Chapter 14
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 14

Objective: To understand Jesus' teaching about oaths and truthfulness. (Text: Matthew 5:33-42)

"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No' be 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

—Matthew 5:37

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

—Matthew 5:38-39

The religious leaders in Jesus' day had an elaborate system in which some oaths were binding and others were not. It was an absurd, complicated system that did not honor God's command not to bear false witness. Jesus insisted that His disciples be people of the Word and people who keep their word.

The religious leaders were also teaching an Old Testament law in the wrong spirit. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was not intended to be a harsh demand for justice but rather a limit to the vengeance an offended person could take. Jesus taught instead that we should not resist an evil person by fighting back. He went beyond justice to the spirit of the Law, which is always mercy.

1. True or false? Jesus was teaching that honesty and integrity were extremely important to Him.

2. True or false? Jesus expected His disciples never to make any commitment at all, in case they weren't able to keep it.

3. True or false? The teaching of the scribes and Pharisees regarding oaths was taken from the Old Testament, but Jesus disagreed with it.

4. True or false? There is no prohibition in the Bible against misleading people by telling only part of the truth.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How would you feel if someone promised you something and then never fulfilled his promise because he didn't really mean it?

a. It would not bother me; people do that all the time.
b. It would bother me, but I understand. I do the same thing.
c. It would bother me because it is dishonest.
d. It would bother me because I knew they would do that.

6. Which of the following captures the essence of Jesus' teaching about truthfulness?

a. We should be truthful in all that we say and not intentionally mislead someone.
b. It is fine with God if we are able tell the truth and still mislead someone, as long as we have not lied.
c. It is acceptable to keep silent and not correct someone's false perception if that keeps us out of trouble.
d. We should always say exactly what we think, even if it hurts someone and no one asked our opinion.

7. How does Jesus' teaching apply to people who live in a competitive world?

a. It tells us to be just as competitive.
b. It tells us to be different by being peacemakers.
c. It tells us to seek justice and make everything perfectly fair.
d. It tells us to always let evil people have their way.

8. How do you think people would respond to disciples who take this teaching literally? *(choose all that apply)*

a. They would be amazed, maybe even converted.
b. They would laugh.
c. They would think we are not very smart.
d. They would take advantage of our generosity.
e. They would admire us, but think we are impractical.

How does your culture approach dishonesty and vengeance? Are they socially acceptable? If you lived out Jesus' teaching about integrity and mercy, how would it impact the people around you?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He is always true to His Word and that He shows us His mercy. Ask Him to help you always be true to your word and to show mercy to others.

Going Deeper

1. In what ways was Jesus' approach to the scripture different from that of the Pharisees? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. How can we be telling the truth while still breaking the commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. In what ways is the Lord asking His disciples to deny their basic instincts and be different from the people of the world? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Define the word "integrity." _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What excuses does your culture give for lack of truthfulness or integrity in politics? In business? In everyday living? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. If a person in your culture had total honesty and integrity in business, politics, teaching, or the church, what would people say or think about him/her? Would he be more or less popular and influential? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. What is Jesus' position on oaths? _____
_____
_____
_____

God-Likeness

Chapter 15
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 15

Objective: To understand how we are to treat our enemies and demonstrate the love of our Father in heaven. (Text: Matthew 5:38-48)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."

—Matthew 5:43-45

These verses are perhaps the most difficult in the teachings of Jesus to interpret and apply. They teach the highest ethic this world has ever heard. The religious leaders had been teaching that the Law says to love your neighbor (which it does) and to hate your enemy (which it does not). Jesus corrects the misunderstanding and calls for total commitment from His disciples. Loving our neighbors and even our enemies according to God's standards is impossible, except for one thing: we have Jesus living in us.

1. True or false? The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, including these difficult teachings, were given to the disciples, not the multitudes.

2. True or false? The Bible never tells us to hate our enemies.

3. True or false? Our motivation for loving people is so that we may be called sons of God.

4. True or false? Self-preservation is the supreme ethic of a disciple of Jesus.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. On what basis is a disciple—a follower of Jesus—able to give up the right of vengeance or the right to seek justice for himself?

a. Christians do not deserve any rights.
b. Christians are usually wrong and will only embarrass themselves if they argue otherwise.
c. Christians earn merit for suffering.
d. Christians willingly accept Jesus as Lord and have offered up everything to Him, so they have nothing to lose.

6. Read Luke 10:30-37. In this parable, what is remarkable about a Samaritan helping a Jew?

a. Nothing. Jews and Samaritans were always helping each other.
b. Jews and Samaritans hated each other.
c. Jews and Samaritans lived so far apart they never saw each other.
d. Jews and Samaritans were from two different cultures and could not speak the same language.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

—Luke 10:30-37

7. When Jesus tells us to love our neighbor, who do you think He means?
    a. People who live near us
    b. People who have the same skin color as us
    c. People who have the same status as us
    d. Just our friends
    e. Everyone

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

—Galatians 2:20

8. Read Galatians 2:20. According to this passage, what power is in us to help us love others, even our enemies?
    a. Just our own sinful selves
    b. Our own heart's desires
    c. God's commandments
    d. Jesus Himself

9. When Jesus says to be perfect as God is perfect, what does He mean?
    a. We can become sinless.
    b. We can become mature and complete by God's design.
    c. We can become divine, like God.

10. What did Jesus expect His disciples to do?
    a. Whatever the rest of the world does
    b. To fit in with society's standards
    c. Only what is expected of them by religious people
    d. More than what is expected of others

Do your relationships do more to reflect your culture or to reflect Christ? What in your behavior distinguishes you from the rest of the world?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for promising His Son, Jesus, to live inside of us. Ask Him to fill you with His strength, character, and love, so that you can become like your Father in heaven.

Going Deeper

1. Where in scripture is there a commandment to hate your enemy? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is the motivation for loving your enemies? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What is the meaning of "be perfect" in the context of these verses? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What is the most dynamic teaching in the New Testament? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What does your culture teach regarding those who might be called enemies? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. In what ways or circumstances do you agree with or follow your culture? In what ways do you disagree? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. When we reserve the right to vengeance on those who hurt us, rather than yielding that right to God, what do we do to ourselves? _____
_____
_____
_____

What Are You Doing More than Others?

Chapter 16
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 16

Objective: To understand what makes Christians different from everyone else. (Text: Matthew 5:43-48)

"If you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

—Matthew 5:46-48

If we follow Jesus and have His attitudes, we will be changed. We will become the salt of the earth and like lights that shine in the world. That means that we will not live the same way that others live. We will do more because we have Jesus living in our hearts. We will have a greater love than the world knows and show greater grace and mercy than the world understands. In so doing, we will become like our Father in heaven.

1. True or false? Jesus taught that His disciples must be different from the world.

2. True or false? God is satisfied if we can at least greet those who greet us.

3. True or false? As disciples, if we cannot be different from the world, we will not be very helpful to those "at the bottom of the mountain," those who are all around us.

4. True or false? Loving someone is just another way of saying we need someone.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. What kind of love does Jesus have?
   a. Conditional love
   b. Unconditional love
   c. Temporary love
   d. Weak love

6. Why does God want us to be like Him? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. So we can understand who He is and love Him.
   b. So we can be part of His solution for the world.
   c. So we can force people to do what is right.
   d. That is one way we glorify Him.
   e. So we show people how much holier we are than they are.

7. Where is God's love seen in scripture?
   a. Only in the Old Testament
   b. Only in the New Testament
   c. Only before Adam and Eve sinned and after Jesus comes again
   d. Everywhere

8. What characteristics will we have if we are like God?
   a. We will love as He loves.
   b. We will have hostility toward sinners.
   c. We will understand as much as He does.
   d. We will become as powerful as He is.

9. When did God first love us?
   a. When we repented of our sins
   b. When we chose to become part of His solution
   c. He always has loved us, even while we were still sinners.
   d. He is still waiting to see if we deserve His love.

Is there anyone you find difficult to love? If so, how can God's love for you help you love that person? What kind of love does God want you to have for people? What can you do this week to show them God's love?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for His unconditional love for you. Ask Him for opportunities and the courage to show His love to other people—and especially to those who do not expect you to treat them well.

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean to be a new creation in Christ? In what ways are both he and she different? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Describe *agape* love. How is it different from the way the people of the world typically love one another? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Looking through your relationships, how many people do you love unconditionally? How and why? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. In what ways can we be more like Jesus? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Is there anyone you find really difficult to love? Explain. _____
_____
_____
_____

6. How can we love someone who is offensive to us? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Why are our motives both difficult to know, and yet very important in our relationships? ____
_____
_____
_____

The Spiritual Discipline of Giving

Chapter 17
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 17

Objective: To understand the spiritual discipline of giving. (Text: Matthew 6:1-4)

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. . . . When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

—Matthew 6:1, 3-4

Jesus has taught His disciples to consider the blessed attitudes that must be in their hearts, and He has taught them to apply those beatitudes in their relationships. Now in Matthew chapter 6, He urges His disciples to look in another direction—toward their relationship with God. They are to live their commitment as disciples by following certain spiritual, or vertical, disciplines and values.

The first spiritual discipline Jesus requires of those who want to be one of His solutions is the discipline of stewardship. Biblical stewardship understands that all we have and are (health, abilities, property, finances, families, etc.) belong to God, and we are only managers. And the kind of stewardship that God rewards is private and devout giving. It reflects a vertical focus on God rather than a horizontal focus on impressing people. Jesus says that those who give to be seen of others have already received their reward: the praise of men. True righteousness isn't motivated by a desire to impress people, and God rewards openly what is done in secret.

1. True or false? The Pharisees actually wanted people to see how generous they were.

2. True or false? The Pharisees were a good example of what Jesus meant in chapter 5, when He said to let your light shine before men.

3. True or false? In the first part of Matthew 6, Jesus continues to teach us how to look around at other people.

4. True or false? Today, no one has the Pharisees' problem of wanting attention for their good deeds.

5. True or false? It is not enough just to have spiritual disciplines; we must also have the same values Jesus has.

6. True or false? Jesus values outer appearances more than the inner character of a person.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

7. What is the best way to demonstrate values to someone else?
   a. Keep explaining them until they understand.
   b. Punish them until they learn the lesson.
   c. Only pray and hope that God will teach them.
   d. Show them how someone with those values lives.

8. Why would Jesus tell His disciples to let their light shine before men, and then criticize the Pharisees for doing acts of righteousness to be seen? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. The Pharisees' heart motive was their own glory.
   b. Jesus was jealous of the attention the Pharisees got.
   c. The Pharisees were acting out of their own righteousness, and the disciples were to act from God's life within them.
   d. Jesus had a double standard.

9. Why did Jesus tell His disciples to give in secret? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. So their motive for giving would be pure
   b. So they wouldn't be embarrassed at how little they could give
   c. Because He didn't want their generosity to draw attention to Him
   d. So God would reward them

Have you ever given to God with a secret desire to be seen and admired by others? If so, how did you feel afterward? How can you give in secret?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He sees into our hearts, that He wants our motives to be pure, and that He rewards us for the sacrifices we make. Ask Him to help you have pure motives in all that you do.

Going Deeper

1. What does Pastor Woodward mean by "look in" and "look around"? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Describe an opportunity you have been given to share in God's work through giving. _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What are your values? How do they compare to the values of Jesus? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What does the word "confess" mean in the biblical context, such as "confess Jesus"? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Why is the motivation for our giving important to the Lord and to us? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Why should the spiritual discipline of giving be a private matter? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. How does our giving reflect both our relationship with those in need and with God? _____
_____
_____
_____

The Spiritual Discipline of Prayer and The Manner of a Disciple's Prayer

Chapter 18
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 18

Object: To understand the spiritual discipline of prayer. (Text: Matthew 6:5-15)

"When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

—Matthew 6:5-9

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray with a prayer we often call "The Lord's Prayer." But this prayer really should be called "the Disciples' Prayer" because Jesus never prayed it Himself. He said this is how we should pray. Jesus tells us to pray in a place where we can shut the door and be alone, where there is no one to impress but God.

The model prayer contains providential petitions, which are prayer requests that put God's concerns first. It also contains personal petitions, which are prayer requests about the needs of the disciple. This fits with the consistent biblical message of putting God first. When we do this, we are not coming to God with a shopping list of what He can do for us, but asking what we can do for Him. He answers our personal petitions when we have aligned our will with His.

1. True or false? When Jesus tells us to pray in secret, He means that we should never pray in a public worship service.

2. True or false? The main thing to remember in any kind of prayer is that we are talking to God and not trying to impress the people around us.

3. True or false? Addressing God as "Father" was a new and radical concept for Jesus' disciples.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

4. In the following list, underline each request that is a "God-first" providential petition. Then put a checkmark by each request that is a personal petition for the disciple's own needs.

Hallowed be your name
Give us today our daily bread
Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors
Your will be done
Deliver us from the evil one
Your kingdom come
Lead us not into temptation

5. Why is it important to understand that God is our *Father*? *(choose all that apply)*

a. It shows that He is a personal God and as his children we can talk to Him.
b. It shows that He is interested in the details of our lives.
c. It means that we do not have to approach Him through a priest.
d. Because this idea is nowhere to be found in the Old Testament.

6. What do we mean when we pray "hallowed be your name"?

a. That God's name is too holy to speak
b. That we want to live in such a way that people revere His name
c. That the key to prayer is knowing how to properly address God
d. That no one can ever really know Him

7. What do we mean when we pray "your kingdom come"?

a. We are ready for Jesus to return
b. We want God to overthrow earthly governments
c. We want to be in His kingdom and not our own

8. What does Jesus mean by "our daily bread"?

a. Bread represents all our needs
b. That we should be content just with bread, nothing more
c. Bread only as a metaphor for spiritual food

9. Why does Jesus list forgiveness first among the spiritual petitions?

a. It is our most important need.
b. His disciples were particularly guilty of sin.
c. God is reluctant to forgive and needs to be persuaded.

10. When we pray to be delivered from the evil one, what are we really asking God to do?

a. Take us out of the world.
b. Use His strength to defend us against Satan.
c. Make us immune to temptation and sin.

Do your prayers focus on God first? Which petition in the Disciples' Prayer do you pray least frequently? Spend some time focusing on that petition today.

_____

_____

_____

Pray the Disciples' Prayer today, meditating on each thought:
"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

—Matthew 6:9-13

Going Deeper

1. What is meant by the "grace of giving," and why do we need that when we practice the spiritual discipline of giving? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Why is the spiritual discipline of prayer to be practiced in private? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. Do you believe in a God who "*is*" rather than one who "*was*"? What is the difference? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What is meant by "vain repetitions"? Give an example. Why is it wrong? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What/who should be the focus in the spiritual discipline of prayer? Why? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Why is it important to understand that God is our *Father*? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. God knows our needs before we ask. How do the four personal petitions summarize our needs? _____
_____
_____
_____

8. Why is this prayer more the "Disciple's Prayer" than "the Lord's Prayer"? _____
_____
_____
_____

9. To whom should prayer be addressed? How and why is this not always the case in many prayers? _____
_____
_____
_____

10. What is the difference between multiple uses of a prayer and "vain repetition" in prayer?
_____
_____
_____

11. Briefly describe what you mean when you pray, "Hallowed be Your name," "Your will be done," "Your kingdom come." _____
_____
_____
_____

12. Record all the names of God you find in Scripture. Use a Bible Dictionary or other Bible study tools as necessary. Which of these represent God as you have experienced Him? _____
_____
_____
_____

13. What is meant by the "kingdom of God"? _____
_____
_____
_____

14. How does Pastor Woodward explain the phrase, "Lead us not into temptation"? _____
_____
_____
_____

Forgiveness and Fasting

Chapter 19
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 19

Objective: To understand the spiritual discipline of fasting. (Text: Matthew 6:14-18)

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

—Matthew 6:16-18

Like giving and praying, fasting also must be vertical, directed toward God and not to impress others. As with the other disciplines, God will reward what He sees, the motives of our heart. As giving provides an opportunity for us to measure our commitment to God, fasting gives us an opportunity to measure the degree to which we value the spiritual more than the physical aspects of our lives. It also demonstrates the sincerity of our prayers.

1. True or false? Jesus assumed that His followers would fast.

2. True or false? The Pharisees wanted people to notice their fasting because it made them look more spiritual than others.

3. True or false? Fasting helps us focus on spiritual things and God first.

4. True or false? According to Matthew 17:21, fasting can add power to prayers.

5. True or false? If anyone finds out that we are fasting, our fasting does not accomplish anything.

> *"Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*
>
> —Matthew 17:20-21

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

6. How does Jesus want our faces to appear when we fast?
   a. Sad and serious
   b. Tired and hungry
   c. More spiritual than everyone else's
   d. Radiant and joyful

7. Why do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to fast?
   a. To earn God's favor and make Him listen
   b. To demonstrate how self-disciplined they were
   c. To focus their attention on God and not their own desires
   d. For the health benefits

8. Which part of us is eternal?
   a. Our physical body
   b. Our mind
   c. Our spirit
   d. None

Have you ever fasted privately, as a vertical expression of faith in God? How has your attitude in prayer been affected by your fasting? If you have not, plan now how you can begin to practice the discipline of fasting.

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that even though your body may get sick and will die, your spirit will last forever. Ask Him to lead you into a fast as He desires. Ask God to help you learn the discipline of fasting.

Going Deeper

1. Does our forgiveness depend on our forgiving others? Why or why not? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Why does Jesus instruct us to forgive those who trespass against us? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What is the application of the parable of the servant who was forgiven but would not forgive?
_____
_____
_____

4. According to Pastor Woodward, what is the value or importance of fasting? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. When we fast, why should we keep that to ourselves? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Have you ever fasted privately as a vertical expression of faith in God? Describe how it affected the way you think about God. _____
_____
_____
_____

7. How has your attitude in prayer been affected by your fasting? _____
_____
_____
_____

Spiritual Values

Chapter 20
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 20

Objective: To understand the values that a disciple of Jesus should have. (Text: Matthew 6:19-34)

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

—Matthew 6:19-21

One of the reasons people have so many problems is that they do not have the right values. Disciples who have the right attitudes within them are living with the right values. That is why they can have a salt and light influence in the world; their priorities are based on eternity and not on earthly treasures.

The way we deal with money and possessions reveals a lot about our values. Our heart is always with what we truly treasure. Do we spend ourselves for temporal or eternal treasures? According to Jesus, we can know what our values are by what we do with our time, what we think about, what anxieties and ambitions we have, and what we serve. It is possible to serve only one master, so we cannot serve both God and money. But if we serve God wholeheartedly, we can find a life of joy and peace.

1. True or false? There is no connection between what we treasure and the condition of our hearts.

2. True or false? Our values and our attitudes will reflect whether we are filled with light or with darkness.

3. True or false? When Jesus spoke of our "treasure," He was speaking only of money, not time, talents, or other resources.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

4. Why did Jesus say disciples should not spend their energy on earthly treasures?
   a. Things on earth are not important.
   b. Earthly treasures will always eventually depreciate or be stolen.
   c. Wealth is sinful.
   d. Only the poor can be saved.

5. What does the "eye" often represent in scripture?
   a. Our mind
   b. Our work
   c. Our intuition
   d. God's Word

6. When Jesus said a disciple cannot serve two masters, which master beside God did He mention?
   a. Status
   b. Money
   c. Work
   d. Family

7. Which items on the following list distract you from serving Jesus? *(choose all that apply)*

Anxieties	Education
Plans for the future	Status
Work activities	Relationships with friends
Family relationships	Ambitions
Possessions	Addictions

From the above list, can you identify any attitude or activity that Jesus, as your Master, forbids for your benefit? What should you do if one of these begins to distract you from your relationship with God?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for teaching us about values and for calling us to love and serve Him above all else. Ask Him if He wants you to rearrange your priorities and then obey Him however He leads you to do so.

Going Deeper

1. "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* Look at your checkbook or credit card statements and answer the question, "According to where my treasure is, where is my heart?" _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What we do with our money and our life show our "philosophy of life," or "world view." Are you trying to lead a Christian lifestyle with a secular world view? Explain. _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What is meant by an eye full of light or an eye filled with darkness? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. As you examine your values, concerns and priorities, what areas conflict with Matthew 6:33?
_____
_____
_____

5. Why is the Lord displeased with "mister in-between," those who are neither "hot nor cold"?
_____
_____
_____

6. Do you have a plan to become single-minded and let your Christian lifestyle be based on a biblical world view? If so, how? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. What are your attitudes? What are your values? How do they align with those of Jesus that we see in the Sermon on the Mount? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Kingdom Values

Chapter 21
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 21

Objective: To understand our worries, our priorities, and God's promise to take care of us. (Text: Matthew 6:25-34)

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? . . . But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

—Matthew 6:25, 33-34

This passage addresses anxiety, but at its core it is really teaching about values, or priorities. When we worry, we are showing what we value and how much we trust God to care for us. Every disciple of Jesus should have a "priority target," with a black circle in the center representing the rule of God over their hearts. Everything outside that center should be prioritized by the King of kings as He shows us what is right. Whatever we are tempted to worry about will be provided by our heavenly Father.

Jesus tells us that we should seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness above all else. That is what should occupy our minds. God will take care of our needs; our responsibility is to follow Him as Lord and to seek His kingdom. When He is our true priority, other values will hold the proper place in our hearts.

1. True or false? Jesus tells us not to worry about things we cannot control.

2. True or false? Jesus promises that we can be as worry-free as the birds and the grass.

3. True or false? God does not know what we need until we tell Him.

4. True or false? God does not give us what we need until we earn it.

5. True or false? Jesus taught that we should never prepare for tomorrow.

6. On the following list, underline the things you tend to worry about most. Then put a check mark by those that are included in God's promises.

Food	Clothing
Money	Shelter
Drink	Job
Relationships	Children
Husband/wife	Future plans

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

7. What is accomplished by worrying about things we cannot control?
   a. God will not be concerned about our needs if we show that we are not concerned about them.
   b. Worry is just another form of prayer that God answers.
   c. Worry has the mystical power to change our circumstances.
   d. Nothing is accomplished by our worrying.

8. In what ways can we be "spiritually" clothed? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. With the latest fashions
   b. With the righteousness of Christ
   c. With the fruit of the Spirit
   d. With the robes of a monk or priest
   e. With good works

9. What should we invest our lives in?
   a. Material possessions that can be destroyed or stolen
   b. Eternal treasures that cannot be taken away
   c. A lifestyle of comfort and happiness
   d. World peace

Have you given your life, without reservation, completely to seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness? If not, what prevents you from doing so?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for His promise that we do not have to worry about our needs. Ask Him to help you be at peace in His promise and to help you seek His kingdom above all else.

Going Deeper

1. Describe events in your life that proved to you that Matthew 6:33 is true. _____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is your experience of having your needs filled? How are you able to differentiate between your needs and your wants, your timing and the Lord's timing? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. How can we discern the difference between those things we should be concerned about and those we should not worry about? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Does worry say anything about the areas where you trust God and those where you do not? What do you worry about? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Who or what do you seek or serve daily? Do you have a life purpose? What does this say about your value system? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Do you often have a problem sorting out your priorities? What system do you use to sort out your priorities? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Have you entered a relationship with God in which He is King? Have you entered into the Kingdom of God? Explain. _____
_____
_____
_____

8. What are the evidences of the "new birth" in your life? _____
_____
_____
_____

9. Describe what it means to have happiness that does not depend on circumstances. _____
_____
_____
_____

10. Explain how values are "caught by example." _____
_____
_____
_____

11. What are the values of a person who truly looks upward? See especially Matthew 6:33. ____
_____
_____
_____

The ‘Me-First’ Club

Chapter 22
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 22

Objective: To commit to the teachings of Jesus in practice, and to understand the difference between those who are true disciples and those who are not. (Text: Matthew 6:19-34; 7:1-6)

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
—Matthew 7:1-2

Jesus taught His disciples to look inward and realize that His eight beatitudes would make them the salt and light the world needs. He also taught them to look around, apply those blessed attitudes to their relationships, and then to look upward and receive from God the spiritual disciplines and values they needed to continue being fruitful disciples.

The last part of the Sermon on the Mount is a challenge: “What are you going to do about what you know?” Jesus always emphasized practical application; what the disciple really believes, the disciple does. So He begins chapter 7 with three exhortations to make His sermon a practical reality in their lives.

Disciples of Jesus should never be hypercritical. Our tendency is to focus on the problems of other people rather than our own issues. Jesus asks two profound questions: “Why are you doing this?” and, “How can you possibly be successful?” The thrust of this teaching is that disciples of Jesus must deal with their personal problems before they can help others with theirs.

1. True or false? In order for us to share the values of the kingdom with the world, we must have them ourselves.

2. True or false? All of the questions Jesus asked in the Sermon on the Mount were directed at his critics and opponents.

3. True or false? When Jesus said not to judge, He was really saying that we should never have an opinion about other people.

4. True or false? In this passage, Jesus was really saying that we should have a "me first" approach to personal problems.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. Which of the following is *not* one of the questions Jesus asked His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount?

a. What are your attitudes?
b. What are your anxieties?
c. How religious and holy are you?
d. Where is your heart?

6. How are values best communicated from one person to another?

a. By lecturing
b. By forcing people to obey
c. By observation
d. By reading about them

7. What should we do first if we notice someone else living the wrong way or having the wrong attitudes?

a. Look inward at ourselves
b. Tell the person to stop sinning
c. Tell other people how bad that person is
d. Ignore the problem completely

8. What does Jesus say about people who judge others while ignoring their own problems?

a. They are understandably doing what is natural.
b. They are hypocrites.
c. They truly understand the Law.
d. They have already become good enough to judge others.

9. When Jesus tells us not to cast our pearls before swine, what does He really mean?

a. Sharing the good news with sinners is a waste of time.
b. Some people are not good enough to be saved.
c. The blessed attitudes are a holy secret, not to be disclosed to everyone.
d. We are to have discernment when dealing with enemies and uninterested hearers.

In what ways are you most likely to judge other people? What issues in your own life do you think God wants you to deal with first?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God that He looks at us with mercy and offers us forgiveness. Ask Him to give you the same attitude toward other people that He has toward you.

Going Deeper

1. Why must one be born again to understand the spiritual message Jesus gave Nicodemus in John chapter 3? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Have you encountered God in a way that made you realize that He is God and He is King? If so, what difference did it make? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. In what ways are you most likely to judge people? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What issues in your own life do you think God wants you to deal with first? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. When Jesus tells us not to cast our pearls before the swine, what does He really mean? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Discuss the biblical definition of the word "confession." _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Describe a time when you have ever cast your pearls before the swine. _____
_____
_____
_____

8. Why do we have to "look in" before we can be of help to others? _____
_____
_____
_____

The Coming and Going of the Disciples

Chapter 23
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 23

Objective: To understand Jesus' invitation to be persistent in prayer and to learn the Golden Rule, which sums up all of the Bible's ethical teaching. (Text: Matthew 7:7-12)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

—Matthew 7:7-12

Jesus told His followers to make a commitment to "look up." That is how we receive the spiritual disciplines and values that come from God. Jesus used continuous verbs for "asking, seeking, and knocking" in order to challenge His disciples to look up continuously and with perseverance. Seeking is repeated and intense asking, and knocking is repeated and intense seeking. Jesus was calling His disciples to be people who are passionate for God. He promised that everyone who asks, seeks, and knocks in this way will be answered. Then Jesus summed up His ethical teaching with one sentence: "Do to others what you would have them do to you." This is known as the Golden Rule.

1. True or false? Jesus taught that we should only ask God for something once. If we continue to ask, we are showing a lack of faith.

2. True or false? The promise that those who seek will find applies not only to the prayer for salvation but to spiritual gifts, disciplines, values, and all good gifts God chooses to give.

3. True or false? According to Jesus, what many call the Golden Rule is what the Law is all about.

4. True or false? The Golden Rule only applies to certain people at certain times; otherwise some people might take advantage of our kindness.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. For whom is the promise of asking and receiving intended?
   a. Only Jesus' disciples
   b. Only the people in the crowd who heard Jesus that day
   c. Everyone!

6. Why do you think many people do not accept this invitation to ask persistently for God's good gifts? *(choose all that apply)*
   a. They think this promise is too good to be true.
   b. They lose faith after asking once or twice.
   c. They do not think this promise applies to them.
   d. They do not know this promise is in the Bible.
   e. They do not understand what the promise means.
   f. They do not believe God cares personally about them.

7. Which of the following is a primary purpose of the church?
   a. To be an exclusive community of select members
   b. To keep people busy with meetings
   c. To be a missionary organization for the world
   d. To provide a social network for Christians

8. To whom should you apply the Golden Rule? *(choose all that apply)*

Husbands/wives	Children
Friends	Co-workers
Teachers	Students
People of other races	People of other status
Enemies	Brothers and sisters
Other Christians	People who don't know Jesus

What things or opportunities have you been seeking the Lord for? How long do you think He wants you to keep asking? What is His promise for those who keep asking, seeking, and knocking?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for His promise to answer our prayers according to His wisdom and love. Ask Him to help you live according to the Golden Rule —doing to others what you want them to do to you—and to show you opportunities to do so.

Going Deeper

1. For what things or opportunities have you been seeking the Lord? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Why does the Lord want us to be continuous and persistent in our search for Jesus and His blessings? Describe a parable of Jesus that illustrates this principle. _____
_____
_____
_____

3. In what situations does the Golden Rule apply where you work? In your home? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. What is the hard part of the Golden Rule? Why? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Have you made the commitment to "look in, to look up, and to look around," as Pastor Woodward puts it? How do you intend to do that? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. Why is going for the Lord fruitless if one has not yet come to the Lord? _____
_____
_____
_____

7. Describe how the church is a missionary organization. _____
_____
_____
_____

Deciding for Jesus

Chapter 24
Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 24

Objective: To understand the great invitation that Jesus gives to anyone who would follow Him. (Text: Matthew 7:13-27)

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

—Matthew 7:13-14

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

—Matthew 7:21

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

—Matthew 7:24

Having given three calls for commitment, which ended with the Golden Rule, Jesus now gives a hard invitation. This is a challenging call to become committed disciples, solutions and answers and to reach the world for Him. It is a pointed challenge that asks, "Are you going to be part of the problem or part of the solution?"

The first part of this passage asks, "What kind of disciple are you?" There are two possible answers: one of the many, or one of the few. The many merely profess to be salt and light, but they are not. They think there is an easy way to be part of the solution. The few, on the other hand, know there is no easy way. They know the gate is small and the road that follows that gate is narrow, difficult, and disciplined.

The next part of this passage asks, "Are you a true disciple or a false disciple?" In a later parable, Jesus teaches that even His true disciples will not be able to tell the difference at first. Only by examining the fruit, over a period of time, are the differences between the true and false visible.

The third part of this passage asks, "Are you a disciple who only says, or who actually does, the will of the Father?" Doing many wonderful works is not evidence of a true relationship with Jesus. His response to those whose discipleship consists only of words is this: "Depart from me, worker of iniquity."

Jesus was not idealistic or pessimistic. He was a realist. He taught that life has storms, and no one is immune. Those who build their lives on His teaching will survive, and those who do not will not. His great sermon ends with a challenge: "What kind of disciple are you?" Your answer determines whether or not you will survive the storms.

1. True or false? Being salt and light in the world is easy.

2. True or false? Those who believe the right things, say the right things, and call Jesus "Lord" are truly His disciples.

3. True or false? Hearing Jesus' words and doing them are not the same thing.

4. True or false? Jesus taught His disciples that whoever obeys Him will not have to go through storms.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. According to Jesus, what is the best way to recognize false prophets?
   a. By their fruit
   b. By their appearance
   c. By their words
   d. By the way they isolate themselves from true believers

6. What does Jesus say to those who call Him "Lord" but do not truly believe and obey Him?
   a. "You did your best."
   b. "Depart from me."
   c. "Keep trying."
   d. "Calling me 'Lord' is enough."

7. What is the key to surviving the storms?
    a. Believing in Jesus
    b. Calling Jesus "Lord"
    c. Doing what Jesus says
    d. Being amazed by Jesus' teaching

How do you know if you are a true disciple of Jesus? If you have noticed any hypocrisy in your relationship with Jesus, what can you do to root it out?

_____

_____

_____

Thank God for all of His life-giving words to you. Ask Him to help you know Him more deeply, to help you be a committed follower of Jesus, and to use you as part of His solution for the world.

Going Deeper

1. Is there a gap between what you say and what you do? How can you close that gap? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Do you know if you are a true disciple of Jesus? Are you part of the problem, or part of the solution? What kind of solution are you? _____
_____
_____
_____

3. What is the Lord doing through you to help others? _____
_____
_____
_____

4. Describe a situation where you had a clear choice between the "wide" and "narrow" gates.
_____
_____
_____

5. Is evangelism more a matter of talking or doing? Why? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. What spiritual disciplines are you using to get to know Jesus more intimately? Explain. ____
_____
_____
_____

7. Which is more important to our eternal destiny, many wonderful works or knowing Jesus? Why? _____
_____
_____
_____

Sermon on the Mount Self-Evaluation **Grade yourself 1 – 5 (Circle one)**

Matthew Chapter 5

1. I realize that I need God in my life. V3	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am remorseful when I do the wrong thing. V4	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am gentle and humble. V5	1	2	3	4	5
4. I strive to do the right thing. V6	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am merciful. V7	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have pure motives. V8	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am a peacemaker. V9	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am living for God and His Kingdom. V10	1	2	3	4	5
9. Everyone knows I am Jesus' follower. V 11	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have done good deeds lately. V 16	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am doing my best to know and obey God's Word. V 19	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am teaching others God's Word. V 19	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am currently angry with someone. V 22	1	2	3	4	5
14. I treat everyone like they are made in God's image. V 23	1	2	3	4	5
15. Someone has something against me. V 23	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have a problem with lust. V 28	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am attracted to a person who is not my spouse. V 28	1	2	3	4	5
18. I avoid people, places and things that tempt me to sin. V 30	1	2	3	4	5
19. I think about divorce while neglecting my spouse. V 32	1	2	3	4	5
20. I honor my commitments and do what I say I will. V 37	1	2	3	4	5
21. I take revenge on those who wrong me. V 39	1	2	3	4	5
22. I am quick to forgive. V 39	1	2	3	4	5
23. I am a generous person. V 42	1	2	3	4	5

24. I pray for people I don't like and who are against me. V 44	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am kind and loving to those who are not my friends. V 47	1	2	3	4	5

Matthew Chapter 6

26. I am doing good deeds to please God rather than people. V 1	1	2	3	4	5
27. I am spending time alone with God in two-way prayer. V 6	1	2	3	4	5
28. I need to forgive someone. V 14	1	2	3	4	5
29. I fast secretly before the Lord. V 16	1	2	3	4	5
30. My treasure is stored in Heaven. V21	1	2	3	4	5
31. I try to serve both God and money. V 24	1	2	3	4	5
32. I trust God to provide for my physical needs. V 25	1	2	3	4	5
33. I worry about what may happen tomorrow/in the future. V 34	1	2	3	4	5

Matthew Chapter 7

34. I am judgmental towards others. V 1	1	2	3	4	5
35. I give my pearls to swine. V 6	1	2	3	4	5
36. When I pray I seek, ask, and knock. V 7	1	2	3	4	5
37. I treat others the way I would like to be treated. V 12	1	2	3	4	5
38. When I make decisions I choose the gateway to life. V 14	1	2	3	4	5
39. Others can tell I am a Christian by my behavior. V 16	1	2	3	4	5
40. I listen for and obey God when He speaks into my life. V 21	1	2	3	4	5
41. I am building my life on the Rock and not on sand. V 24	1	2	3	4	5

In conclusion, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, briefly describe any commitments you believe God is leading you to make:

Toward God:

_____
_____
_____
_____

In your relationships with family, friends, and others:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Toward other disciples (the church):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Toward enemies and those who do not know the Good News:

_____
_____
_____
_____