

DISCIPLE-MAKING CIRCLES

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# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT



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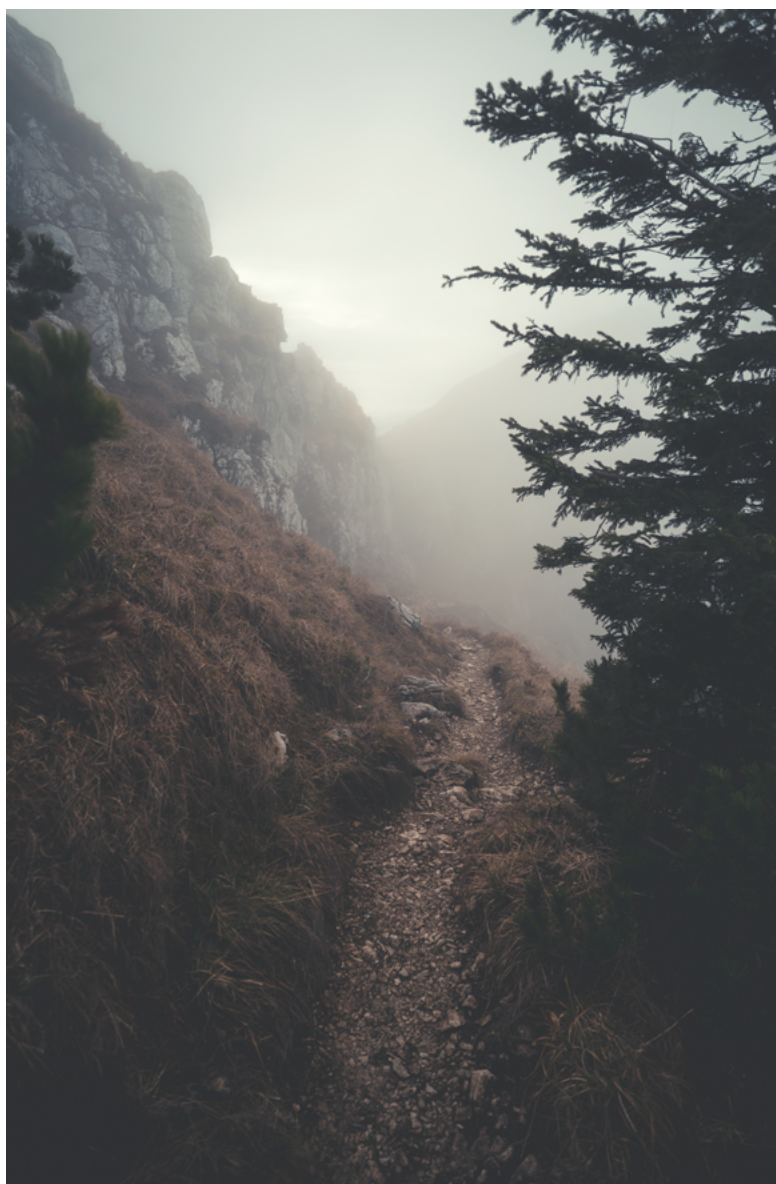
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## Jesus' Invitation to Discipleship

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Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden,  
And I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me,  
For I am gentle and lowly in heart,  
And you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

— Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30

Consider these twenty-eight weeks an invitation. Not to merely learn about Jesus but to learn from Jesus. Jesus invites the fatigued and overwhelmed, the wearied and the worried to come to him. All of them. Jesus knows the struggle that life is for most people. All who come to Jesus belong to Jesus. All who come to Jesus find rest in him. Consider these words from a great modern commentator on Matthew, Frederick Dale Bruner:

*Jesus realizes that the most restful gift he can give the tired is a new way to carry life, a fresh way to bear responsibilities...Jesus means that obedience to his Sermon on the Mount (his yoke) will develop in us a balance and a “way” of carrying life that will give more rest than the way we have been living...But while a yoke is a work instrument and is best equated in context with Jesus’ teachings, particularly with his Sermon on the Mount, the phrase that immediately follows the yoking is a phrase that brings us into an even more personal relation with Jesus: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me....” Jesus says, “learn from me,” not just “learn about me.” It means that with the second phrase, “learn from me,” Jesus is repeating his first phrase, “take on my yoke [of teaching],” and adds a more personal sense to it: “I myself will teach you with my teaching and my doing.” ...A yoke is not a sitting instrument; it is a walking instrument. Jesus does not say, “Take my chair and learn from me”; he says, “Take my yoke and learn from me,” which means that as we seek to live in obedience to Jesus we learn from Jesus along the way... We all know from experience, a teacher’s manner is nine-tenths of the teacher’s impact. Jesus apparently believes that his manner is one reason why studying with him will bring students refreshment. His (gentleness) means that he will be patient with slow students and thoughtful in correction...After a while, as we listen to Jesus and seek to obey his teachings in life, we find that his lessons are a better way to live, his gentleness is relaxing, and his focus is refreshing. We find that deep down in our souls - in our psyches (the actual word used here) - we feel refreshed and renewed...We remember that commonly a yoke was a wooden instrument that yoked two oxen together and made of them a team. In this word Jesus may be saying: “Become my yoke mate, and learn how to pull the load by working beside me and watching how I do it.” Jesus’ simply being there, carrying most of the yoke’s load, helps the disciple who is carrying the rest!...All high-quality experiences are both difficult and delightful. In a sense, it is precisely the difficulty of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that makes Christian discipleship exciting...It is surely the personal presence of Jesus himself with disciples that takes the onus out of the rigor. The simple secret of the church is the risen Lord Jesus Christ, whose companionship we experience in his Spirit, Word, sacraments, and people.*

Work through these twenty-eight weeks as one who belongs to Jesus and gets to be with Jesus in order to become like Jesus together with your Circle.

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## Jesus' Challenge to Discipleship

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Jesus' challenge to discipleship is: Follow me into loving God with all of yourself, loving your neighbor as yourself, and making disciples by giving yourself. This is the sum of the whole Bible. There is nothing more important than these. Let's look at them in turn.

### I. LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL OF YOURSELF.

Loving God orders and integrates us from the inside out. Because the Lord is one, we can be unified, made whole, integrated as He is one. What does all of yourself entail? You are a whole person made up of heart, soul, mind, and strength. Your heart is the seat of the self. It is the executive center, the source of your will. Your heart is where the "I" resides. It is the integration point for your whole life. "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov 4:23). Your soul is your life-source. The soul is "all that is within me" (Psalm 103:1). The soul is the entire inner person. The body is the outer person. They are two perspectives on the same whole, meant to be integrated by the heart. Your mind flows from your heart. Your mind thinks, plans, imagines, hypothesizes, dreams, focuses attention, and many more functions. As D.A. Carson states: "You're not what you think you are. But what you think, you are." Your strength is your influence on the world around you. The first three aspects (heart, soul, mind) are internal, whereas your strength is how you affect change on the world around you. All four aspects of your whole person are to be bound together by the love of God.

### II. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.

The commandment to love God must come first. Only an all-consuming passion for God will sustain an all-encompassing compassion for neighbors. But the commandment to love your neighbor must come second. John warns: "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). Maybe the most significant indicator that you truly love your God is that you duly love your neighbor. Who is my neighbor? Your neighbor is anyone near with need. It starts with your family, your brothers and sisters in the church, and moves out in concentric circles to the people in proximity to you everywhere you live, work, learn, and play. This love does not stop even with your enemies (Matt 5:43-48). In fact, this is Jesus' measure of maturity (Matt 5:48). Is this a command for self-love? No. Jesus assumes self-love and harnesses it for your neighbor: "Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them" (Matt 7:12, MSG).

### III. MAKE DISCIPLES BY GIVING YOURSELF.

Jesus' last command should be our first priority. Between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus gathered his band of disciples to himself and directed them to make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching them. We go to the nations to love them there as our neighbors. We baptize them by immersing them into their new trinitarian identity. We teach them to obey all of Jesus' commands (i.e. summed up as double love) in all of life. The soil from which this mission grows is the everywhere-authoritative and always-present Jesus.

We are called to be and build disciples. We do this by inviting others to follow me as I follow Jesus. This is not about perfection but direction (or else we'd all be disqualified). Where are you heading? What is the trajectory of your life? Is it aimed at Jesus? Then invite others to imitate you along the way. This is how you give yourself away. Imagine that you only have three years left to live. How would you invest your life to leave a legacy after you left? This was Jesus' scenario and he made his highest priority selecting, discipling, and empowering a few others to carry on the mission long after him. Let's do the same.

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## Disciple-Making Circle Commitment

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In order to be formed into a whole-life disciple, I commit together with this Disciple-Making Circle (DMC) and with God's help to the following:

- To attend all DMC meetings, unless providentially hindered. If I am unable to attend, I will contact my DMC leader as soon as possible, and take responsibility to keep current with my DMC. As much as my schedule lies within my control, I will arrange work and other commitments so as not to conflict with my DMC. I will not make it a habit to miss meetings.
- To be prompt in attendance. I understand that this DMC will meet weekly for 90 minutes on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) from \_\_\_\_\_ (start time) until \_\_\_\_\_ (end time). We will take breaks for holidays and other occasions as we agree together.
- To journal through the guide to the best of my ability. I understand that this will usually require about one hour per week.
- To prioritize monthly meetings with my DMC leader for a life-on-life relationship.
- To sincerely endeavor to memorize the Sermon on the Mount, recognizing that it will be a challenge yet possible. I understand that I will receive help and support from this guide as well as from my DMC.
- To earnestly practice the Common Rhythm — utilizing my calendar, my community, and coaching from my DMC. I will seek to show courage through failure and keep love as the source and measure of my practice so that I am truly formed to love God and neighbor.
- To pray regularly for not-yet-disciples within my circle of influence and to seek opportunities to bear witness to Jesus through prayer, word, and deed.
- To participate in DMC discussion and activities. I will be ready and willing to give an account of God's work in and through my life on a weekly basis. I will curiously ask and humbly listen for God's work in and through the other members of my DMC. I will seek to be open and honest about the true state of my heart.
- To protect the confidentiality of my DMC. I pledge to keep whatever is shared in this DMC confidential, as far as prudence permits, so as to intentionally create an ongoing environment of trust, openness, honesty, and safety.
- I understand that the duration of this DMC is for nine months, after which I will enter into a process with my DMC leader to discern my next steps. I realize that it is the hopeful expectation that I will be a disciple who makes disciples by leading a Disciple-Making Circle myself.

If you agree to the above, your word is your bond.

Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'. — Jesus (Matt 5:37)

### WHY DISCIPLE-MAKING CIRCLES?

Jesus' call to discipleship is, "Follow me into loving God with all of yourself, loving your neighbor as yourself, and making disciples by giving yourself" (Mark 12:29-31; Matt 22:36-40; Luke 10:25-37; Matt 28:18-20). There is nothing more important than this. A disciple is someone who belongs to Jesus to be with Jesus to become like Jesus in all of life. A Disciple-Making Circle (DMC) is a place to center and shape your life around the love of God and neighbor, then give it away to others.

### WHAT IS A DISCIPLE-MAKING CIRCLE?

A DMC is a relational environment of 3-6 men or women that lean on each other as they learn to be and build disciples over the course of nine months. It is a place for you to practice the way of Jesus and process your way of life in the context of close community. It's a place where you make, mature, and multiply disciples of Jesus.

### HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN A DISCIPLE-MAKING CIRCLE?

Let's get into the details. The distinctives of DMCs are Modeling, Memorization, Mission, and Multiplication. Modeling is an invitation into a life-on-life relationship where someone says, "Follow me as I follow Jesus" (1 Cor 11:1). Memorization is a commitment to the mind-renewing practice of learning Scripture by heart together (John 15:7). Mission is following Jesus on mission by taking prayerful steps towards three not-yet-disciples in your circle of influence (John 20:21, Matt 4:19). Multiplication is a willingness to become a disciple who makes disciples by leading others in a disciple-making circle (2 Tim 2:1-2). All four of these distinctives matter and must be maintained. If there were a fifth "M" it would be the meaningful community that develops among your DMC as you live out the other distinctives together.

DMC leaders will maintain the priority of these distinctives. They don't have it all together but leaders say, "Let's." Let's meet there and then. Let's memorize together. Let's grab lunch. Let's pray together. Et cetera. Leaders are learning to give their life away to you as they say, "Follow me as I follow Jesus." They will go first in many ways. Leaders will prioritize monthly one-on-one meetings with you but you should also attempt to spend time with others members in your DMC. The organized weekly meeting matters, but so does organic contact outside of the meeting.

### EACH WEEK

- MEMORIZE the select verses from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).
- PREPARE to share your story using Appendix B: How to Share Your Story.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to relevant resources based on the text and topic of the week.
- JOIN with Jesus and one another on mission through the OUT exercises.

### EACH MEETING

- Begin each meeting by reciting the scripture memorized for that week. Memorizing scripture is a significant challenge yet a high calling. But maintain that challenge here. It's worth it!
- The first several weeks spend 20-30 minutes having one person share their story, listening intently, asking good questions, and praying for them. Use the format in Appendix B. Leaders go first to model how to do it for others.
- Spend the bulk of your time discussing your reflections from journaling through the guide. This is meant to be like sitting around a campfire together. The guide is not the main thing. The community and conversation created by the guide is the main thing. Everyone must come prepared, ready to throw their log on the fire. Everyone's participation matters.

## JOURNALING THROUGH THE GUIDE

Each week is structured around UP, IN, and OUT. This is a holistic framework that accounts for our relationship with God, ourselves, and the world.

### **UP: Listen to the Father's voice in scripture.**

A key principle of studying the Bible is to compare scripture with scripture. This is because the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. This section is meant to help us understand the details of the text in the context of the rest of scripture. Understanding aids meditation, memorization, and participation in the text.

### **IN: Open to the Spirit's work in our heart, soul, mind, and strength.**

This section prompts us to work the details of the text into the details of our lives. It is meant to lead to self-examination but not condemnation. The hope is to open ourselves up to the Spirit's work, whatever that may be. Yet we do this, not alone, but together within this community of prayerful love.

### **OUT: Follow Jesus toward loving our neighbors.**

To follow Jesus is to join him on mission. The missiologist Lesslie Newbigin said, "The deepest motive for mission is simply the desire to be with Jesus where he is, on the frontier between the reign of God and the usurped dominion of the devil." This section calls us out of our comfort zones and into mission - places where we are out of our depth and aware of our desperation for God to show up.

### **PRAY**

We pray because all of us need all of Jesus for all of life. We pray because "to clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world" (Karl Barth). We pray because "the prayers of God's people are the footsteps of God's mercies coming" (Charles Spurgeon). Each week begins with the word of God to us and ends with our answer back to him. This develops in us this dialogue with God that Jesus calls eternal life (John 17:3).

### **MULTIPLY**

DMC is not done when you finish this guide in nine months. That's the halfway point. DMC is done when you repeat this process with a few more. Multiplication is a mark of maturity, as an organism and as a disciple. It is the hopeful expectation that you will be a disciple who makes disciples by leading a Disciple-Making Circle yourself. Your current DMC leader will coach you through this process, as they were coached by their leader.

### **WHAT YOU NEED**

1. This guide: Disciple-Making Circles: The Sermon on the Mount
2. A Bible.
3. A journal to record your responses.
4. One of these commentaries on the Sermon on the Mount (recommended):
  - a. [The Message of the Sermon on the Mount](#) by John Stott
  - b. [Studies in the Sermon on the Mount](#) by Martyn Lloyd-Jones (free audio)
  - c. [Studies in the Sermon on the Mount](#) by Martyn Lloyd-Jones
  - d. [The Cost of Discipleship](#) by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
  - e. [The Divine Conspiracy](#) by Dallas Willard
5. The [Dwell Bible](#) app to repeatedly listen to the Sermon on the Mount (recommended)
6. The [Bible Memory](#) app for reviewing (recommended).

### **Sources (Giving credit where credit is due):**

The church has a treasure trove of excellent commentaries on the Sermon on the Mount. Some of the most influential in this guide were: John Stott, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jonathan T. Pennington, Frederick Dale Bruner, Dallas Willard, Glen Stassen, and Scot McKnight. We learned a lot from Randy Pope's curriculum: The Journey. Many of the discussion questions came from John Stott's Sermon on the Mount (LifeGuide Bible Studies) and William Klein's Become What You Are: Spiritual Formation According to the Sermon on the Mount.



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## Why and How to Memorize Scripture

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Learning Scripture by heart is essential for renewing your mind (Rom. 12:1-2). It is how we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16). Jesus said that if his words abide in us we can expect fruitful lives full of answered prayer (John 15:1-11). Speaking about the benefits of memorizing, Yale professor Harold Bloom said, “We live in an age of distraction...dominated by bombardment coming from the screen...The process of making (a text) your own, can be a refuge from that bombardment.” Scripture memorization shapes the mind with the vocabulary, images, and words within which the spiritual life can flourish. This holy habit requires the effort of repetition and concentration. But with that rigor comes great reward. As with much of life, with the measure you use it will be measured to you (Matt 7:2).

Over the next twenty-eight weeks, you are going to learn the Sermon on the Mount (111 verses) by heart. The pace will be about 4 verses per week or 16 verses per month. Here are some helps to develop this holy habit:

- **GET VISION:** Imagine yourself 9 months from now steeped in the Sermon on the Mount. Consider the way Jesus’ magnum opus will influence your spiritual and moral imagination over these months.
- **LEARN IT BY HEART:** Meditation is the means. Prayer is the process. Don’t get bogged down in the rote-ness of the memorization process. This requires a key mindset shift. As you’re rehearsing the words for the dozenth time, let them roll through your lips as prayer.
- **BECOME OBSESSIVE:** Give yourself completely to this project, you won’t regret it. You will regret giving up.
- **DO IT DAILY:** When in your day will you rehearse and recite Scripture?
- **DO IT FIRST:** Prioritize memory work over any other reading.
- **HABIT-STACK YOUR ROUTINE:** Review while running, driving, cleaning, showering, or almost anything else.
- **DO IT IN COMMUNITY:** Develop a text thread with your Circle to share thoughts, reflections, and insights.
- **DO IT WITH FAMILY:** Kids memorize with parents. Enlist your roommates to join you.
- **FOREST AND TREES:** Seeing the shape of the whole aids memory (Appendix A: The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount), but the details matter. The Spirit doesn’t waste his breath.
- **USE TOOLS:** The [Bible Memory](#) app and the [Dwell Scripture Listening](#) app are both indispensable.

## ONE METHOD

- Print out the entire month's text on a slip of paper that you can mark up and keep in your journal or pocket.
- Over the month, read the text aloud 20-30 times with gusto and verve (3-5 times per day).
- Mark the text with insights and questions, connections between ideas, and repetition of words or themes. Jot some thoughts in the margins as you meditate on the text.
- Once you've read it aloud about 10 times, read your first commentary. This is a huge aid to memorization because it draws your attention to things that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. It also helps you see the structure of the text, a huge aid to memory.
- Use the [Bible Memory](#) app to make sure you have it word for word and for regular, repeated review.
- Use the [Dwell Scripture Listening](#) app by putting the text on repeat while you go about daily life.

*"The Sermon on the Mount comes from a time and culture that concentrated on the ear more than the eye. The Sermon...is designed as an aural, memorizable meditation device....that gathers together Jesus' teachings on various themes and presents them in a memorable thematic structure (usually in sets of three)—with vivid images and poetic language—so that would-be disciples can easily hear, memorize, and thereby meditate on what the Master has said. To be a disciple is to memorize the Teacher's sayings and to model one's life on his."*

- Commentator Jonathan T. Pennington



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# The Common Rhythm

## A common life for a common love

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### INTRODUCTION

The Common Rhythm is a shared set of practices that bind us together in a common life aimed at a common love for God and neighbor. Augustine of Hippo said a community of people is bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love. Disciples of Jesus have a common agreement to love God with all of ourselves and our neighbors as ourselves — it is a double love.

But we cannot do this by merely trying harder. We must train harder. Dallas Willard said, “A discipline is an activity within our power that enables us to accomplish what we cannot do by direct effort.” This set of disciplines is a trellis that a life of love can grow upon. A well-ordered life flows from well-ordered loves (the inverse is also true about a disordered life). We assume we will fail at times, but we plan to fail forward. Jesus gives more grace as we follow him into this double love. On the path of discipleship, we can stumble, fall, and continue to pursue loving well together.

If you’re starting from scratch, begin by discussing with your Circle one daily and one weekly practice you intend to implement. Reflect on your life and the specific ways the Spirit may be leading you into deeper love. Invite them to hold you accountable. Then after a couple weeks add another daily and weekly practice. This guide will direct you at points to try some of these practices. Remember we do this together. It is a common life for a common love.

### DAILY

1. PRAYER — Punctuate our days with prayer to practice dependence.
2. SCRIPTURE — Hear God’s voice in Scripture before any others.
3. BLESS — Ask the Spirit who you might bless with words, time, gifts, prayer, or service.
4. LISTEN — One hour with no screens to listen to others, God, or yourself.

### WEEKLY

1. WORSHIP — Come together to participate in Scripture, sacrament, prayer, and praise.
2. REST — Set aside one day to rest from all that we know to be work.
3. FEAST — Eat a meal with and for others.
4. FAST — Deny ourselves (food, social media, etc.) to hunger for God with others.

### THE 5 C’S – WHAT DO WE NEED TO PRACTICE THE COMMON RHYTHM?

1. Calendar - A schedule to work the practices into our daily and weekly routines.
2. Community - Companions who have permission to help us along the way.
3. Coaching - Guides to show us how to deepen the practice into a habit of love.
4. Comfortable with Failure - Grace to stumble, fall, and try again to love well.
5. Core of Love — Practices do not change God’s love but God’s love changes our practices.

See the [Common Rhythm Guide](#) for practically applying the Common Rhythm to your life.

## Schedule

WEEK	MEMORIZE	OUT / MISSION	NOTES
1	Matthew 5:1-2	Develop a missional mindset.	Leader Shares Story
2	Matthew 5:3-6	Develop a missional mindset.	Share Your Story
3	Matthew 5:7-12	Develop a missional mindset.	Share Your Story
4	Matthew 5:13-16	Name three people in your Circle of Influence.	Share Your Story
5	Matthew 5:17-20	Share your Circle of Influence with your group.	Share Your Story
6	Matthew 5:21-26	Model repentance with not-yet disciples.	Review EHS Assessment
7	Matthew 5:27-30	Share a meal (Feast) with one person in your Circle of Influence.	Review EHS Assessment
8	Matthew 5:31-32	Share a meal (Feast) with one person in your Circle of Influence.	Review EHS Assessment
9	Matthew 5:33-37	Model repentance with not-yet disciples.	Review EHS Assessment
10	Matthew 5:38-42	Serve (Bless) one person in your Circle of Influence.	Review EHS Assessment
11	Matthew 5:43-48	Serve (Bless) a not-yet disciple (within or outside your Circle of Influence).	
12	Matthew 6:1-4	Circle Project: Give to those in need.	
13	Matthew 6:5-8	Exercise: Prayer walk your neighborhood.	
14	Matthew 6:9-15	Practice Kingdom-Focused Prayer at a specific location.	Participant co-leads
15	Matthew 6:16-18	Fast and pray for your Circle of Influence.	Participant co-leads
16	Matthew 6:19-23	Write your Before/Because Story.	Participant co-leads
17	Matthew 6:24-26	Share your Before/Because Story with a not-yet disciple.	Participant co-leads
18	Matthew 6:27-30	Share your Before/Because Story with a not-yet disciple.	Participant leads
19	Matthew 6:31-34	Next-Step one person in your Circle of Influence.	Participant leads
20	Matthew 7:1-5	Next-Step one person in your Circle of Influence.	Participant leads
21	Matthew 7:6-11	Next-Step one person in your Circle of Influence.	Participant leads
22	Matthew 7:12	Commit to three ways to move towards your circle of influence.	Participant leads
23	Matthew 7:13-15	Utilize the Common Rhythm and Resource Collection in your circle of influence.	Participant leads
24	Matthew 7:16-20	Pray for your future Circle members and your Circle of Influence.	Discuss beginning DMC
25	Matthew 7:21-23	Pray for your future Circle members and your Circle of Influence.	Discuss beginning DMC
26	Matthew 7:24-27	Pray for your future Circle members and your Circle of Influence.	Discuss beginning DMC
27	Matthew 7:28-8:1	Pray for your future Circle members and your Circle of Influence.	Discuss beginning DMC

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## Why the Sermon on the Mount?

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The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' manifesto to cultivate kingdom-culture in his self-replicating communities of disciples. Jesus presents a whole new way to be human within the in-breaking reality of the Kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount invites, calls, summons, and challenges us to a life of radical discipleship to Jesus.

The majesty of Jesus' magnum opus is broadly recognized. The Yale historian Jaroslav Pelikan remarked, "The Sermon on the Mount remains the greatest moral document of all time." Mahatma Gandhi said, "The Sermon on the Mount left a deep impression on my mind when I read it." Gandhi read from the Sermon nearly every morning and evening for over forty years. He said, "It is that Sermon which has endeared Jesus to me." His meditation on the Sermon enabled him to develop his philosophy of non-violence through which he helped liberate both South Africa and India from systemic violence. Even evolutionary biologist and impassioned atheist Richard Dawkins wrote, "Jesus was surely one of the great ethical innovators of history. The Sermon on the Mount is way ahead of its time." It seems as if everyone can see the beauty and brilliance of the Sermon, except the Church.

Two great Christian leaders of the 20th century believed the Sermon on the Mount was essential for the Church moving forward. These two leaders are Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. MLK said, "It was the Sermon on the Mount, rather than a doctrine of passive resistance, that initially inspired the Negroes of Montgomery to dignified social action. It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the Negroes to protest with the creative weapon of love." The Sermon on the Mount is not merely about pious religious practice but about life under a new king who shapes a community that changes the world. Staring at the rise of the Third Reich, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in a letter to his brother in 1935: "The renewal of the Church will come from a new type of monasticism which only has in common with the old an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount. It is high time people banded together to do this." As in every generation, the Sermon on the Mount is perhaps the main conversation Jesus wants to have with his disciples today.

The Sermon on the Mount is not merely an ethical agenda or a moral document. It is the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven—the realm where God is already king. It is a call to live under this rule here and now. As scholar N.T. Wright said, the Sermon is "a summons to live in the present in the way that will make sense in God's promised future; because that future has arrived in the present in Jesus of Nazareth." Our meditation, memorization, participation, and obedience to the Sermon on the Mount is the part we play in our prayers for the Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

Over the course of three chapters (Matthew 5-7), Jesus calls his disciples to a new vision of the good life (called the Beatitudes), a new way to relate to culture (salt and light), and a new (yet old) righteousness that is a reality in the heart and rooted in Scripture. He deals with anger and reconciliation, lust and chastity, divorce and integrity, non-retaliation and enemy love as the mark of maturity. He instructs on giving, praying, and fasting. He deals with consumerism and greed, anxieties and priorities. He teaches on contempt and coercion, prayer and proactive goodness. He ends with warnings about the influencers in our lives. And a call to radical commitment to actually doing what he teaches.

If we've truly heard the Sermon on the Mount, listening beyond the familiarity that breeds contempt, in the end, we will stand with the crowds and be astonished at Jesus' teaching (Matthew 7:28). Will you listen in?



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## Preparation

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### PRE-WORK

- **REVIEW** and agree to the Disciple-Making Circle Commitment.
- **TAKE** the [Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Assessment](#) (Forward results to your leader. The leader will forward their results to each of you).
- **PREPARE** to share your story (See Appendix B: How to Share Your Story).
- **READ** The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as a whole in one sitting.
- **STUDY** Appendix A: The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount to aid your memory.
- **READ** the Orientation pages in the front of this guide (from the cover to this page) to orient yourself.

### JOURNAL

1. What expectations and reservations do you have about the next 9 months in this Disciple-Making Circle?
2. What are hoped for outcomes? Be specific.
3. Pray for the Spirit to work in and through your DMC in this season.



## WEEK 1

# The Call To Discipleship

Matthew 5:1-2 - Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying...

### OVERVIEW

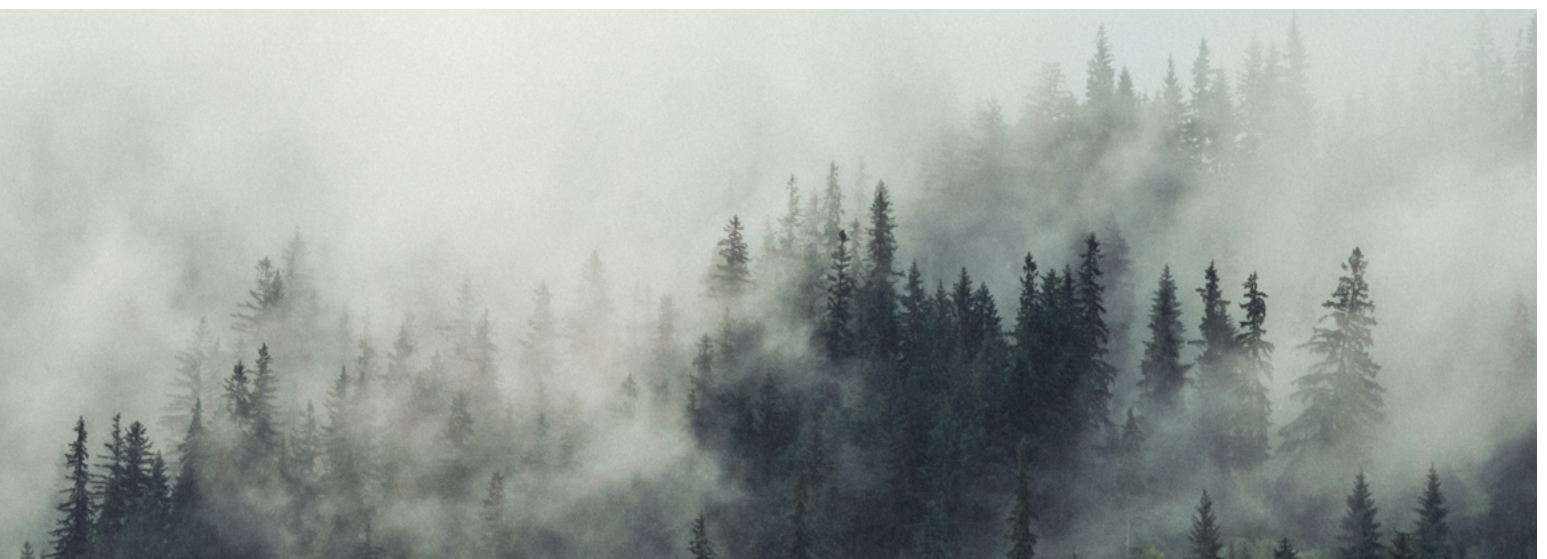
- MEMORIZE Matthew 5:1-2.
- PREPARE to share your story (See Appendix B: How to Share Your Story).
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [Disruptive Discipleship An Overview: Flourishing in the Kingdom by Jon Tyson](#)

### UP

1. Notice both the crowds and the disciples are present to hear Jesus but he is speaking to his disciples. How does the fact that the Sermon is meant specifically for disciples, those who “came to him,” shape how you read the Sermon?
2. Read the end of the Sermon (Matt 7:28-8:1), what do you think of the audience’s “astonished” response to Jesus’ teaching because of his “authority?” Why do you think they “followed him?”

*“Let us picture the scene: Jesus on the mountain, the multitudes, and the disciples. The people see Jesus with his disciples, who have gathered around him. Until quite recently these men had been completely identified with the multitude, they were just like the rest. Then came the call of Jesus, and at once they left all and followed him. Since then they have belonged to him, body and soul. Now they go with him, live with him, and follow him wherever he leads them. Something unique had occurred to them. That disconcerting and offensive fact stares the people in the face. The disciples see the people, from whose midst they themselves have come...Thus their very action in enlisting as disciples proves that they are members of this people; they will live among them, going into their midst, and preaching the call of Jesus and the glory of discipleship...Jesus sees his disciples. They have publicly left the crowd to join him. He has called them, every one, and they have renounced everything at his call...They have only him, and with him they have nothing, literally nothing in the world, but everything with and through God.”*

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship





## IN

1. Take 15-20 min to read the whole Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) in one sitting. What would a life ordered by the Sermon on the Mount look like? Imagine it, write about it. Would it be a life well-lived? If so, why?
2. What are the most challenging/encouraging aspects of the Sermon?
3. Describe how you responded to the call of Jesus to follow him and become his disciple. In what areas of your life do you still find yourself hesitant to follow Jesus? What gives you hesitation?
4. Common Rhythm: Of the eight practices in the Common Rhythm, which are you currently practicing? Which are challenging for you? Discuss this with your Circle.

## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus ascended another mountain — Golgotha (Matt. 27:33). On this mountain, Jesus didn't just give us teaching, he gave us his very life. Because Jesus gave his life for us we can trust him with our lives. When you realize he ascended the cross to give you life, you can trust his authority over your life.*

## OUT

Answering Jesus' call to become his disciple separates you from the crowds (i.e. not-yet-disciples). As Bonhoeffer said, disciples are those who "go with (Jesus), live with him, and follow him wherever he leads them." Jesus wants his disciples to join him on his mission. Let's see what that mission is.

1. Read the passage just before the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 4:17-25). Pay attention to Jesus' actions. What do you see Jesus doing?
2. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." There is a command (follow me), a promise (I will make you) and an outcome (fishers of men). According to Jesus, what is your responsibility and what is his responsibility in you joining his mission?
3. What is your immediate response to the idea of following Jesus in His mission? Are you uncertain? Eager? Resistant? Journal your first thoughts and feelings about the missional aspect of discipleship with Jesus trusting that he will meet you and lead you in that place.

## PRAY

We will be learning to use Jesus' pattern of prayer from Matthew 6:9-13, often called The Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. When Jesus said, "Pray then like this" (Matt 6:9), he intended this to be a pattern or framework for his disciples' prayer life. But in Luke's account of this prayer, Jesus said, "When you pray, say..." (Luke 11:2). Therefore we can use the Lord's Prayer as both a pattern and a script for our prayers.

Beginning this week, use the Lord's Prayer for one of your times of Prayer. We will continue this practice throughout the course of these 28 weeks.

- **Morning:** It can be a prayer of relinquishment, offering the day to your Father, asking for his provision.
- **Midday:** It can be a prayer of reorientation, turning your day back to the true north of Your Father and His kingdom.
- **Evening:** It can be a prayer of reflection, considering your day in light of God's presence and activity.

## WEEK 2

# Blessed Emptiness in Loving God

Matthew 5:3-6 - Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:3-6.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-2.
- PREPARE to share your story.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [Disruptive Discipleship: Poor in Spirit by Jon Tyson](#)

### UP

1. These verses (5:3-12) are traditionally called The Beatitudes which in Latin means “supreme happiness.” The Bible scholar, Jonathan Pennington argues that the word “blessed” would be better translated: “flourishing.” The Beatitudes, then, are “a vision-casting invitation to true human flourishing through Jesus.” What beliefs have you held about the Beatitudes? How might this “invitation to true human flourishing” shape your understanding of them?
2. The Beatitudes are Jesus’ self-portrait. Read these passages then write down how it shapes your view of Jesus: poor in spirit (Mark 14:35-36), mourn (John 11:32-36), meek (Matt 11:28-30, “gentle” is the same word as “meek”), hunger and thirst for righteousness (John 4:31-34).
3. From the world’s point of view, why is it surprising that the meek will inherit the earth?

*“The Beatitudes paint a comprehensive portrait of Christian disciples. We see them first alone on their knees before God, acknowledging their spiritual poverty and mourning over it. This makes them meek or gentle in all their relationships, since honesty compels them to allow others to think of them what before God they confess themselves to be. Yet they are far from giving in to their sinfulness, for they hunger and thirst after righteousness, longing to grow in grace and in goodness. We see them next with others, out in the human community. Their relationship with God does not cause them to withdraw from society, nor are they insulated from the world’s pain. On the contrary, they are in the thick of it, showing mercy to those battered by hardship and sin. They are transparently sincere in all their dealings and seek to play a constructive role as peacemakers. Yet they are not thanked for their efforts, but rather opposed, slandered, insulted and persecuted on account of the righteousness for which they stand and the Christ with whom they are identified.”*

- John Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount

All people seek happiness and flourishing. Ancient manuscripts entitle this sermon: “Concerning Happiness” because Jesus is inviting his disciples into a way of life that leads to flourishing. A life within the kingdom of heaven. True flourishing in Jesus’ kingdom looks different from those who are fortunate in the world. The first four beatitudes are about emptiness towards God. The second four beatitudes are about fullness towards our neighbors. The Beatitudes form a preface to Jesus’ great sermon on the upside-down nature of His kingdom. The King of this kingdom shows with his own life that the cross is the way to the crown, death leads to life, emptiness prepares for fullness.

### IN

1. Write a definition in your own words for each of the first four Beatitudes. Feel free to use cross references or commentaries (see Introduction for recommended commentaries) for help.
  - Poor in Spirit (cf. Isaiah 57:15)
  - Mourn (cf. Psalm 32)
  - Meek (cf. Psalm 37)
  - Hunger and thirst for righteousness (cf. Isaiah 55:1-3)

2. To be “poor in spirit” (v. 3) is to acknowledge our spiritual poverty, our bankruptcy before God. Why is spiritual bankruptcy an indispensable condition for receiving the kingdom of heaven? Why is it so difficult for us to admit our spiritual poverty?
3. What has it looked like for you to mourn your own sin (repent) and the sin around you (lament)? How might you begin to step into the comfort available to you in Christ?
4. How does seeing ourselves as spiritually bankrupt (v.3) and grieving it (v.4) lead us to be “meek”— to have a humble and gentle attitude toward others (v. 5)?

### GOOD NEWS

*The way of the Kingdom is down, not up. The Kingdom belongs to the weak, not the strong; the bankrupt, not the bankrolled; the needy, not the competent. Of course, Jesus leads the way by being crucified in weakness, nakedness, poverty, and vulnerability. He was crucified in weakness so that we might live by the power of God (2 Cor. 13:4). Come down to him. Stoop low to get on this King's level.*

#### OUT

1. Read the passage just before the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 4:17-25). Pay attention to Jesus' actions. What else do you see Jesus doing?
2. According to Matthew 4:17, the content of Jesus' preaching was, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (i.e. near).” In light of the first six verses of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-6), what do you think Jesus means by ‘repent’ and ‘the kingdom of heaven’?
3. Read Mark 1:15. Considering Jesus' message here, what do you think it means to join Jesus in his mission of proclaiming the kingdom? Journal your thoughts and feelings about this missional aspect of discipleship with Jesus.

#### PRAY

*“There is, of course, much more to prayer than the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer that teaches us to pray. It is a foundation of the praying life: its introduction and its continuing basis. It is an enduring framework for all praying. You only move beyond it provided you stay within it. It is the necessary bass in the great symphony of prayer. It is a powerful lens through which one constantly sees the world as God himself sees it.”*

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

1. What is standing out to you as you pray the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) during one of your times of Prayer?
2. Ask God to form these four kingdom qualities in you (e.g. mourn) and the corresponding kingdom flourishing (e.g. comfort) in your life and for those in your group.
3. Ask God to help you cultivate a healthy, hearty spiritual appetite for righteousness as you study the Sermon on the Mount.



## WEEK 3

### Blessed Fullness in Loving Neighbor

Matthew 5:7-12 - Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:7-12.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-6.
- PREPARE to share your story.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Disruptive Discipleship: Blessed Are The Merciful by Dr. Derwin Gray](#)

#### UP

1. The Beatitudes are Jesus' self-portrait. Read these passages then write down how it shapes your view of Jesus: merciful (Matt 20:29-34); pure in heart (Mark 12:14); peacemakers (Eph. 2:13-18); persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt 9:9-13).
2. Jesus says the merciful will be shown mercy (v. 7). Why do you think our treatment of others will affect God's treatment of us?

3. Why would the world hate the kind of people described in the Beatitudes (5:10-12)?

*"Congratulations to the entitled, for they grab what they want. Congratulations to the carefree, for they shall be comfortable. Congratulations to the pushy, for they shall win. Congratulations to the greedy, for they shall climb the food chain. Congratulations to the vengeful, for they shall be feared. Congratulations to those who don't get caught, for they shall look good. Congratulations to the argumentative, for they shall get in the last word. Congratulations to the popular, for this world lies at their feet."*

- Ray Ortlund Jr., UnBeatitudes

#### IN

1. Write a definition in your own words for each of the last four Beatitudes. Feel free to use cross references or commentaries for help:

- Merciful (cf. Matt 18:21-35)
- Pure in Heart (cf. Ps. 24:4-5)
- Peacemakers (cf. 2 Cor 13:11)
- Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (cf. 1 Pet 3:13-18)

2. Scripture both confronts and comforts us. How have the Beatitudes comforted you where you are and challenged you towards change?
3. Pure in heart (5:8) means sincerity in your relationship with God and others. Why would the promise of seeing God be reserved for those who are pure in heart?
4. Reflect on what it could look like to be a peacemaker in your home, in your church, in your workplace, and in your society/cultural context. How might you use your particular gifts and strengths to pursue peace?



## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus' pure heart overflows with mercy to the undeserving. He himself is our peace. With the vertical beam of the cross he made peace between God and us. With the horizontal beam of the cross, he made peace between one another (Eph. 2:13-14). Draw near to him now in prayer, praising him for being your Peacemaker.*

### OUT

1. Read Matt 4:17-25, the passage just before the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' mission has been summarized as a ministry of word (teaching and proclaiming) and deed (healing). The good news of the kingdom comes with both proclamation and demonstration. According to Matt 4:17-25, what does "word and deed" include?
2. What is your immediate response to the idea of following Jesus in both word and deed? Which of these two is more difficult for you to join Jesus in?
3. Turn your thoughts and feelings about following Jesus on mission into a prayer. What would you want to say to Jesus about the mission he's calling you to join him in? This is how the pure in heart practice sincerity in relationship with Jesus.

### PRAY

1. What has confronted or comforted you while praying the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) during one of your times of Prayer?
2. Journal Your Prayer: Ask God to form these four kingdom qualities in you (e.g. merciful) and the corresponding kingdom flourishing (e.g. receive mercy) in your life and for those in your group.

*"The prayers of God's people are the footsteps of God's mercies coming."*

- Charles Spurgeon

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 5:13-16



## WEEK 4

### Church & Culture

Matthew 5:13-16 - You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:13-16.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-12.
- PREPARE to share your story.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Disruptive Discipleship: City on a Hill by Jon Tyson](#)



*“The basic truth which lies behind these metaphors and is common to them both is that the church and the world are distinct communities...Salt is good for nothing if its saltiness is lost; light is good for nothing if it is concealed...Probably the greatest tragedy of the church throughout its long and chequered history has been its constant tendency to conform to the prevailing culture instead of developing a Christian counter-culture...The function of salt is largely negative: it prevents decay. The function of light is positive: it illuminates the darkness. So Jesus calls his disciples to exert a double influence on the secular community, a negative influence by arresting its decay and a positive influence by bringing light into its darkness. For it is one thing to stop the spread of evil; it is another to promote the spread of truth, beauty and goodness. Putting the two metaphors together, it seems right to see in them the proper relation between evangelism and social action in the total mission of Christ in the world – a relation which perplexes many Christians today....Christians have too often interpreted their social responsibility in terms only of helping the casualties of a sick society, and have done nothing to change the structures which cause the casualties. Just as doctors are concerned not only with the treatment of patients but also with preventive medicine and public health, so we should be concerned with what might be called preventive social medicine and higher standards of moral hygiene. However small our part may be, we cannot opt out of seeking to create better social structures, which guarantee justice in legislation and law enforcement, the freedom and dignity of the individual, civil rights for minorities and the abolition of social and racial discrimination.”*

- John Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount

## UP

1. What positive qualities of salt and light do you think Jesus had in mind as he spoke these words?
2. According to Revelation 21:22-27, where does the city get its light? How does that affect your reading of Matthew 5:16?
3. According to Mark 9:49-50, how do you think being “at peace with one another” is an aspect of our call to be salt?

## IN

1. It’s been said, “Your life may be the only Bible that someone will ever read.” This is one way of getting at what Jesus means by his disciples being the light of the world. Who has been like a Bible for you and how did they show you what God is like?
2. Before refrigeration, salt was used to keep meat from rotting. John Stott said, “When society does go bad, we Christians tend to throw up our hands in pious horror and reproach the non-Christian world; but should we not rather reproach ourselves? No-one blames unsalted meat for going bad! It cannot do anything else. The real question to ask is: where is the salt?” What has been in the news lately that indicates society is rotting and decaying? How have you blamed culture or society for going bad, rather than taking responsibility as a part of the church? What are some practical ways we can function as salt and light where we live, work, and play (v.13)?
3. What relationship do you see between the Beatitudes and our role as salt and light in society?
4. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first.” What is an area of your belief or behavior where you are tempted to conform to the world and thus lose your saltiness (v.13) or hide your light (v.15)?

## GOOD NEWS

*Like the moon with the sun, we derive our light from Jesus. Being with him and beholding him, we become like him (2 Cor 3:18). Being light among your neighbors starts with basking in the light of Jesus’ love for you, despite the darkness inside you. Like a flower seeking the sun, turn towards Jesus and let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you (Num. 6:25).*

## OUT

1. Read Acts 17:26-27. Here Paul speaks of the significance of where God has placed us. We are here because God may use us to allow people to seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. One of the reasons God is actually not far from each one of us is because he has placed his people as salt (to preserve) and light (to illumine). Consider the people God has placed you near (neighborhood, workplace, family and friends, recreation spots, businesses you frequent, etc.). How have you been intentional towards these people? How can you be intentional towards these people?
2. Ask the Spirit to bring to mind three people that He has placed in proximity to you, within your circle of influence. Write them down in your journal, on a note card, or in your phone. Begin praying regularly for ways to be salt and light in their life. Share them with your Circle. Write down the three people from each other’s circle of influence list so that you know how to pray for them.

## PRAY

1. Continue praying the Lord’s Prayer during one of your times of Prayer.
2. Use the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer (**Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done**) to pray for those around you — your neighbors — to “see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
3. Choose one of your other Prayer times to pray for those three people in your circle of influence by name.



## WEEK 5

# The Bible & Disciple-Making

Matthew 5:17-20 - Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

### OVERVIEW

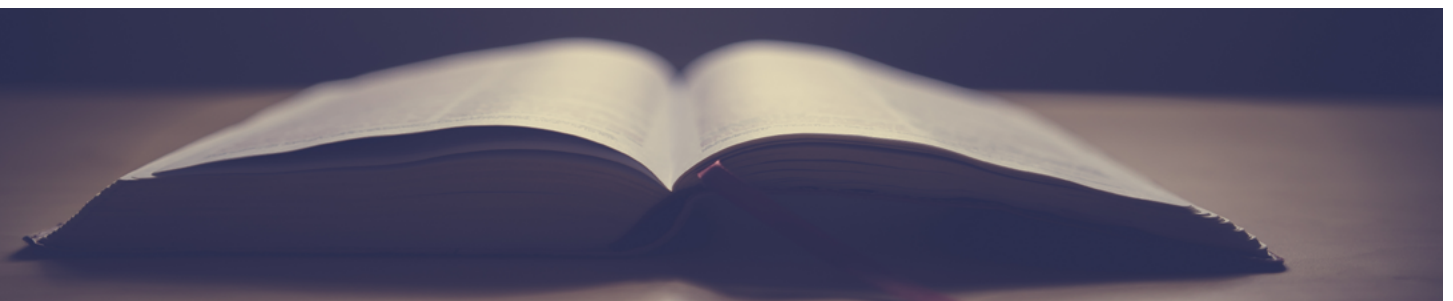
- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:17-20
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-16.
- PREPARE to share your story.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [What Does Jesus Think About the Bible? by John Mark Comer](#)

### UP

1. This passage naturally divides into two parts, verses 17-18 and verses 19-20. What does each part emphasize?
2. Read these texts: Matthew 22:29; Matthew 22:43; John 5:39-40, 46-47; John 10:35; Luke 24:27, 44-45. In your own words, what was Jesus' view of Scripture?

*"Jesus held Scripture in the highest possible esteem. He knew his Bible intimately and loved it deeply. He often spoke with the language of Scripture. He easily alluded to Scripture. And in his moments of greatest trial and weakness—like being tempted by the devil or being killed on a cross—he quoted Scripture. His mission was to fulfill Scripture, and his teaching always upheld Scripture. He never disrespected, never disregarded, never disagreed with a single text of Scripture. He affirmed every bit of law, prophecy, narrative, and poetry. He shuddered to think of anyone anywhere violating, ignoring, or rejecting Scripture. Jesus believed in the inspiration of Scripture, down to the sentences, to the phrases, to the words, to the smallest letter, to the tiniest mark. He accepted the chronology, the miracles, and the authorial ascriptions as giving the straightforward facts of history. He believed in keeping the spirit of the law without ever minimizing the letter of the law. He affirmed the human authorship of Scripture while at the same time bearing witness to the ultimate divine authorship of the Scriptures. He treated the Bible as a necessary word, a sufficient word, a clear word, and the final word. It was never acceptable in his mind to contradict Scripture or stand above Scripture. He believed the Bible was all true, all edifying, all important, and all about him. He believed absolutely that the Bible was from God and was absolutely free from error. What Scripture says God says, and what God said was recorded infallibly in Scripture. Jesus submitted his will to the Scriptures, committed his brain to study the Scriptures, and humbled his heart to obey the Scriptures. In summary, it is impossible to revere the Scriptures more deeply or affirm them more completely than Jesus did. The Lord Jesus, God's Son and our Savior, believed his Bible was the word of God down to the tiniest speck and that nothing in all those specks and in all those books in his Bible could ever be broken."*

- Kevin DeYoung, Jesus' Doctrine of Scripture



## IN

1. According to Jesus, greatness in his kingdom is available to anyone who does and teaches what he says (Matt 5:19). True discipleship is to both be and build disciples, to both do and teach. To teach without doing is hypocrisy; it lacks integrity. To do without teaching is stagnancy; it blocks maturity. To do and teach is to be a disciple who makes disciples. How do Jesus' words here cast vision for you to pursue greatness by being a disciple who makes, matures, and multiplies disciples?
2. The Bible is how the authority of Jesus is mediated to his disciples. What role does the Bible play in your thought life, imagination, worldview, emotional life, behavior, evaluation of culture and media? Who or what competes with the Bible's authority in your life?
3. Eugene Peterson translates v.19: "Trivialize even the smallest item in God's Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom." Reflect on the relationship between trivializing Scripture and trivializing yourself. How do you trivialize God's Word in your life (and thereby trivialize yourself)? Which of Jesus' commands are you most tempted to relax?
4. As we will see in the coming verses, Jesus intends for your righteousness to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. This exceeding is qualitative, not quantitative. It must be an internal righteousness of the heart (5:28), not merely an external righteousness of behavior. It must be a righteousness that is more concerned with God's view of us than others' view of us (6:1). In what ways does this challenge you?

## GOOD NEWS

*In the New Testament, Christ is several times called "the Righteous One" (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14). He perfectly fulfilled and embodied all the righteousness of the law. That righteousness depends not on our willpower or effort to be righteous, but on God, who has mercy (Rom 9:16). Where you feel convicted of your lack of real righteousness, run to Jesus for the righteousness that can only be found in him.*

## OUT

The purpose of Disciple-Making Circles (DMCs) is to help you make, mature, and multiply disciples of Jesus by giving your life away. This is why the hopeful expectation is that everyone who participates will lead others soon.

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20 (often called The Great Commission) and 2 Timothy 2:1-2. How are Jesus' and Paul's words similar to what we learned in Matthew 5:19? Jesus' mission is to make disciples; how does this shape our missional calling?
2. Continue asking the Spirit about three people that he has put near to you (proximity or relationally). This is your circle of influence. Ask the Spirit to lead you into a vision of seeing them become disciples who make disciples. If you haven't yet, write these people down and share them with your Circle. Write down each other's three people and pray for them as well.

## PRAY

1. Has praying the Lord's Prayer at one of your Prayer times become a habit yet? If not, what's getting in the way? Consider "habit stacking" it with something else you do on a daily basis (e.g. doing it during/after you brush your teeth, commute to or from work, exercise, or eat meals).
2. Remember you can pray the Lord's Prayer...
  - **Morning:** It can be a prayer of relinquishment, offering the day to your Father, asking for his provision.
  - **Midday:** It can be a prayer of reorientation, turning your day back to the true north of Your Father and His kingdom.
  - **Evening:** It can be a prayer of reflection, considering your day in light of God's presence and activity.

# WEEK 6

## Anger & Conflict

Matthew 5:21-26 - You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:21-26.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-20.
- PREPARE to share your story.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to at least one of [Brad Hambrick’s seminars on Overcoming Anger](#).

### UP

1. In verses 21-22, Jesus places murder and unrighteous anger in the same category. How are they related?
2. In verses 23-24, the situation is “your brother has something against you.” Who is to take the initiative? Now read Matthew 18:15-20. Who is at fault in this passage? Who is to take the initiative? What are the similarities and differences between Matthew 5:23-24 and Matthew 18:15-20?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>You shall not murder</i>	<i>Being angry, or saying, you fool!</i>	<i>First, be reconciled!</i>

Bible scholar Glen Stassen has pointed out that in the main section of the Sermon on the Mount, from 5:21 through 7:12, there is “a carefully crafted triadic structure, consistent across the (sections)...and this unites them all as members of one family.” There are fourteen triads that each follow a threefold pattern. The first member of each triad is traditional righteousness (i.e. You have heard that it was said). The second member is the diagnosis of a vicious cycle and its consequence (i.e. But I say to you). The third member is a transforming initiative that points the way to deliverance from the vicious cycle (i.e. imperative)” This is essential for interpreting the Sermon on the Mount. Look at Appendix C now for Glen Stassen’s Fourteen Triads of the Sermon on the Mount.

*Jesus “analyzes the cycles of sin and gives instruction for breaking through those cycles...The commandment is not: “Don’t be angry.” Jesus’ commandment is: “Go be reconciled.” That is the greater righteousness, not simply avoiding the anger but acting in a way that breaks through the cycle of anger and insult that leads to murder.”*

- Peter J. Leithart, The Gospel of Matthew Through New Eyes

### IN

1. Notice Jesus says, If your brother has “something” against you. It doesn’t say, If you’ve “sinned” against your brother. It may be minor or seemingly insignificant. The fault is in the eye of the beholder. How does this challenge you to be a peacemaker (5:9) and seek reconciliation regardless of your evaluation of the situation?

2. When have you either initiated reconciliation or had someone initiate it with you? What was the outcome? How have those experiences shaped the way you approach reconciliation?
3. The priority (“first”) and the promptness (“quickly”) of Jesus’ commands are relationally wise because bitterness and resentment really can be avoided if things are dealt with in a swift and humble way, rather than letting anger fester into a hardened heart which makes reconciliation nearly impossible. What keeps you from pursuing reconciliation quickly?
4. Create the table below in your journal. Think back over the past few months and list a few people or experiences that made you angry. Start with your family, friends, church or those with whom you live, work, learn, and play.

1. Over the past few months, what were some occurrences of anger?	2. When was the date and time of each occurrence?	3. When was the date and time when the anger was resolved?	4. What did you do to reconcile or resolve your anger?

5. Consider how many occurrences on the list do not have entries for columns 3 or 4. Do you have any relationships where you are harboring anger, resentment, bitterness, or unforgiveness? What is stopping you from going to them to be reconciled? Discuss this with your Circle.

### GOOD NEWS

*Jesus felt anger (Mark 3:5; 10:14). But he knew how to be angry and not sin; not to let the sun go down on his anger (Eph 4:26). On the cross, the sun went down on Jesus as he hung in the darkness of His God’s anger (Mark 15:33-34). God hates sin. Jesus was crushed to free us from the anger of God for our sins (Isa 53:5-12). This is why we sing, “Till on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied; For every sin on him was laid, Here in the death of Christ I live.”*

## OUT

1. What the world often needs to see is our repentance, not our supposed righteousness. Repentance means turning away from that which keeps us in destructive isolation from one another and turning towards that which promotes flourishing in fellowship with one another. What might repentance look like for you? How would that be a movement from isolation to relationship?
2. Are there any not-yet disciples of Jesus that may “have something against you”? What fears, doubts, or questions come up as you consider this step? How can your Circle pray for you in that? Go to them, tell them your fault, and ask for their forgiveness.
3. Are there specific ways you can model repentance to not-yet disciples of Jesus in your life?

## PRAY

- In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus connects our willingness to forgive with our ability to be forgiven. This is not about earning forgiveness (otherwise it would say, “forgive us our debts, “because” we also have forgiven...”). Instead, Jesus is pointing to the underlying humility of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. And the underlying pride of defensiveness, resentment, and irreconciliation. You won’t forgive if you don’t repent. Unforgiveness is pride. Only humble people repent. Only repentant people are forgiven.
1. As you pray the Lord’s Prayer daily this week, linger over the words: **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**
  2. Ask your Father to show you the places in your life where there’s a lack of repentance.
  3. Ask your Father to forgive you for your pride leading to a lack of repentance (as the offender) and unforgiveness (as the offended).
  4. Pray for anyone you are unreconciled with that your Father would bring about harmony.
  5. Pray for the others in your Circle to be humble and seek reconciliation.

# WEEK 7

## Lust & Sexuality

Matthew 5:27-30 - You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:27-30.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-26.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN: [Communicating the Beauty of Christian Sexual Ethics by Joshua Ryan Butler](#)

### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Mark 9:42-49. How does this text help you understand Jesus' transforming initiative here?
2. Notice Jesus' priority of the next life over this life, eternity over the present at the end of vv. 29 and 30. How does this shape your view of lust?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>You shall not commit adultery</i>	<i>Looks with lustful intent</i>	<i>Cut out the cause of temptation</i>

*"Jesus deepens the commandment, so that it applies to desires, attitudes of the heart. But Jesus is not simply contrasting external and internal. He analyzes the cycles of sin and gives instruction for breaking through those cycles...It's not enough to avoid lust; in fact, Jesus doesn't say "Don't lust." Rather, he tells you how to respond to lust, how to break through the chains of lust, in order to have chaste relations with women (or men). You need to cut off the organ that offends. It's not enough to avoid hating enemies; you need to do good to them, to break through the habits of hatred, counter-hatred, escalating hatred, that destroy life."*

- Peter J. Leithart, *The Gospel of Matthew Through New Eyes*

*"The essence of chastity is not the suppression of lust, but the total orientation of one's life towards a goal. Without such a goal, chastity is bound to become ridiculous."*

*"Adherence to Jesus allows no free rein to desire unless it be accompanied by love...Instead of trusting to the unseen, we prefer the tangible fruits of desire, and so we fall from the path of discipleship and lose touch with Jesus."*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

### IN

1. Calvin Miller compared lust to "a cannibal committing suicide by nibbling on himself." How have you seen lust hurt yourself and others?
2. Jesus used the strong metaphor of "gouge out an eye" or "cut off a hand." What specific, radical steps is the Spirit leading you in to cut out lust, fantasy, covetousness, or comparison from your life?
3. What streams or sources of content (e.g. social media, streaming services, TV, internet browsing, etc.) provide temptation to you? How do you plan to cut them out?
4. How can you fan the flames of desire for Jesus that overpowers lust?

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## GOOD NEWS

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*Jesus lived the most fully alive, fully human life...and never had sex. Our desires convince us that if they are not gratified, then we will miss life. Jesus died on the cross in order to free us from our disordered desires and was raised so that we have the hope of resurrection even in the moment of temptation. Our moment by moment resurrection comes from the intimacy Jesus offers as we crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24).*



### OUT

We follow Jesus into seeing others as people (love) not as objects (lust). Jesus' practice of hospitality highlighted others' dignity by welcoming, honoring, and sharing with them as image-bearers.

1. Read Mark 10:45, Luke 5:27-32, and Luke 19:10. According to Jesus, what was his mission (i.e. why did he come)?
2. Read Luke 7:34, Matthew 9:10, Luke 15:1-2. According to Jesus, what was his method?
3. Feast is one of the weekly practices of the Common Rhythm. It is defined as eating a meal with and for others. We see this as a core practice in Jesus' life and ministry. His mission was to seek and save the lost. His method was to eat and drink with them. Table hospitality has a long and rich history within Christianity of extending welcome to the least and the lowly, the down and out. Which of the three people you've been praying for in your circle of influence can you plan to invite to share a meal with you? Share this with your Circle and make plans to do so.

### PRAY

1. This week, use your evening Prayer to reflect on your day.
2. Ask the Spirit to show you ways you have objectified others with your gaze, whether through lust, comparison, or competition.
3. Ask the Spirit to help you notice it in the moment and pray something like: "Dear God, thank you for her/his beauty and that it is not mine to participate in." (From *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age* by Alan Noble).
4. Pray for the Spirit to **lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil** (us = your Circle).
5. Ask the Spirit to show you Jesus' beauty as that far-better beauty to which you are truly drawn.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 5:31-32



## WEEK 8

### Marriage & Divorce

Matthew 5:31-32 - It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:31-32.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-29.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [Marriage as Commitment and Priority by Timothy Keller](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matthew 19:3-9. Jesus points back to Genesis 1-2. What does this teach us about God's original design for marriage (cf. 19:4-6)?
2. The Greek word behind "sexual immorality" is porneia. It is a broad term for various kinds of unsanctioned/unlawful sexual acts (where we get the term pornography). This is the only ground Jesus gives for divorce. What does this mean for the role of sex within marriage?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>Whoever divorces, give a certificate</i>	<i>Divorcing involves you in adultery</i>	<i>See above two initiatives: Be reconciled (Matt 5:24) and remove cause of temptation (Matt 5:29, cf. 1 Cor 7:11).</i>

Marriage is an inseparable bond between one man and one woman for one lifetime. This union is so strong that God sees divorce as violence (Mal 2:16) because it requires a severing from one another. William Klein said, "Only God's pity for human sinfulness moved him to allow divorce: to protect people, particularly women, against excesses and abuses." Divorce is a worst-case scenario for any marriage.





Notice that unlike the previous two triads on anger (Matt 5:21-26) and lust (Matt 5:27-30) this triad on divorce (Matt 5:31-32) does not have an actionable step based on God's gracious deliverance (e.g. Transforming Initiative). Why do you think this is? One possibility is that most divorces are caused by either anger (including resentment, bitterness, unforgiveness, disgust, contempt, abuse) or lust (pornography, covetousness, adultery, sexual dissatisfaction). If you act on Jesus' initiatives above: be reconciled and remove the cause of temptation, you are more likely to remain married. You cannot do this on your own but with the gracious deliverance that comes from living within the Kingdom of God.

## IN

1. If you were to write an article for a magazine on marriage entitled "The Top Three Reasons Why Marriages Fail," what reasons would you give for the failure of marriages?
2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your parents' marriage? How has this affected you?

3. In a sermon for his niece's wedding, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love." What do you think it means that "the marriage sustains your love?"

4. Read Ephesians 5:22-33 three times slowly. Pray between each reading for the Spirit's guidance. Whether you are married or not, how are you specifically encouraged or challenged by what a husband or wife is meant to be? What did this look like in your parents' marriage? What are practical steps you can take to become this kind of man or woman?

## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus is our true husband. Whether you're in a difficult marriage or you've been through the severing of divorce, we can draw near to Jesus to be embraced in true covenantal love. He's seen his Bride, the church, at her worst and still speaks over her, "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away with me" (Song 2:10). Jesus bore the cross to deal with whatever might get between you and Him. So with confidence you can reply even now: "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Song 6:3).*

## OUT

1. How is it going praying for three not-yet disciples of Jesus in your circle of influence? What obstacles have you faced? Why might those obstacles be there?
2. How was it inviting someone to Feast with you? If you haven't yet, make plans to invite one of your three people in your circle of influence to share a meal with you. Consider inviting someone else in your Circle to join you.

## PRAY

Paul Miller said, "Self-will and prayer are both ways of getting things done. At the center of self-will is me, carving a world in my image, but at the center of prayer is God, carving me in his Son's image" (A Praying Life). Praying for Your Father's will to be done includes submitting your self-will to His.

1. As you've studied marriage and divorce, ask the Spirit where you need to pray for God's will (not yours) to be done in your marriage, dating life, or singleness?
2. Pray for **God's will to be done** in these areas of your life.
3. Confess to God (and to your spouse if applicable) what God has revealed to you.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 5:33-37

## WEEK 9

### Integrity

Matthew 5:33-37 - Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:33-37.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-32.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [Skills to Revolutionize Your Prayer Life: Climb the Ladder by Pete Scazzero](#)

#### UP

1. How might the issue of oaths and vows (Matthew 5:33-37) be connected to the topic of marriage and divorce (Matt 5:31-32)?
2. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matthew 23:16-22 to see what the real problem is. How does plain, straightforward speech (simply 'Yes' or 'No') free us from needing to take an oath?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>You shall not swear falsely</i>	<i>Swearing by anything involves you in a false claim</i>	<i>Let your yes be yes, and your no be no</i>

Since Paul took oaths (Acts 18:18, Rom. 1:9, Gal. 1:20), angels took oaths (Rev. 10:5-6), the Psalmist took oaths (Psalm 119:106), and even the Lord took oaths (Ps. 132:11), we know that taking oaths is not the issue. The issue was people using oaths as loopholes to get out of keeping their word (e.g. like crossing your fingers behind your back when you make a promise). Jesus wants to preserve the integrity of your words. Words are sacred. Swearing oaths is only necessary because of the prevalence of dishonesty in human speech. "Put your money where your mouth is." "Say what you mean and mean what you say." "Talk is cheap." These are statements that point to the erosion of trust in each other's speech.

As disciples of Jesus, we should always speak as if in the presence of God. We are people of plain, straightforward speech. We don't play verbal games. We don't use "ifs," "ands," or "buts" to hide our real intentions. We fear our own tongue as an untamable beast (James 3:1-12). We would rather keep silent than be guilty of slander, gossip, exaggeration, misleading, misrepresenting, or lying. Our speech is unadorned, simply 'Yes' or 'No' lest we use cunning to deceive others, becoming like the Serpent (Gen. 3).

#### IN

1. Having listened to Skills to Revolutionize Your Prayer Life Pt. 2: Climb the Ladder by Pete Scazzero, use the Ladder of Integrity to work through a situation where your values and actions did not align. Discuss this example with your Circle.

2. Think about the last 24 hours. If every word you spoke was recorded, what would you have said differently? Why is this?

3. In The Leadership Challenge, Kouzes and Posner present research showing that credibility — "Doing what you say you will do" — is the most important characteristic of a followable leader. What makes it hard for you to do what you say you will do?

Ladder of Integrity	
WHAT I HOPE (11-12)	12 - I hope and look forward to...
	11 - I think my honest sharing will benefit our relationship by...
WHAT I VALUE (7-10)	10 - The most important thing I want you to know is...
	9 - One thing I could do to improve the situation is...
	8 - I am willing / not willing to...
	7 - This issue is important to me because I value...and I violate that value when...
WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE ME (1-6)	6 - What my reaction tells me about me is...
	5 - My feelings about this are...
	4 - My need in this issue is...
	3 - My part in this is...
	2 - I'm anxious in talking about this because...
	1 - Right now the issue on my mind is...

4. Where are you tempted by sins of the tongue in your friendships, work, marriage, or parenting? In telling a story, do you try to make yourself look better by embellishing the truth? Do you overpromise and under-deliver? Do you add or omit details to make a better impression? Do you say you'll pray for someone and not do it? Do you say you want to get together with someone but have little intention to make it happen?

### GOOD NEWS

*Jesus is trustworthy and true (Revelation 21:5). No deceit was found in his mouth. Yet he was reviled, maligned, and falsely accused. Jesus was the victim of abusive and destructive speech. Yet he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten. He continued entrusting himself to His Father who judges justly (1 Pet. 2:22-24). Jesus was able to do this because His Father's words are completely trustworthy. Jesus suffered under the sins of the tongue so that he could purify us from our unclean lips (Isa. 6:5). Use your lips now to confess to him your sins and ask for him to cleanse your heart and mouth.*

### OUT

1. What the world often needs to see is our repentance, not our supposed righteousness. Living a life of repentance means following Jesus away from that which undermines our integrity and following Jesus towards that which promotes sincerity and truthfulness. What might repentance look like for you in this area?

2. Are there any not-yet disciples of Jesus that you could follow up with to ask their forgiveness for not doing what you said you would? Is there anywhere your life has not lived up to your lips as a disciple of Jesus?

3. Are there specific ways you can model repentance to not-yet disciples of Jesus in your life?

### PRAY

1. The Third Commandment says, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain" (Ex. 20:7). One way we do this is by calling ourselves God's sons or daughters or disciples of Jesus or Christians but failing to live up to it. "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity" (2 Tim 2:19).

2. Ask the Spirit to reveal places where your practice does not live up to your profession, your life to your lips. Confess these areas of your life to your Father and to your Circle.

3. Ask that your Father would **hallow his name** in your life such that "others may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 5:38-42

## WEEK 10

### Nonviolent Resistance

Matthew 5:38-42 - You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:38-42.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-37.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Jesus on Breaking the Chain of Violence by John Mark Comer](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Exodus 21:22-27. These were instructions for the law courts (not personal relationships) to be overseen by qualified judges. How would the principle of 'eye for eye and tooth for tooth' limit the extent of revenge?
2. Looking at Matt 5:39-42, how would you contrast our natural responses in such situations with the responses Jesus expects of us?
3. What is accomplished by turning the other cheek or going a second mile?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>Eye for eye, tooth for tooth</i>	<i>Resisting evil by violent/vengeful means</i>	<i>1. Turn the cheek 2. Give your cloak 3. Go the second mile 4. Give to the beggar and the borrower</i>

Before rejecting Jesus' prescription, consider the surprising amounts of injustice that were done away with by largely nonviolent resistance: Gandhi's India, Martin Luther King's civil rights movement, Cory Aquino's Philippines, and East Germany's Christian protests and prayer meetings before the Berlin Wall fell. Harvard Professor Erica Chenoweth's groundbreaking research shows that nonviolent resistance campaigns are ten times as likely to result in democratic change. Jesus knew something, even at a mere sociological level. Listen to Martin Luther King Jr.'s own words, "It was the Sermon on the Mount, rather than a doctrine of passive resistance, that initially inspired the Negroes of Montgomery to dignified social action. It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the Negroes to protest with the creative weapon of love" (A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches).

*"Our reaction is to say, 'Get real, Jesus! This may all be great for a perfect world. But we don't live in a perfect world. We live in a hard world, and you've got to cut some corners, break some eggs, defend yourself, take a little bit of vengeance, if you're going to survive.'" Jesus says, No. The whole issue comes down to trust. Do you trust your Father to give you what you need if you do what Jesus says? Do you trust that you'll still have clothes if you keep giving them away, that you'll still have bread if you are generous, that you'll still have a face if you keep giving up your cheeks for a punching bag? Trust your Father, Jesus says, and obey my commandments. Trust your Father, and live a righteousness that surpasses the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Trust your Father, and live out the righteousness of that faith."*

- Peter J. Leithart, The Gospel of Matthew Through New Eyes

## IN

1. In what situations in your life might Christ's commands apply today? In what situations might Christ's command NOT apply? Are there any?
2. How are you challenged by Jesus to take up "the creative weapon of love" (MLK)? Give specific examples.
3. Does this mean that Christians are to be doormats for anyone to walk on? Explain. (Consider how Jesus' words in John 10:18 might apply).
4. How have you asserted your self-will instead of obeying Jesus' commands to nonviolent resistance?

## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus said, "No one takes (my life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18). He did this willingly for you. When the soldiers struck his cheek and spit on him and slapped him, he prayed for them (Matt 26:67, Luke 23:34). When they stripped him of his cloak, he hung naked (Matt 27:28). When they forced him to carry his cross, he was too weak from the beatings so they made a man help him (Matt 27:32). When he hung on the cross, he gave access to his kingdom, not to a beggar or a borrower, but to a robber (Luke 23:43). Jesus laid his life down for you so that you could lay your life down for others. Come to him and speak to him honestly of your fear of laying down your life and receive his life in exchange for your own.*

## OUT

1. Consider the three people you have written down in your circle of influence.
2. What is one tangible way you can "go the extra mile" for them this week?
3. Discuss with your Circle how you can serve someone in your circle of influence together.

## PRAY

The acronym P.R.A.Y. (pause, rejoice, ask, yield) is patterned after the Lord's Prayer. Use it as a model:

### PAUSE

1. Pause to slowly re-read one of these passages: Matthew 26:47-56; 1 Peter 2:21-25; Isaiah 53:3-12.
2. Meditate on how Jesus' embodied nonviolent resistance to evil.

### REJOICE

3. Rejoice in praise, adoration, worship, and thanksgiving at Jesus' self-giving love.

### ASK

4. Ask for forgiveness for the ways you self-protect when you ought to self-give.
5. Ask the Spirit for help in your weakness as you follow Jesus in his way.

### YIELD

6. Yield to Jesus your life, entrusting it into the security of his nail-scarred hands.



LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 5:43-48



## WEEK 11

### Loving Your Enemies

Matthew 5:43-48 - You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 5:43-48.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5:1-42.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN: [Jesus on His Most Radical Idea: Enemy Love by John Mark Comer](#)
- WATCH: [Accidental Courtesy: Daryl Davis, Race & America.](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Romans 12:14-21. How does the Apostle Paul apply Jesus' instructions to the disciples living in the Roman empire?
2. Compare Matthew 5:9 and 5:45. What does this comparison teach us about peacemaking, enemy love, and being children of God?
3. The word translated "perfect" (Gk. teleios) in Matthew 5:48 could be translated: mature, finished, complete, full grown, or fully functioning (cf. Philippians 3:15; Ephesians 4:13). Read Matthew 5:48 but replace the word "perfect" with a few of these other words. How does that change the way you understand the verse?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
Love neighbor and hate enemy	If you love those who love you, what more is that than the Gentiles do?	Love enemies, pray for your persecutors; be mature in love as your Father in heaven is.

*In sixteenth-century Holland, the Mennonites were outlawed and, when caught, often executed. One of them, Dirk Willens, was being chased across an icefield when his pursuer broke through and fell in. In response to his cries for help, Willens returned and saved him from the waters. The pursuer was grateful and astonished that he would do such a thing but nevertheless arrested him, as he thought it his duty to do. A few days later Willens was executed by being burned at the stake in the town of Asperen. It was precisely his Christlikeness that brought on his execution.*

- Ronald A. Wells, History Through the Eyes of Faith

*"Wouldn't you like to be one of those intelligent people who know how to live a rich and unshakable life? One free from loneliness, fear, and anxiety and filled with constant peace and joy? Would you like to love your neighbors as you do yourself and be free of anger, envy, lust, and covetousness? Would you like to have no need for others to praise you, and would you like to not be paralyzed and humiliated by their dislike and condemnation? Would you like to have the inspiration and strength to lead a constant life of creative goodness?...Wouldn't you also like to have a strength and understanding that enables you genuinely and naturally to bless those who are cursing you—or cheating you, beating you out on the job, spitting on you in a confrontation, laughing at your religion or culture, even killing you? Or the strength and understanding merely to give further needed assistance to someone who has forced you to drop what you are doing and help out? To offer the other cheek to someone who has slapped you? Clearly, our entire inner reality of thought and feeling would have to be transformed to bring us to such a place."*

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

## IN

1. If we define an enemy as anyone who you feel to be against you, think of a specific example in which your spouse, friend, roommate or co-worker seemed to be “against” you. How did you respond? What would it have looked like to respond in light of Matt 5:44-45?

2. According to Jesus, how are we to treat our enemies and why (vv. 44-45)? In what ways is Jesus’ command extraordinary (vv. 46-48)?

3. Reflecting on vv. 46-47, John Stott said, “No comment could be more hurtful to the Christian than the words, ‘But you’re no different from anybody else.’” Why is this the case?

4. In v. 48, to be perfect does not mean perfection as we commonly think of the term. It means to be mature, fully grown, in full bloom. We are mature when we love our enemies like our Father (v. 45). How does this challenge your working definition of maturity?

5. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = infant, 10 = adult), where do you place yourself on the spectrum, if maturity is defined as loving your enemies? Why not higher? Why not lower?

## GOOD NEWS

*Unlike you who probably wouldn’t die for even a good person, Jesus died for the weak, the ungodly, sinners, even his enemies (Rom. 5:6-10). The cross teaches us that enemy love is the heart of God. When God’s brilliance and power are on display, it looks like him getting crucified on a cross. If we are to be like our Father, like our King Jesus, filled with the Spirit, we are lovers of our enemies. But first we must receive His love as those who were once enemies (Col. 1:21). Turn to God now asking for the Spirit to pour his love into your heart. Lay hold of Jesus by faith as the great Enemy Lover.*



## OUT

*“The congregation is to be a humble servant of Jesus for the sake of its neighbors.”*

—Lesslie Newbigin

1. In the Common Rhythm, we have a daily practice of loving our neighbors called Bless. The emphasis is on asking the Spirit who we might move towards to bless with words, time, gifts, prayer, or service today.

2. Disciples of Jesus don’t conquer with the sword, but with the towel (John 13:1-20). How can you ‘take up the towel’ and bless and serve others around you, even - maybe especially - your enemies?

## PRAY

1. When Jesus’ kingdom comes, it takes the shape of a cross, not a crown and certainly not a sword.
2. Pray now for specific opportunities for you and your Circle to find ways to seek the Kingdom by going low, bearing your cross, and taking the form of a servant (Phil 2:1-11).

3. Pray for the three people in your circle of influence that they would see your cross-shaped love and be interested in Jesus.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 6:1-4

## WEEK 12

# Hypocrisy & Generosity

Matthew 6:1-4 - Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But 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. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:1-4.
- STUDY Appendix A: The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount to aid your memory.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN: [The Inside Out Kingdom](#) by Tim Keller

### UP

1. In verse 1 Jesus commands us “not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.” Yet in 5:16 he said, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds.” Is there a contradiction here? Explain.
2. Reward is a recurring theme in the Sermon on the Mount (5:12; 5:46; 6:1-2; 6:5; 6:16). How do you think the reward the Father will give us (v. 4) differs from the reward we receive from others (v. 2)?
3. The word reward (6:2, 4) could be translated as “full pay/wages.” What is the difference between the way a boss and a father rewards?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>When you give to the needy</i>	<i>Sound no trumpet like hypocrites</i>	<i>Give in secret, and your Father will reward you</i>



Matthew 6:1-18 begins a new section in Jesus’ sermon (See Appendix A). Here he is concerned with how we practice our righteousness outwards (giving), upwards (prayer), and inwards (fasting). In this section, the principal is that you get what you want. If you want the approval of people, you’ll get it — and nothing else. If you want the approval of God, you’ll get it. Which do you treasure more?

Jesus is trying to prevent hypocrisy. But Jesus’ view of hypocrisy is not merely mismatched public and private life, but also a mismatched internal and external life. To this dilemma, Jesus teaches us the discipline of secrecy — “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (6:3). The discipline of secrecy protects your heart from doing anything that could gain acclaim from others by doing it for the audience of One, your Father who is in heaven and in secret.

## IN

1. What is the biggest discrepancy between who you are as a Christian in public vs. in private? To help answer this question: Think about how others describe you or experience you (at church, at work, with friends, etc). What do they say about you and your faith? Do you alter your behavior in different contexts (alone, with Christians, non-Christians, work, church, etc.)?
2. “Performative Activism” is a term referring to activism done to increase one’s social capital rather than because of one’s devotion to a cause. “Virtue Signaling” is the action of publicly expressing opinions or sentiments intended to demonstrate the moral correctness of one’s position on a particular issue. In our social media age, Jesus’ instruction in Matthew 6 is more pressing than ever. Where do you struggle with putting on a public performance that doesn’t match your inner person?
3. How generous were your parents? How has this impacted you and your own generosity? Who have you seen display radical generosity?
4. C.S. Lewis said, “I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare.” Jesus assumes his disciples will give (“when you give...” 6:2). What is your own practice of giving? How might the Lord be inviting you into deeper generosity?

## GOOD NEWS

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is seen in that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). This frees us up to give not for people’s approval or reluctantly, but because we will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way (2 Cor 9:11). Open wide your empty hands and let them be filled by Jesus. Then open your full hands and give freely to those near and in need because God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7).*

## OUT

### PROJECT: GIVE TO THOSE IN NEED.

1. As a Circle, either use your weekly time or schedule another time (so you can involve family/friends) to create blessing bags for the homeless. The purpose of these bags is to have a tangible way to bless someone in need as Jesus says in Matthew 6:1-4.
2. Decide on what you’d like to fill the bags with. Here are some ideas: Use large ziplock bags, granola bars, \$5-10 gift cards to local grocery stores or restaurants, socks, soap, resources (e.g. directions to shelters).
3. Agree on how many bags you want to make for each of you.
4. Divvy up the list so that each person is responsible for getting some supplies.
5. Come together, pack the bags, and pray over the people you’ll give them to.
6. Look for opportunities to give them to people in need (e.g. stop lights, downtown, etc.). Consider going out of your normal paths if you don’t typically intersect with the poor.
7. When you give the bag away, be kind, introduce yourself, ask their name and if there are specific ways you can pray for them.

*“We live, as Jesus lived, in a world all too full of injustice, hunger, malice and evil. This prayer cries out for justice, bread, forgiveness and deliverance.”*

- N.T. Wright, The Lord and His Prayer

## PRAY

1. Journal a brief prayer for each person in your Circle by name.
2. Each day this week, pray for one Circle member and the three people in their circle of influence.
3. Use the Lord’s Prayer to shape your prayers.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 6:5-8

# WEEK 13

## Hypocrisy & Prayer

Matthew 6:5-8 - And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:5-8
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:4.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People by Pete Greig](#)

### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Luke 18:9-14. How does this story illustrate what Jesus teaches in Matthew 6?
2. How do pagan prayers (v. 7) differ from the persistent prayers Jesus himself offered (Matthew 26:44)?
3. Why and how is our praying to be different (v. 6) from that of hypocrites (v. 5)?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
6:5 When you pray...	<i>Making a show like the hypocrites</i>	<i>But pray in secret, and your Father will reward you</i>
6:7 When you pray...	<i>Babbling like Gentiles, thinking the wordiness will be heard</i>	<i>But pray then like this: Our Father...</i>

*"I personally did not find the Lord's Prayer to be the doorway into a praying life until I was in my mid-twenties. In my family that prayer was, for three generations I know of, always said in unison at the breakfast table. But at some point, for reasons I cannot explain, I began to use it in a new way: taking each phrase of it and slowly and meditatively entering into the depths of its meaning, elaborating within it important details of my current life. When I began to "live" in the prayer in this way—for that is the only way I can describe it—there were many nights when I would awaken about two o'clock and spend an hour of delight before God just dwelling in one or more phrases from it. I had to make a point at times, as I still do, of praying thoughtfully on through the entire prayer. Otherwise the riches of one or two phrases in the prayer would be all I could develop, and I would not benefit from all its contents. Sometimes now I do not begin at the first request but go immediately to the end or the middle and settle in there for a while. At other times I will use just the words of the address, "Our Father filling the heavens," to establish and reestablish address and orientation as I go through the day. For some reason I especially profit from using those words while driving Los Angeles freeways. They put the vast, sprawling urban landscape, with a greater population than many nations, into its proper perspective before God. And they transform my sense of who and where I am. I have never found any situation in which they failed to be extremely powerful."*

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy



## IN

1. According to Jesus the acid test of hypocrisy is, do you have a secret prayer life? It's been said that a person is who they are on their knees before God, and nothing more. Reflect on your private prayer life. Think about its overall character, as well as specific moments of both worship (e.g. adoration, awe, thanksgiving) and wrestling (e.g. distraction, ambivalence, indifference). How does your prayer life reflect your true beliefs about God? What does your prayer life say about you?
2. What are some clear ways you can cultivate a private prayer-life? How can you take small steps that will build into a meaningful life of prayer?
3. Common Rhythm: How has the practice of Prayer influenced your prayer life?

## GOOD NEWS

*Both Jesus and the Spirit pray for us continuously (Rom. 8:26, Heb 7:25). Even more, they help us not despite but because of our weaknesses. Therefore, draw near now and offer your struggling, inconsistent, too-often-cold prayer life to the Lord. As John Stott said, "(God) is neither ignorant, so that we need to instruct him, nor hesitant, so that we need to persuade him. He is our Father – a Father who loves his children and knows all about their needs." Pray until you can pray. Pray yourself into praying.*

## OUT

### EXERCISE: PRAYER-WALK YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

1. Schedule a day this week to prayer-walk your neighborhood.
2. Feel free to invite your Circle, roommates, friends, your spouse, or kids to join you.
3. Walk the streets of your neighborhood.
4. Pay attention to the people, the houses, the parks, and the cars.
5. Ask the Spirit to show you things you've never seen before.
6. Pray for neighbors by name as you pass their houses.
7. Introduce yourself to neighbors you don't know.
8. Ask how you can pray for them while you walk.
9. Journal some reflections to share with your Circle.

## PRAY

1. Use the Lord's Prayer on your prayer walk. Pray for your ***Father's name to be hallowed, His kingdom to come, and his will to be done in your neighborhood as it is in heaven.***
2. Pray for your neighbors' provision, forgiveness, reconciliation, deliverance, and protection.
3. Continue praying for the three people in your circle of influence by name.



## WEEK 14

# The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-15 - Pray then like this: 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 also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:9-15
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:8
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Basis of Prayer: "Our Father" by Timothy Keller](#)
- PRAY together during your normal Circle time. Consider using the UP, IN, OUT framework for your time. UP: praise, adoration, thanksgiving. IN: petition, confession, healing. OUT: kingdom-focused, intercession, mission.

### UP

1. What natural divisions do you observe in the Lord's Prayer? What is the focus of each? (Hint: Pay attention to the pronouns).
2. The prayer begins with "Our Father." Read Jesus' references to the Father throughout the Sermon (Matt. 5:9, 5:16, 5:45, 5:48, 6:1, 6:4, 6:6, 6:8, 6:9, 6:14, 6:15, 6:18, 6:26, 6:32, 7:11, 7:21). Why does praying to "our Father" make all the difference in whether we pray like hypocrites, Gentiles, or disciples?

*"In the Episcopal Order of Worship, the priest sometimes introduces the Lord's Prayer with the words, 'Now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say...' The word bold is worth thinking about. We do well not to pray The Prayer lightly. It takes guts to pray it at all. We can pray it in the unthinking and perfunctory way we usually do only by disregarding what we are saying. 'Thy will be done' is what we are saying. That is the climax of the first half of the prayer. We are asking God to be God. We are asking God to do not what we want but what God wants. We are asking God to make manifest the holiness that is now mostly hidden, to set free in all its terrible splendor the devastating power that is now mostly under restraint. 'Thy kingdom come...on earth' is what we are saying. And if that were suddenly to happen, what then? What would stand and what would fall? Who would be welcomed in and who would be thrown the Hell out? Which if any of our most precious visions of what God is and of what human beings are would prove to be more or less on the mark and which would turn out to be phony as three-dollar bills? Boldness indeed. To speak those words is to invite the tiger out of the cage, to unleash a power that makes atomic power look like a warm breeze. You need to be bold in another way to speak the second half. Give us. Forgive us. Don't test us. Deliver us. If it takes guts to face the omnipotence that is God's, it takes perhaps no less to face the impotence that is ours. We can do nothing without God. Without God we are nothing. It is only the words 'Our Father' that make the prayer bearable. If God is indeed something like a father, then as something like children maybe we can risk approaching him anyway."*

- Frederick Buechner, Foreword to Lord, Teach Us: The Lord's Prayer & the Christian Life

### IN

1. In what ways do your prayers need to more closely resemble this model prayer? How might Buechner's words and your own study and practice of the Lord's Prayer change how you currently pray?
2. The 20th century theologian, Karl Barth said, "To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world." How is the "disorder of the world" counteracted by each line of the Lord's Prayer?



3. When do you find yourself most/least motivated to pray? What factors keep you from praying? Are these helps or hindrances to prayer typically theological, practical, personal, or spiritual?
4. The principle of 6:14-15 is that you won't repent if you don't forgive. Both unforgiveness and unrepentance have the same root: pride. Only humble people repent. Only humble people forgive. Who are you tempted to withhold forgiveness from?

### GOOD NEWS

*Jesus himself is our access to the Father, our gate and guide to Heaven, the King come on earth, God's will done in human form perfectly and on our behalf, our daily bread of life, the forgiveness of our debts, the model for our forgiveness of others, the one who was tempted in every way just as we are yet without sin, the ultimate Deliverer from the Evil One, and the One to whom all glory and honor and power forever and ever is due. To pray the Lord's prayer is to summon Jesus, the Lord himself.*

#### OUT

*"The deepest motive for mission is simply the desire to be with Jesus where he is, on the frontier between the reign of God and the usurped dominion of the devil."*

- Lesslie Newbigin

1. Prayer is mission. Spend some time in prayer for the Kingdom to come here and now.
2. Pray the Lord's Prayer over one of your places (where you live, work, learn, or play).
3. It is best to be on site, preferably walking around.
4. Ask the Spirit to show you where you can join in what Jesus is already doing.
5. Pray the Lord's Prayer against the works of the Evil One in that location.
6. Ask to see God's kingdom come in real tangible ways.

*"Prayer does not equip us for greater works — prayer is the greater work."*

- Oswald Chambers

#### PRAY

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus connects our willingness to forgive with our ability to be forgiven. This is not about earning forgiveness (otherwise it would say, "forgive us our debts, "because" we also have forgiven..."). Jesus envisions his community of self-replicating disciples (i.e. the church) to be a beacon and haven of forgiveness and reconciliation.

1. As you pray the Lord's Prayer daily this week, linger over the words: **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**
2. Ask your Father to forgive you for your pride leading to a lack of repentance (as the offender) and unforgiveness (as the offended).
3. Pray for anyone you are unreconciled with that your Father would bring about harmony.
4. Pray for the others in your Circle to be humble and seek reconciliation.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 6:16-18

## WEEK 15

### Hypocrisy & Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18 - And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:16-18.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:15.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [Prayer and Fasting for Discipling Relationships](#) by Dave Clayton & Sydney Clayton
- OPTIONAL: [Fasting: To Starve the Flesh and Feed the Spirit](#) by John Mark Comer

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Isaiah 58. In vv. 1-5, how does Israel's fast only appear to be good? In vv. 6-12, what characterizes the fast the LORD wants?
2. John Stott remarks: "To pray is to seek God (6:5-15), to give is to serve others (6:1-4), to fast is to discipline oneself (6:16-18). But the effect of hypocrisy is to destroy the integrity of these practices by turning each of them into an occasion for self-display." How have you become more aware of the danger and temptation of doing things for self-display?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
When you fast...	Appearing gloomy to others, like the hypocrites	Dress with joy, and your Father will reward you

*"In fasting, we abstain in some significant way from food and possibly from drink as well. This discipline teaches us a lot about ourselves very quickly. It will certainly prove humiliating to us, as it reveals to us how much our peace depends upon the pleasures of eating. It may also bring to mind how we are using food pleasure to assuage the discomforts caused in our bodies by faithless and unwise living and attitudes – lack of self-worth, meaningless work, purposeless existence, or lack of rest or exercise. If nothing else, though, it will certainly demonstrate how powerful and clever our body is in getting its own way against our strongest resolves."*

- Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*

*"This trio of religious obligations expresses in some degree our duty to God, to others, and to ourselves. For to give is to seek to serve our neighbour, especially the needy. To pray is to seek God's face and to acknowledge our dependence on him. To fast (that is, to abstain from food for spiritual reasons) is intended at least partly as a way to deny and so to discipline ourselves. Jesus does not raise the question whether his followers will engage in these things but, assuming that they will, teaches them why and how to do so."*

- John Stott on Matthew 6:1-18, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*

#### IN

Fasting is an opportunity to deny yourself a good thing (e.g. food) in order to humble yourself and feel your weakness before God and dependence on God. Are there any good things — food, social media, caffeine, sugar, screens — that may have too much control over your well-being? What does it look like for this good thing to control or hold power over you?



In the Common Rhythm, we define the Fast practice as denying ourselves to hunger for God with others. Plan your weekly fast by using the steps below:

1. Choose the day and duration of your fast.
2. Set a purpose for fasting: healing, intercession for others, specific sin, intimacy with God.
3. Determine what you will deny yourself: food, social media, caffeine, sugar, screens.
4. Invite others to join in fasting and praying with and for you.
5. When and how will you pray more during your fast?
6. Reflect: How have I felt a hunger for more of God? How have I felt solidarity with those who go hungry?

### GOOD NEWS

*Jesus was hungry in the wilderness (Matt 4:2). Jesus was thirsty on the cross (John 19:28). Why? Jesus emptied himself so we could be filled (Phil 2:7). Jesus leaned into the lack of being human so we could know the fullness of the Son of God. We fast now as we wait for the Bridegroom (Matt 9:15). When he comes we feast for joy. Feel your hunger for him now. Offer it to him to be filled by him.*

#### OUT

1. Set aside time on your fast day to pray by name for the three people in your circle of influence.
2. Ask the Spirit to give them spiritual hunger for Jesus.
3. Ask the Spirit to open doors for you to speak to them about Jesus (Col. 4:2-4).
4. Reach out to them and ask if you can pray for anything in particular for them.

#### PRAY

1. Ask your Circle for specific ways you can be praying for them on your fast day.
2. Use the meal time to pray for them by name.
3. Ask for specific break-throughs in your own life.
4. Allow the weakness of your hunger to make you more aware of your need for God, that **he gives you your daily bread.**
5. Trust the Spirit's desire to help you in your weakness (Rom. 8:26).





# WEEK 16

## Heart & Treasure

Matthew 6:19-23 - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:19-23
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:18
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN: [Treasure vs. Money by Tim Keller](#)

### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Luke 12:13-21. Why did Jesus tell this parable? How does a person become “rich toward God” (v. 21)?
2. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 17-19. How does Paul apply Jesus’ teaching here in Matthew 6:19-23?
3. Read Hebrews 13:5. According to this passage, what is the basis for our contentment?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>Do not lay up treasures on earth</i>	<i>Where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal</i>	<i>Lay up treasures in heaven</i>

*“What Jesus forbids his followers is the selfish accumulation of goods (‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth’); extravagant and luxurious living; the hardheartedness which does not feel the colossal need of the world’s underprivileged people; the foolish fantasy that a person’s life consists in the abundance of possessions; and the materialism which tethers our hearts to the earth.”*

- John Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount



*“Everyone has treasures. This is an essential part of what it is to be human. To have nothing that one treasures is to be in a nonhuman condition, and nothing degrades people more than to scorn or destroy or deprive them of their treasures. Indeed, merely to pry into what one’s treasures are is a severe intrusion. Apart from very special considerations, no one has a right even to know what our treasures are. A main part of intimacy between two persons is precisely mutual knowledge of their treasures. Treasures are directly connected to our spirit, or will, and thus to our dignity as persons. It is, for example, very important for parents to respect the “treasure space” of children. It lies right at the center of the child’s soul, and great harm can be done if it is not respected and even fostered...We reveal what our treasures are by what we try to protect, secure, keep.”*

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

## IN

1. John Stott said, "To store up treasures in heaven is to do anything on earth whose effects last for eternity." Practically speaking, what are ways you can store up treasure in heaven? Does this mean that we cannot have personal property, savings accounts, or insurance policies? Explain.

2. In their book *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*, de Graaf, Wann, and Naylor diagnose a disease called affluenza: "a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more." One diagnostic question is: Given a choice between a slight pay raise and a shorter work week, would you choose the money? Why or why not?

*"In the first century a Christian named Diogenetus wrote a letter in which he talked about the difference between early Christians and people who worshiped the Roman gods. He said, 'We share our table with all, but we do not share our bed with all.' In other words he said, that pagans are promiscuous with their body but stingy with their money, whereas the early Christians were stingy with their body and promiscuous with their money."*

- Tim Keller

1. What power has the spell of materialism held over you? How has it been hard to break?
2. When Jesus speaks about the eye, he's referring to perspective. How has greed, consumerism, or materialism distorted your view of life?
3. What specific things might change in your life if you took up Jesus' view of materialism?

## GOOD NEWS

*Any treasure except Jesus will insist that you give all in order to purchase it. But Jesus is the only treasure who gave all in order to purchase you. Come to him with empty hands and ask him to make you content with himself.*

## OUT

You are going to write your Before/Because Story. The purpose of this story is to develop a tool to share your story in a concise, clear, and compelling way with a not-yet-disciple of Jesus. The framework is simple: Thirty seconds of your life BEFORE you knew Jesus. Thirty seconds of your life BECAUSE you know Jesus. Consider summarizing the story you shared at the beginning of this DMC process.

1. BEFORE Jesus my life was...
  - Where did you seek to find life, meaning, beauty, justice, satisfaction, purpose?
  - How did you live your life on your own apart from God?
  - How were you trying to bandage your own wounds? Heal your own hurts?
  - Tip: Avoid Christianese language that would not translate to a not-yet-disciple of Jesus.
2. BECAUSE of Jesus my life is...
  - Be sure to speak of Jesus' dying and rising. The cross and resurrection makes all the difference.
  - How did God change you? How is God changing you?
  - Tip: Beware of over-spiritualizing and making it seem like all is well because of Jesus. Jesus does not promise pain-free lives but presence-filled lives. How does Jesus make life meaningful despite pain?

## PRAY

1. Take up the words of the Lord's Prayer over the next week and pray for a concrete and clear vision of how you can store up treasures in heaven.
2. Ask the Spirit to show you places you store up treasures on earth. Surrender these to God.
3. Worship **your Father who is in heaven** as your heart's highest treasure.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 6:24-26

# WEEK 17

## See the Birds

Matthew 6:24-26 - No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:24-26
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:23
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Jesus on Becoming a Non-Anxious Presence by John Mark Comer](#)

UP

1. How will the crucial choices we make in 6:19-24 affect our ability to live free from worry (v. 25)?
2. Many people hold two jobs and are able to satisfy two bosses. So why would Jesus say that it is impossible to serve two masters—God and money (v. 24)?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
No one can serve two masters	You are not able to serve God and wealth, being anxious about food and clothes	Consider the birds, study the lilies, seek first God's kingdom and righteousness

*“Jesus places the alternatives before us at every stage. There are two treasures (on earth and in heaven, vv. 19–21), two bodily conditions (light and darkness, vv. 22–23), two masters (God and Money, v. 24) and two preoccupations (our bodies and God’s kingdom, vv. 25–34). We cannot sit on the fence.”*

- John Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount

*“The central theme of 6:25-34, however, is that one should take each day as it comes, not worrying about God’s provision, because he cares deeply for his people. The petition about daily bread from the Lord’s Prayer is in essence unpacked here. One verse in this paragraph stands out as frequently misinterpreted: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (6:33). Either commentators relegate this promise entirely to the (end times) or they have to admit that millions of Christians throughout history have not been given adequate food, clothing and shelter through no necessary fault of their own. Mark 10:29 makes it clear, however, that Jesus did promise houses and fields to his followers a hundredfold, even in this present age, and the context there makes it clear how they receive them. Just as they get numerous new family members in the Lord, so too God’s people share with one another when there are physical needs. Likewise, just two verses after Luke’s parallel saying, “Seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well” (Luke 12:31), we read, “Sell your possessions and give to the poor” (12:33a). Thus we must take the plural terms in Matt. 6:33 seriously (“you [all] seek...given to you [all]”). When God’s people truly seek his righteous standards collectively, that will include helping the poor and needy in their midst.”*

- Craig Blomberg, The Most Often Abused Verses in the Sermon on the Mount and How to Treat Them Right

## IN

1. The singer Neil Hannon, whose father was an Anglican bishop, wrote a poignant yet witty song about the way in which his deep yearning to believe in God is

thwarted by this kind of hypocrisy in the church:

“The cars in the churchyard are shiny and German,  
Distinctly at odds with the theme of the sermon.  
And during communion I study the people,  
Threading themselves through the eye of the needle.”

What was it that held Neil Hannon back from belief in God? How have you wrestled with the economic hypocrisy of the church in the West?



2. If God promises to feed and clothe his children, then why are many of them in rags and undernourished? Read Matthew 6:1-4; 6:11; and Matthew 25:41-45, how does God plan to feed his children?
3. How would your spending habits change if you asked yourself John Wesley’s Four Money Questions?
  - In spending this money, am I acting as if I owned it, or am I acting as the Lord’s trustee?
  - What Scripture passage requires me to spend this money in this way?
  - Can I offer up this purchase as a sacrifice to the Lord?
  - Will God reward me for this expenditure at the resurrection of the just?

## GOOD NEWS

*Your heavenly Father feeds your deepest need by sending His Son to be the bread of life. On the cross, Jesus was naked. Jesus was hungry. Jesus was thirsty. He gave his very life to be your sustenance so that he could say, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Look at the birds of the air and see how your Father values them. Look at Jesus upon the cross, and ask, “Am I not of great value to him?”*

## OUT

1. Share your BEFORE/BECAUSE Story with your Circle (See OUT section of Week 16).
2. Set a timer for 1 minute.
3. Share feedback on how to make it more concise, clear, and compelling to a not-yet disciple.
4. Make necessary edits and practice sharing it without reading it.
5. Pray for a not-yet disciple to share your story with.
6. Cast any anxieties on your Father that you may have about sharing your story.
7. Look for opportunities over the next week.

## PRAY

1. Take up the words of the Lord’s Prayer over the next week and pray for an awareness that your **daily bread** comes from God.
2. Ask God to deepen in you a contentment with what you have (and even with what you don’t have).
3. Ask your Father to show you a sign of his real-time provision for your needs.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 6:27-30



## Study the Lilies

Matthew 6:27-30 - And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

## OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:27-30
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:26
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Praying Our Fears by Timothy Keller](#)

## UP

1. Jesus asks, "Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" (v. 27). He's speaking of our tendency to want control over our lives. What is Jesus' reasoning for why we can relinquish control (v. 30)?
2. Jesus is speaking of not being anxious. Yet Paul spoke of "the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). What is the difference between proper and improper anxiety?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>No one can serve two masters</i>	<i>You are not able to serve God and wealth, being anxious about food and clothes</i>	<i>Consider the birds, study the lilies, seek first God's kingdom and righteousness</i>

How do we diagnose proper anxiety vs. improper anxiety? By examining what we care about.

1. Sometimes you're anxious because you care about the right things.
2. Sometimes you're anxious because you care about the wrong things.
3. Sometimes you're anxious because you care too much.
4. Sometimes you're not anxious because you care too little.

Improper anxiety is care without contentment. Proper anxiety is care with contentment.





*“Soberly, when our trust is in things that are absolutely beyond any risk or threat, and we have learned from good sources, including our own experience, that those things are there, anxiety is just groundless and pointless. It occurs only as a hangover of bad habits established when we were trusting things—like human approval and wealth—that were certain to let us down. Now our strategy should be one of resolute rejection of worry, while we concentrate on the future in hope and with prayer and on the past with thanksgiving.”*

- Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

## IN

1. What is your experience of improper anxiety? Reflect on specific instances and how care without contentment manifested itself. What is your experience of proper anxiety? How might you move towards care with contentment?
2. The root choice is: Can I trust God or must I assume total responsibility for my life, with all the worry of such responsibility? How does this question clarify your own feelings of worry and anxiety?
3. Jesus is inviting us to trust God’s vision of abundance over the world’s myth of scarcity. How are you shaped by the “myth of scarcity?” How would your life be different if you trusted that your Father gives generously out of his abundance?
4. What gets in the way of trusting the provision of your Father? What makes it hard for you to be “careless in the care of God?”
5. Common Rhythm: One practice is Rest. Taking one day in seven to do nothing you know to be work is an act of trust in our Father’s vision of abundance. Refusal to Rest is symptomatic of living within our world’s myth of scarcity. Discuss with your Circle how you take 24 hours to do nothing you know to be work. What challenges do you encounter in this weekly practice? Note what underlying beliefs may create the challenge.

## GOOD NEWS

*As Jesus approached the cross he said, “Now is my soul troubled” (John 12:27). He knows what it means to fear something in the future. And yet, he endured the cross so that we could have the confidence and security of a good and generous Father. We can be “carefree in the care of God” because on the cross God proved his care for our deepest problems and pain (e.g. our commitment to control our lives). Relinquish your life into Jesus’ nail-scarred hands for safe keeping.*

## OUT

1. Have you been able to share your BEFORE/BECAUSE Story with anyone this week?
2. If so, how did it go? Share your experience with your Circle.
3. If not, pray for an open door (Col. 4:3) to share your story.
4. What are some “closed doors” that you’re experiencing, internally or situationally?
5. Pray for the specifics of those.
6. Ask the Spirit to give you courage, clarity, and boldness.
7. Step out in faith this week to share your story with someone.
8. Pray for the other members of your Circle to share their story.

## PRAY

1. Take up the words of the Lord’s Prayer over the next week and thank God that your everyday provision (i.e. **daily bread**) comes from God.
2. Make a practice of asking the Father to provide for specific needs.
3. Ask your Father for eyes to see His real-time provision for your needs.
4. Pray for those who live with lack (e.g. physical, material, financial, emotional, relational, spiritual).

# WEEK 19

## Seek the Kingdom

Matthew 6:31-34 - Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 6:31-34
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:30.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN: [Seek First by Ray Ortlund Jr.](#)

### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matthew 5:47; Matthew 6:7; and 1 Thessalonians 4:5. What are the defining characteristics of “the Gentiles” (v. 32) in contrast with Jesus’ disciples?
2. Jesus says not to be anxious because your heavenly Father knows what you need (v. 32) and yet we can expect daily troubles (v. 34). You are cared for yet not spared from troubles. How do you reconcile this tension?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
No one can serve two masters	<i>You are not able to serve God and wealth, being anxious about food and clothes</i>	<i>Consider the birds, study the lilies, seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness</i>

*“Earthly possessions dazzle our eyes and delude us into thinking that they can provide security and freedom from anxiety. Yet all the time they are the very source of all anxiety...By trying to ensure for the next day we are only creating uncertainty today. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. The only way to win assurance is by leaving tomorrow entirely in the hands of God and by receiving from him all we need for today...It is not care that frees the disciples from care, but their faith in Jesus Christ.”*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

*“To seek first his kingdom and his righteousness may be said to embrace our Christian evangelistic and social responsibilities, much as do the ‘salt’ and ‘light’ metaphors of Matthew 5. In order to seek first God’s kingdom we must evangelize, since the kingdom spreads only as the gospel of Christ is preached, heard, believed and obeyed. In order to seek first God’s righteousness we shall still evangelize (for the inward righteousness of the heart is impossible without it), but we shall also engage in social action and effort to spread throughout the community those higher standards of righteousness which are pleasing to God.”*

- John Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount

*“The kingdom of God is what God is doing...So how do you seek first the kingdom of God? Well, you try to find out what God is doing and get involved with it.”*

- Dallas Willard, Renewing the Christian Mind

## IN

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says that Jesus wants to explode the illusion of cause and effect between your work and God's provision. In other words, God's provision does not rely upon your work. Instead, Jesus wants his disciples to live with the carefree simplicity of walking with him and accepting everything as it comes from God. What difference would it make to your anxiety if you truly lived as if everything is a gift from your Father's generous hand?
2. This section of the Sermon on the Mount (6:19-34) is about ambition. Ambition is what you "seek after." John Stott said, "Ultimately there are only two possible ambitions for human beings...we can be ambitious either for ourselves or for God. There is no third alternative." We often seek first 'my comfort, my wealth, my status, my power.' We can either seek 'my kingdom come' or 'Thy kingdom come.' What are your goals and ambitions? How has this passage challenged you to reexamine them?
3. What thoughts and emotions are stirred up when Jesus speaks about anxiety? Does it seem unrealistic? Why or why not?
4. Jesus tells his disciples to seek first the kingdom of God. He's speaking here of priorities. Look at your calendar, your credit card/bank statement, and your recurring thoughts. According to your actions, what are your priorities? How might Jesus invite you to prioritize seeking his kingdom (see Willard quote above)?
5. Common Rhythm: The weekly practice of Rest is one way we act as if our heavenly Father knows our needs. Describe your practice of Rest. How has it helped to have 24 hours to do nothing you know to be work?

## GOOD NEWS

*As he turned toward the cross, Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled." He felt anxiety about bearing the crushing weight of the impending day of the Lord. Sufficient for that day, Good Friday, is its own trouble. Jesus sought first the Kingdom of God. He went through that day of trouble so that he might free us from fear and free us to seek first what God is doing in and around us.*

## OUT

John Stott said, "God's kingdom exists only where Jesus Christ is consciously acknowledged." Evangelism is a primary way that we "seek first the kingdom of God" (v. 33). It's easy to think that we're only effective in evangelism if someone repents and believes in Jesus. But there are typically many steps that lead up to that point. This has been called pre-evangelism. This entire process is under God's guidance. As Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father" (John 6:65).

1. Read the Engel Scale in Appendix E.
2. Locate the three people in your circle of influence somewhere on the scale.
3. Prayerfully collaborate with your Circle how you might be involved in helping them up a step.
4. Ask the Spirit for help and consider ways you can act to "next step" someone towards Jesus.

## PRAY

*"Prayer as kingdom praying is an arrangement explicitly instituted by God in order that we as individuals may count, and count for much, as we learn step by step how to govern, to reign with him in his kingdom. To enter and to learn this reign is what gives the individual life its intended significance. This high calling also explains why prayer frequently requires much effort, continuous effort, and on some matters possibly years and years of effort. Prayer is, above all, a means of forming character. It combines freedom and power with service and love. What God gets out of our lives—and, indeed, what we get out of our lives—is simply the person we become. It is God's intention that we should grow into the kind of person he could empower to do what we want to do. Then we are ready to "reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22: 5)."*

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

1. Read Revelation 21:1-8 to see what it looks like when the kingdom comes.
2. Pray back through Revelation 21:1-8 asking for Jesus' future reign to become a present reality.
3. Use the petition, "**Your kingdom come**" from the Lord's Prayer to guide these Kingdom-Focused prayers.

## Condemnation & Confession

Matthew 7:1-5 - Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:1-5
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-6:34.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Matthew 7:1-12 by Thabiti Anyabwile](#)

John Stott points out that Matthew 7 is about following Jesus into our relationships: to our brother or sister (vv. 1-5); to a group startlingly designated 'dogs' and 'pigs' (v. 6); to our heavenly Father in prayer (vv. 7-11); to our neighbors as our attitude and actions are shaped by the Golden Rule (v. 12); to our fellow pilgrims who walk with us along the narrow way (vv. 13-14); to false prophets (vv. 15-20); and to Jesus our Lord whose teaching we build our lives upon (vv. 21-27).

### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Luke 18:9-14. Jesus is giving us a story-form commentary on Matthew 7:1-5. What do we learn about the kind of judgement Jesus is forbidding here? Are there any kinds of judgement that are not forbidden (cf. 7:15-20)?
2. Read back over Matthew 5:8; 5:16; 5:28-29; 6:1; 6:22-23; 6:26; and 7:3-5 paying attention to the role of sight/perception in the Sermon on the Mount. According to Jesus, how can our sight (i.e. perception) become distorted? How can it be healed?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>Do not judge, lest you be judged</i>	<i>By the measure with which you judge, you will be judged</i>	<i>First take the log out of your own eye</i>

*"The follower of Jesus is still a 'critic' in the sense of using powers of discernment (e.g. Matt 7:15), but not a 'judge' in the sense of being censorious. Censoriousness is a compound sin consisting of several unpleasant ingredients. It does not mean to assess people critically, but to judge them harshly. A censorious critic is a fault-finder who is negative and destructive towards other people and enjoys actively seeking out their failings. Such a person puts the worst possible construction on the motives of others, pours cold water on their schemes and is ungenerous towards their mistakes...If we enjoy occupying the bench, we must not be surprised to find ourselves in the dock...To sum up, the command not to judge is not a requirement to be blind, but rather a plea to be generous."*

- John Stott

### IN

1. In 7:2, Jesus says, if you judge strictly and unmercifully, you will be judged the same way. Read Matthew 5:26 and Matthew 6:12-15 to see elsewhere when Jesus offers a choice between living in an economy of grace or an economy of condemnation. What thoughts and feelings are stirred up by these verses?

2. Our tendency is to exaggerate the faults of others while minimizing our own. In v. 5, Jesus calls us first to self-examination (first take the log out of your own eye) then to others-exhortation (then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye). Why does our refusal to face ourselves honestly blind us in helping others? Which are you more prone to avoid: self-examination or others-exhortation? Why?

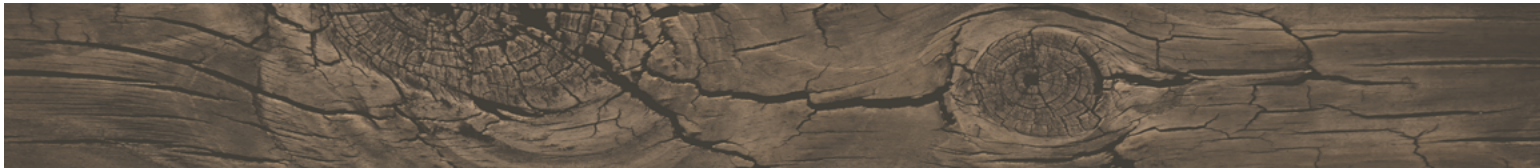
3. Francis Schaeffer has an illustration of v.2: Imagine for your whole life you had a voice recorder hanging around your neck. But it only records the moral judgments with which you bind other people (e.g. “He should...” or “I can’t believe she...”). Now, at the end of your life, you stand in that great moment before God as judge. Suppose, then, that God simply touched the voice recorder button and you heard replayed in your own words all those statements by which you had bound other people in moral judgment. Then God would simply say to you: “Now where do you stand in the light of your own moral judgments?” How would you fare? Really imagine it. What emotions does this stir up?

4. Ask yourself, are you judging anyone’s behavior by a stricter standard than you judge your own? Consider your relationships: friends, family, spouse, children, co-worker, employer, employee, neighbors, other Christians, people with different views (e.g. religion, politics, sexuality, race, etc.) than you. Who might you need to confess this to and ask forgiveness from?

5. Common Rhythm: Rather than harshly judging your brother or sister, Bless them. Ask the Spirit who you might bless with words, time, gifts, prayer, or service everyday this week. Be intentional about specific ways you see Jesus in their life.

### GOOD NEWS

*Only when I am saved by grace, apart from anything that I have to offer, will I have the security to look at who I really am. Jesus was crucified on your log to set you free to see yourself and others with eyes of love. Come to your Father now with no pretension, in utter honesty trusting that he receives you as you are because of Jesus’ cross.*



## OUT

Pre-evangelism is the hard and patient work of uprooting objections and obstacles to a sincere hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many people don’t believe the gospel because it has become unbelievable. Some objections are intellectual (e.g. Did Jesus really rise from the dead?); some are moral (e.g. Why does God care who I sleep with?); and some are emotional (e.g. Where was Jesus during my rigid, judgemental religious upbringing?). Following Jesus winsomely and without shame is one of the most important ways to make the gospel believable again.

1. Read the Engel Scale in Appendix E.
2. Locate the three people in your circle of influence somewhere on the scale.
3. Prayerfully collaborate with your Circle how you might be involved in helping them up a step.
4. Ask the Spirit for help and consider ways you can act to next step someone towards Jesus.

## PRAY

In Psalm 139:23–24 David prays, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

In Psalm 19:12–13 David prays, “Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.”

Both of these psalms imply that we are prone to blindspots but the Spirit is willing to reveal these to us, if we ask sincerely. During your evening Prayer this week, use the Prayer of Examen below to ask God to search your life:

### EVENING EXAMEN:

- **Recall:** What happened today? (Recall the day with as much detail as you can).
- **Rejoice:** Where do I see God’s presence and blessing?
- **Repent:** Where do I see my sinful patterns or attitudes?
- **Renew:** How can I be more present with Jesus tomorrow?

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 7:6-II



## WEEK 21

### Ask, Seek, Knock

Matthew 7:6-11 - Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:6-11
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:5
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT.
- LISTEN to [Flourish: Matthew 7:1-12 by Benjamin Kandt](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matthew 8:28-34 and Matthew 15:21-28. Dogs and pigs are ways Jews spoke of Gentiles. Israel had a history of entrusting themselves (giving what is holy...throwing their pearls) to Gentile nations for protection and provision. Jesus is warning his disciples not to do the same. According to 7:7-11, how does he want us to find protection and provision instead?
2. Read Luke 11:13. What do you think it means that Luke and Matthew use “the Holy Spirit” and “good gifts” interchangeably?

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
<i>Do not give holy things to dogs, nor pearls to pigs</i>	<i>They will trample them and tear you to pieces</i>	<i>Give your trust in prayer to your Father in heaven</i>



Matthew 7:6 is arguably the most difficult passage to interpret in the Sermon on the Mount. A common reading is that Jesus is counseling us not to preach the gospel (holy and pearls) to people who staunchly refuse it (dogs and pigs). While Jesus teaches something like that in Matthew 10:14 and Paul does it in Acts (13:51; 18:6), that's unlikely here. How do you judge (7:1) when someone is too resistant to receive the gospel? Some of the most hardened antagonists to Jesus have become his most radical followers (e.g. Apostle Paul). Jesus elsewhere compares the kingdom of heaven to pearls (Matthew 13:45-46). He does not want his disciples to ally with secular or pagan powers (“dogs” and “pigs” to the first century Jewish mind) to bring the Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Instead he wants us to ask, seek, and knock; giving our trust to a Father who knows how to give good gifts — even his very own Spirit — to his children.



## IN

1. Few things undercut our prayer life like cynicism (e.g. “I’ve asked and God didn’t answer”). Paul Miller said, “The movement from naive optimism to cynicism is the new American journey. In naive optimism we don’t need to pray because everything is under control. In cynicism we can’t pray because everything is out of control, little is possible.” Does your prayer-life tend towards naive optimism or cynicism? What about your story has brought you to this place?
2. Write down one example of answered prayer and one example of unanswered prayer. Discuss with your Circle. As you share, pay attention to your movement towards either naive optimism or cynicism.
3. Who or what are you tempted to trust with your provision and protection instead of persevering prayer (ask, seek, knock) to your Father?
4. Common Rhythm: Many of us turn to our screens for comfort. Netflix feels better than boredom. Instagram feels better than anxiety. This week try the practice of Listen from the Common Rhythm. Decide the time and place when you will turn off your devices for the sake of presence with God, others, or yourself. Discuss what this was like with your Circle.

## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus prayed Psalm 22 on the cross (Matt 27:46) which says, “Dogs encompass me...they have pierced my hands and feet” (v. 16). Jesus was crucified by Roman Empire because he gave himself over to the pagan powers of his day yet continued entrusting himself to His Father who judges justly (1 Pet 2:23). Jesus came to show a trustworthy picture of God so that we can give him the precious pearl of our trust.*

## OUT

1. How have you been able to next step someone towards Jesus on the Engel Scale?
2. If you haven’t, what’s getting in the way?

You may feel like you’re not sure how to do that. One option is to invite them to coffee to read and discuss something meaningful together. We’ve created a Resource Collection (see Appendix G) to help you do just that. We’ve curated a list of succinct resources that stir up questions, invite conversation, or present Christianity in an accessible way. Most people are willing to have coffee or a meal and discuss something with you. You can use the HEAR the Heart Tool in Appendix F to listen well.

3. Based on what you know about the three people in your circle of influence, which of these articles, videos, and podcasts would they be interested in discussing with you? Discuss with your Circle.
4. Make a plan to invite someone in your circle of influence to discuss one of these resources with you.

## PRAY

1. Reflect on your experience with the Prayer of Examen from last week.
2. What insights did you gain from considering the presence of God throughout your day?
3. Renew your intention for the practice of Prayer this week.
  - **Morning:** Reorient your life around the Kingdom by praying the Lord’s Prayer.
  - **Midday:** Intercede for your circle of influence.
  - **Evening:** Prayer of Examen (see Week 20: PRAY)

*“Every single time we say ‘Amen,’ we pull the Kingdom a little closer.”*

- Pete Greig

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 7:12

## WEEK 22

# The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:12 - So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:12.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:11.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [The Golden Rule by John Mark Comer](#)

### UP

Matthew 7:12, commonly called the Golden Rule bookends the main body of the sermon (5:17-7:12). Notice that 5:17 also speaks of the Law and the Prophets. The rest of the sermon is the conclusion. See Appendix A.

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matthew 22:34-40. Note the language of the Law and the Prophets. What do the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12) and the Great Commandments (Matt 22:38-40) have in common? How do they explain one another?
2. When Jesus speaks of the Law and the Prophets, he was concerned how his disciples read and live their Bibles (the Old Testament). How would your reading of the Old Testament change if you read it through this Jesus-given lens of the Double Love commands (Matt 22:34-40) and the Golden Rule? In what sense do they both sum up the Law and the Prophets?

When we look at the legion of problems around us, we typically think they have economic, social, psychological, or political sources and solutions. But most of them simply come down to this: our relationships with people. Consider how relational the law is. It's all summed up here in the way we relate to other people. Jesus, being the Great Psychologist, knows the human heart's propensity toward self-interest, so he redirects it into loving other people. It's like he says, "Since you're already thinking about yourself so much (whatever you wish that others would do to you), why not take the momentum of that wishful thinking to do good to your neighbor. Both the Golden Rule and the command to love our neighbors as ourselves require "imaginative identification" with others, in other words, empathy. Even more, this rule is not restricted to brothers or sisters within the family of Jesus but open to everyone, especially our enemies — the quintessential "others."

### IN

WOODEN RULE	SILVER RULE	GOLDEN RULE
<i>Do to others what they do to you</i>	<i>Don't do to others what you would not have them do to you</i>	<i>Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them</i>

1. Speaking of the other rules above, A.B. Bruce said, "The negative confines us to the region of justice; the positive takes us into the region of generosity or grace." How does the Golden Rule (7:12) go beyond the Wooden and the Silver Rule?
2. Our culture's rule seems to be "Let others do to me what I would like them to do to me." How does this prevent authentic relationships full of truth and love?
3. What are three concrete ways you could attempt to act out the Golden Rule in your relationships this week? Imagine them. Write them down. Seek the opportunity to try them. Reflect on your attempts. Share with your Circle.



## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus took the initiative and did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He came. He saw. He was conquered so that we could live in love for our neighbors. He identified with us not only by imagination but through incarnation. The Son of God did not know the experience of being human until he was born of Mary. He now lives, standing at the right hand of the Father, knowing what you experience, overflowing with grace and mercy from his heart to yours.*

### OUT

1. How did the discussion go over one of the resources in the Resource Collection (Appendix G)?
2. Are you finding the HEAR the Heart Tool in Appendix F to be helpful?
3. What are three ways you want to move with prayerful intentionality towards those in your circle of influence over the next couple of weeks? Write them down. Discuss with your Circle.

### PRAY

John Mark Comer imagines, “What if there is a world where the golden rule becomes the background of the mental chatter of your mind?” He invites us to pray, “Holy Spirit, bring to my mind the Golden Rule every time it’s necessary.” This is another way of praying: “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

- **Morning:** Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to my mind the Golden Rule in specific situations this week.
- **Midday:** The Lord’s Prayer — ***Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***
- **Evening:** Prayer of Examen — 1. Recall, 2. Rejoice, 3. Repent, 4. Renew.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 7:13-14

## WEEK 23

### Two Ways

Matthew 7:13-14 - Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:13-14.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:12.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [How to Find the Way by Timothy Keller](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Psalm 1. What are the similarities between Psalm 1 and 7:13-14? According to Psalm 1, how does one walk in the right way?
2. How does Jesus describe the two ways (7:13-14)? Notice the different beginnings, journeys, destinations, and travelers that Jesus names.

*“What is immediately striking about these verses is the absolute nature of the choice before us. We would all prefer to be given many more choices than only one, or better still to fuse them all into a conglomerate religion, thus doing away with the need for any choice. But Jesus cuts across our easy-going syncretism. He will not allow us the comfortable solutions we propose. Instead he insists that ultimately there is only one choice, because there are only two possibilities to choose from...Enter by the narrow gate, he begins. That is, the contrast between the two kinds of righteousness and of devotion, the two treasures, the two masters and the two ambitions has been faithfully set out; now the time for decision has come. Is it to be the kingdom of Satan or the kingdom of God, the prevailing culture or the Christian counter-culture? Jesus continues with his presentation of the alternative as he describes the two ways (broad and narrow), the two teachers (false and true), the two pleas (words and deeds) and finally the two foundations (sand and rock).”*

- John Stott

*“The path of discipleship is narrow, and it is fatally easy to miss one’s way and stray from the path, even after years of discipleship. And it is hard to find. On either side of the narrow path deep chasms yawn. To be called to a life of extraordinary quality, to live up to it, and yet to be unconscious of it is indeed a narrow way. To confess and testify to the truth as it is in Jesus, and at the same time to love the enemies of that truth, his enemies and ours, and to love them with the infinite love of Jesus Christ, is indeed a narrow way. To believe the promise of Jesus that his followers shall possess the earth, and at the same time to face our enemies unarmed and defenseless, preferring to incur injustice rather than to do wrong ourselves, is indeed a narrow way. To see the weakness and wrong in others, and at the same time refrain from judging them; to deliver the gospel message without casting pearls before swine, is indeed a narrow way.”*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

#### IN

1. In what sense is following Jesus a small gate and a narrow road? In what sense is the world’s gate wide and its road broad?
2. The gate is narrow because we will not fit if we are self-inflated. Only those who are poor in spirit (5:3) may enter the kingdom of heaven. Review what you’ve learned in the Sermon on the Mount thus far. What are some other choices Jesus requires us to make in following him through the narrow gate and down the narrow way?



3. Jesus' band of disciples is a "despised minority movement." They should expect to be marginalized and persecuted (5:10-12). This is because they do not go the way of the "many" (v. 13). As disciples of Christ, what beliefs and behaviors do we hold that marginalize us today? How are we pushed to the edges of our culture by what we believe?

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## GOOD NEWS

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*Jesus said, "I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). Jesus is wonderfully inclusive because "anyone" can come regardless of their past, their present, their worthiness, or their merit. But Jesus is clearly exclusive in that salvation only comes through "entering by me." He will have no competitors for ultimate allegiance in your life. Through his life, death, and resurrection Jesus alone has become the gate, the way, and the goal of our existence.*

### OUT

Jesus says that few find the gate that leads to life. This is because few seek it. People are content and comfortable with the spacious way of the world. This is why Jesus often uses trials, transitions, and tragedy to draw people to himself. They wake up to their way of life. They are willing to consider a way of life that is not popular (v. 14). This is when a relationship with a

loving disciple of Jesus is essential — someone who shows by their life that the narrow way of Jesus works in everyday realities (e.g. anger 5:22, lust 5:27, anxiety 6:25).

1. Continue praying for the people in your circle of influence. Paul reminds us not to grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up (Gal 6:9). God is at work in their lives evidenced by Him moving you to pray.
2. Use the Common Rhythm practices of Feast and Bless and the Mission Hub tools of the Engel Scale, HEAR the Heart, and the Resource Collection (Appendices E-G).
3. Discuss with your Circle how you can be incarnationally present to those who are in your circle of influence, showing them the narrow way of Jesus.

### PRAY

In your Prayer practice, consider using the words of Psalm 73:23–28. These words are about being grasped, guided, and glorified by Jesus as you walk with and towards him. Continue praying for those in your circle of influence.

- **Morning:** Pray through Psalm 73.
- **Midday:** The Lord's Prayer — **Lead us** through the narrow gate down the narrow way.
- **Evening:** Prayer of Examen — 1. Recall, 2. Rejoice, 3. Repent, 4. Renew.



## WEEK 24

### Two Trees

Matthew 7:15-20 - Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:15-20.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:14.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [Here Comes the Wolf Pack by John Mark Comer](#)

#### UP

1. Why is it significant that Jesus' warning about false prophets (7:15-20) comes immediately after his discussion of the narrow and wide gates?
2. Read Acts 20:17-38. How does Paul apply Jesus' warning to the elders of the church plant in Ephesus?

3. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matt 12:33-37, John 12:24-26, John 15:1-16, and Galatians 5:22-23. Jesus says, "By their fruit you will recognize them" (7:16). According to these other texts, what kind of fruit does he have in mind?

John Stott directs us not to be superficial in our scrutiny of those we allow to influence us. We need to make "a close and critical scrutiny of their character, conduct, message, motives and influence." Not all false prophets claim to be Christians. But they all tend to widen the narrow gate and ease the hard path. Although we must also beware when they talk more of sin than grace, more of law than Christ, and more of command than empowering. That too is a false ministry. Remember, Jesus says that false teachers are by definition difficult to spot. But if you pay close attention all wolves will eventually howl. Shepherds are eager to feed you, wolves are eager to feed on you.

#### IN

1. Jesus says that false prophets "come to you in sheep's clothing" (v. 15). What disguises might they wear today (see vv. 21-23)?
2. What false messages are popular today? How could you tell they were false? Which ones are most tempting to you? What in your story may make you especially vulnerable to those messages?
3. Why are broad gates and false prophets so appealing to people today?





*Jesus is the opposite of a wolf, he is the lamb who was slain. He's also the Lion of Judah. He's able to defend you, but willing to die for you. Here is the Good Shepherd who lays his life down for the sheep. Come to him now to lead you in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Ask him to lead you with his rod, to protect you, and his staff, to guide you (Ps 23).*

## OUT

Read Matthew 28:16–20 commonly called The Great Commission. Jesus is alive from the dead. He gathers his disciples to give them the multi-millenia task of the church: make disciples. None of the disciples scratched their heads at this command. They knew it meant, “Do with others what I have done with you.” Jesus’ commission for the church is to make disciples who can make disciples. We stand in a long line of disciple-makers. The true apostolic succession is the family tree of disciples. This is your task. You may have doubts, but be encouraged. Jesus promised his presence for this task (v. 20), regardless of whether we worship or waver (v. 16). Jesus’ final command is to be our first priority: make disciples.

1. Continue with prayerful intentionality toward those in your circle of influence (See Appendices E-G).
2. Pray for the Spirit to lead you toward the people you will lead in your next Disciple-Making Circle.
3. Ask God for people in your circle of influence to desire to ‘follow you as you follow Jesus.’

*“In praying that God will not “put us to the test (lead us not into temptation)” we pray that God will not make us vulnerable to those powers that rage against God’s kingdom. What you are up against, in being saved, is not simply your personal faults and foibles, your petty temptations and peccadilloes. You are up against what we call “the principalities and powers.” Evil is large, cosmic, organized, subtle, pervasive, and real. The powers never appear as evil or coercive. The powers always masquerade as freedoms that we have been graciously given or as necessities that we cannot live without.”*

- Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon

## PRAY

1. Ask the Lord to reveal any subtle false teaching that you’ve succumbed to.
2. Ask Jesus to lead you out of the false teaching and to deliver you from the Evil One’s temptations to avoid the pain of the cross you’re called to bear.

- **Morning:** Use PRAY to Pause, Rejoice, Ask, and Yield your day to the Lord.
- **Midday:** The Lord’s Prayer — ***Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the Evil One.***
- **Evening:** Prayer of Examen — 1. Recall, 2. Rejoice, 3. Repent, 4. Renew.

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK’S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 7:21-23



## WEEK 25

### Two Graces

Matthew 7:21-23 - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:21-23.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:20.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP /IN /OUT
- LISTEN to [On That Day by Sinclair Ferguson](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Matthew 4:17; 5:3; 5:10; 5:19-20. What does this tell you about those who enter the kingdom of heaven?
2. Read Matthew 18:1-4 and Matthew 18:10-14. What do these verses tell us about who enters the kingdom of heaven and the will of the Father?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. What are the similarities between Jesus and Paul here? What are the differences?

*"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate...Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "You were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God."*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

#### IN

1. Pause. Pay attention to what happens inside you when you read Matthew 7:21-23. What thoughts, feelings, sensations, desires do you have?
2. Why do people so often confuse religious activity (7:22) with doing the will of the Father? How do you understand the difference? Where are you tempted to do for Jesus without being with Jesus?

3. You may be saying with the disciples, "Is it I, Lord?" (Matt 26:22). Jesus wants his disciples to have assurance that they belong to him, but not false assurance. Tell Jesus how these verses affect you as if he didn't already know. Be honest with your Circle about this as well.

#### GOOD NEWS

*Jesus offered himself to have you. What he wants more than anything else is not your gifts, but you. He does not want your ministry (many mighty works). He wants you. He does not want what you can offer but the offering of yourself. He did not say, "You never knew me." He said, "I never knew you." Open yourself up to be known by him now. Don't hide. Don't pretend. Be known.*

## OUT

In 2 Timothy 2:1–2, Paul writes to Timothy, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” There are four generations of disciple-making here: 1) Paul to Timothy, 2) Timothy to faithful men, 3) faithful men to 4) others that continue the process. We are the heirs of this global, multiplying, generational, disciple-making movement called the Church. The baton is in our hands.

1. Continue with prayerful intentionality toward those in your circle of influence (See Appendices E-G).
2. Pray for the Spirit to lead you toward the people you will lead in your next Disciple-Making Circle.
3. Ask God for people in your circle of influence to desire to ‘follow you as you follow Jesus.’

## PRAY

*“Many people make little progress in learning to pray simply because they have not seriously entered into Jesus’ answer to the explicit request, “Teach us to pray.” Praying is a form of speaking, and it is best learned by entering into the words that Jesus gave us to say to God when we pray. He is the Master of this subject too.”*

- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

- **Morning:** Ask the Spirit to lead you to the people to invite into your next Disciple-Making Circle.
- **Midday:** The Lord’s Prayer — ***Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.***
- **Evening:** Prayer of Examen — 1. Recall, 2. Rejoice, 3. Repent, 4. Renew.





## WEEK 26

### Two Houses

Matthew 7:24-27 - Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

#### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:24-27.
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:23.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [The Two Men and the Two Houses by Martyn Lloyd-Jones](#)

#### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. Read Luke 6:46-49. What are the similarities and differences with what Jesus says here in Matthew 7:24-27? How were the two houses similar and different (vv. 24-27)?

2. Read Zechariah 13:8-9. What is the outcome of the Lord's testing (i.e. fire)?

*"If we behold Jesus Christ going on before step by step, we shall not go astray. But if we worry about the dangers that beset us, if we gaze at the road instead of at him who goes before, we are already straying from the path. For he is himself the way, the narrow way and the straight gate. He, and he alone, is our journey's end...Here is a challenge to closer fellowship with Jesus and to a more loyal discipleship...The end of the Sermon on the Mount echoes the beginning. The word of the last judgement is foreshadowed in the call to discipleship. But from beginning to end it is always his word and his call, his alone. If we follow Christ, cling to his word, and let everything else go, it will see us through the day of judgement. His word is his grace."*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

#### IN

1. In this closing section Jesus is warning his disciples against self-deception. The wolves in sheeps clothing, the people who say, 'Lord, Lord', and the

house built on the sand all have the self-deception of outward appearances without inward substance. How did the storms reveal what was previously unseen? What kinds of storms have you faced in life? What did they reveal about the foundation your life is built on?

2. The foolish man was in a hurry to build his house. Otherwise he would have taken the time to dig a proper foundation. He failed to stop and consider the future. How does hurry make you unstable, vulnerable to being knocked off balance?

## GOOD NEWS

*Jesus himself is the rock (Eph 2:20). Which is why we are bold to say, "My hope is built on nothing less / Than Jesus' blood and righteousness / I dare not trust the sweetest frame / But wholly lean on Jesus' name / On Christ the solid rock I stand / All other ground is sinking sand."*

### OUT

In Week 5, you memorized Matthew 5:19. According to Jesus, greatness in his kingdom is available to anyone who does and teaches what he says (Matt 5:19). True discipleship is to both be and build disciples, to both do and teach. To teach without doing is hypocrisy; it lacks integrity. To do without teaching is stagnancy; it blocks maturity. To do and teach is to be a disciple who makes disciples. Jesus is casting vision for you to pursue greatness by being a disciple who makes, matures, and multiplies disciples.

1. Continue with prayerful intentionality toward those in your circle of influence (See Appendices E-G).
2. Pray for the Spirit to lead you toward the people you will lead in your next Disciple-Making Circle.
3. Ask God for people in your circle of influence to desire to 'follow you as you follow Jesus.'

### PRAY

*"The Lord's Prayer" "sums up fully and accurately, albeit in a very condensed fashion...the way in which (Jesus) understood his own vocation and mission and invited his followers to share it. This prayer, then, serves as a lens through which to see Jesus himself, and to discover something of what he was about."*

- N.T. Wright, The Lord and His Prayer

- **Morning:** Ask the Spirit to lead you to the people to invite into your next Disciple-Making Circle.
- **Midday:** The Lord's Prayer
- **Evening:** Prayer of Examen:
  1. Recall
  2. Rejoice
  3. Repent
  4. Renew



LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK'S OVERVIEW TO PREPARE - MATTHEW 7:28-8:1



## WEEK 27

# Astonished by Jesus

Matthew 7:28-8:1 - And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him.

### OVERVIEW

- MEMORIZE: Matthew 7:28-8:1
- REVIEW: Matthew 5-7:27.
- JOURNAL your responses to UP / IN / OUT.
- LISTEN to [The Sermon on the Mount in Our Secular Age by Douglas Webster](#)

### UP

1. Compare scripture with scripture. The crowds were amazed at the authority of Jesus in his teaching (vv. 28-29). Read Matthew 5:11, 5:17; 7:21-23; 7:24-26. Pay attention to what Jesus reveals about himself (e.g. me, my, mine, I). In what ways was Jesus' authority demonstrated in his Sermon?
2. Read Matthew 28:18 and Philippians 2:9-11. What else do we learn about Jesus' authority?
3. In Matthew 7:28-8:1, what was the twofold response of the crowds to the Sermon on the Mount? What has been your response?

*"We have listened to the Sermon on the Mount and perhaps have understood it. But who has heard it aright? Jesus gives the answer at the end (Matt. 7:24-29). He does not allow his hearers to go away and make of his sayings what they will, picking and choosing from them whatever they find helpful and testing them to see if they work. He does not give them free rein to misuse his word with their mercenary hands, but gives it to them on condition that it retains exclusive power over them. Humanly speaking, we could understand and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways. Jesus knows only one possibility: simple surrender and obedience, not interpreting it or applying it, but doing and obeying it. That is the only way to hear his word. He does not mean that it is to be discussed as an ideal; he really means us to get on with it."*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

### IN

1. How does Jesus' authority (7:29) play out practically in your life? Give an example of a time when you allowed Jesus to have a higher authority than you in an area of your life.
2. In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to an exclusive attachment to his person." How has your study of the Sermon summoned you away from other attachments to an exclusive attachment to Jesus?
3. Were you "astonished" at all as you worked through the Sermon on the Mount? As you come down from the mountain, what are new/deeper ways in which you are following Jesus?

### GOOD NEWS

*Jesus does not use his authority to lord it over us (Matt 20:25-28; Phil 2:1-11). Instead he takes the form of a servant. He has all the right and all the might as our Lord but he does not press down on us. Instead he was lifted up on the cross to lift us up with him — both in dying and rising. Now we can sing: "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to take Him at His Word; Just to rest upon His promise, Just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord!'"*

## OUT

In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows the journey’s end. But we do know that it will be a road of boundless mercy. Discipleship means joy.” The purpose behind all that we’ve done in the OUT section has been to envision and equip you to follow Jesus on mission in all of life. The hope is that you will continue praying, feasting, blessing, asking, listening, speaking, and inviting your neighbors to join you on this road of boundless mercy and the joy of discipleship to Jesus.

1. Discuss with your Circle how you will continue to pray and be intentional with the people in your circle of influence.
2. Continue with prayerful intentionality toward those in your circle of influence (See Appendices E-G).
3. Pray for the Spirit to lead you toward the people you will lead in your next Disciple-Making Circle.
4. Ask God for people in your circle of influence to desire to ‘follow you as you follow Jesus.’

## PRAY

Continue in the practice of Prayer. Listen to [this sermon](#) for encouragement to keep going.

**Morning:** Ask the Spirit to imprint the Sermon on your heart that it might guide your life forever.

**Midday:** The Lord’s Prayer

**Evening:** Prayer of Examen — 1. Recall, 2. Rejoice, 3. Repent, 4. Renew.



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## Conclusion

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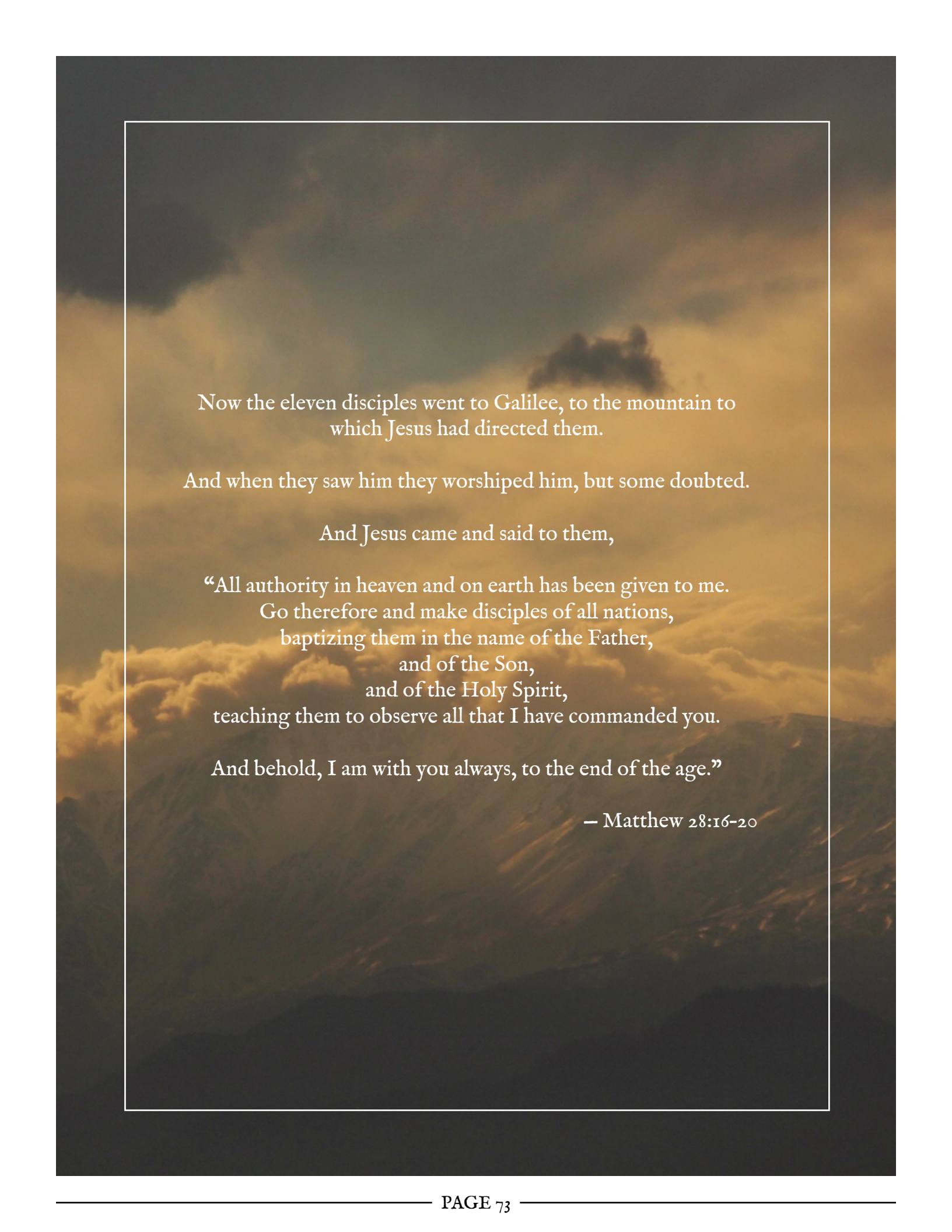
*“Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows the journey’s end. But we do know that it will be a road of boundless mercy. Discipleship means joy.”*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

### WHAT’S NEXT?

1. Over the next few months, your Disciple-Making Circle leader will coach you through the process of prayerfully selecting others for your Disciple-Making Circle.
2. Continue reviewing and reciting the Sermon on the Mount so it sticks in long-term memory.
3. Maintain the habit of praying for and moving toward those in your circle of influence.
4. Continue deepening your practice of the Common Rhythm into habits of love.
5. Rely on the power and presence of Jesus as you follow him in making disciples by giving yourself.





Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to  
which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.  
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

— Matthew 28:16-20

## Appendix A

### The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount

A: FRAME & CONTEXT: THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM (4:23-25)

B: ASCENDING & SITTING (5:1-2)

- Jesus Ascends / Disciples Follow / Crowds Listen

C: THE CALL TO DISCIPLES (5:3-16)

- Beatitudes (5:3-12)

- Salt (5:13)

- Light (5:14-16)

D: GREATER RIGHTEOUSNESS: THE LAW & PROPHETS (5:17-48)

- Triad 1: Anger (5:21-26)

- Triad 2: Lust (5:27-30)

- Triad 3: Divorce (5:31-32)

- Triad 4: Integrity (5:33-37)

- Triad 5: Nonviolent Resistance (5:38-42)

- Triad 6: Enemy Love (5:43-48)

E: GREATER RIGHTEOUSNESS: TOWARD NEIGHBOR, GOD, & SELF (6:1-21)

- Triad 7: Giving (6:1-4)

- Triad 8: Praying not like hypocrites (6:5-6):

- Triad 9: Praying not like Gentiles (6:7-15)

- The Lord's Prayer (6:9-13) - Center of Sermon

- Triad 10: Fasting (6:16-18)

D: GREATER RIGHTEOUSNESS: WEALTH & THE WORLD (6:19-7:12)

- Triad 11: Treasures: Earth vs. Heaven (6:19-23)

- Triad 12: Trust: Wealth vs. God (6:24-34)

- Triad 13: Judgement: Speck vs. Log (7:1-5)

- Triad 14: Trust: Pigs vs. Prayer (7:6-11)

- The Golden Rule: The Law & Prophets (7:12 parallel with 5:17)

C: THE CALL TO WALK IN THE WAY (7:13-27)

- Narrow/Hard vs. Wide/Easy Ways (7:13-14)

- Good Fruit vs. Bad Fruit = Judgement (7:15-23)

- Build on Rock vs. Build on Sand (7:24-27)

B: DESCENDING & ACTION (7:28-8:1)

- Crowds Astonished / Jesus Descends / Crowds Follow

A: FRAME & CONTEXT: THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM (8:2-9:38)



## Appendix B

### How to Share Your Story

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All of our stories are shaped by and fit within God's grand narrative. God's story unfolds in four distinct movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Likewise, God's redemption of our unique story follows this same pattern. The questions below will help you share your story within this framework. Pick a few questions within each category to shape how you tell your story. For this exercise, you need to be able to share a 15-20 minute version of your story, which should leave time for dialogue, questions, and prayer. On a vulnerability scale of 1-10 (1 = share on social media, 10 = only tell your closest friend, spouse, or counselor), we are aiming for a story above 5. For more help, listen to Adam Young's three-part series: [How Healing Happens](#).

#### CREATION

1. Where were you born? What was your family like? Where did your story begin?
2. What is a specific story from childhood that embodies who you were/are?
3. What shaped your vision of the good life, hopes, and dreams?
4. Who or what most shaped the way you viewed your identity/values?

#### FALL

1. In what unique and specific ways has your life been affected by sin, suffering, and sorrow?
2. What did you most live for before you came to Christ? What sins and idols dominated your life?
3. How did God bring you to the end of yourself and to a posture of dependence on him?

#### REDEMPTION

1. Who loved you into the kingdom? How did you hear the gospel? What did they say to you?
2. What did grief, repentance, and forgiveness look like for you (sometimes that looks like admitting the ways in which we've been sinned against, in addition to how we have sinned against others)?
3. How has Jesus' life, death in your place, and resurrection reconciled you to God and set you free to live the way God intends?
4. How have you seen Jesus' pattern of dying and rising take shape in your own life?
5. How did Jesus begin to break the power of sin in your life (freedom from bondage)?
6. How has Jesus changed your heart, as opposed to you merely changing your behavior?

#### RESTORATION

1. What has Jesus' healing looked like in your life? How have you seen the original dignity and goodness (from your Creation story) of your life be re-shaped and made more glorious?
2. What idols of the heart is God saving you from right now that you can share (i.e. power, control, approval, comfort)?
3. How has God used trials and suffering to shape you, encourage you, and make the gospel come alive?
4. Where are you still longing and lamenting in your story?
5. What is your future hope for yourself and your story?

#### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Does my story communicate the past and present saving work of Christ?
2. Does my story honestly portray my heart, desires, sin, and weaknesses?
3. Does my story appropriately showcase Jesus as the hero of my story?
4. Does my story invite others into my life to know me truly?
5. Does my story reveal my present need for the power of the Spirit and my future hope in the renewing work of God?

## Appendix C

### Glen Stassen's Fourteen Triads of the Sermon on the Mount

TRADITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS	VICIOUS CYCLE	TRANSFORMING INITIATIVE
1. Do not give holy things to dogs, nor pearls to pigs	They will trample them and tear you to pieces	Give your trust in prayer to your Father in heaven
2. You shall not commit adultery	Looking with lust	Remove the cause of temptation (cf. Mark 9.43ff.)
3. Whoever divorces, give a certificate	Divorcing involves you in adultery	See above two initiatives: Be reconciled and Remove cause of temptation (cf. 1 Cor 7:11)
4. You shall not swear falsely	Swearing by anything involves you in a false claim	Let your yes be yes, and your no be no
5. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth	Violently/vengefully resisting by evil means	Turn the cheek, Give your tunic and cloak, Go the second mile, Give to beggar and borrower
6. Love neighbor and hate enemy	If you love those who love you, what more is that than the Gentiles do?	Love enemies, pray for your persecutors; be all-inclusive as your Father in heaven is
7. When you give to the needy	Sound no trumpet like hypocrites	Give in secret, and your Father will reward you
8. When you pray,	Making a show like the hypocrites	But pray in secret, and your Father will reward you
9. When you pray,	Babbling like Gentiles, thinking the wordiness will be heard	But pray then like this: Our Father...
10. When you fast,	Appearing gloomy to others, like the hypocrites	But dress with joy, and your Father will reward you
11. Do not pile up treasures on earth (cf. Luke 12.16-31)	Where moth and rust destroy, and thieves enter and steal	But pile up treasures in heaven
12. No one can serve two masters	You are not able to serve God and wealth, being anxious about food and clothes	But seek first God's reign and God's justice/righteousness
13. Do not judge, lest you be judged	By the measure with which you judge, you will be judged	First take the log out of your own eye
14. Do not give holy things to dogs, nor pearls to pigs	They will trample them and tear you to pieces	Give your trust in prayer to your Father in heaven

## Appendix D

### Discussion Questions

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1. How have you seen God's goodness this week?
2. How are you doing at loving the people God has already put in your life?
3. How has God been speaking to you through His Word and prayer?
4. Tell us about the three not-yet-disciples in your circle of influence that you're praying for.
5. Does your schedule reflect your priorities?
6. What is eclipsing your view of Jesus right now?
7. What would you change if you had a 500 year life plan?
8. What have you learned about yourself in the last year that you liked? Disliked?
9. If you could go back in time, what would you say to yourself before: Last week? Last month? Last year?
10. What invitation do you sense God giving you today?
11. What story are you telling yourself today?
12. In what ways have you seen the desire to control manifest itself in relationships with significant people in your life?
13. What are some radical things you could do to eliminate: Stress? Busyness? Distractions?
14. What would you regret this time next year about your life if it didn't change?
15. When was the last time you felt yourself coming alive?
16. What's capturing your attention lately?
17. Who is the most creative person you know?
18. What are some obscure things that you are/were really into?
19. As you get older, what are you becoming more and more afraid of?
20. What question have you been thinking about lately?
21. What have you done lately because Jesus said you should/shouldn't?
22. What is one thing you know you need to do but have been putting off?
23. What are you preventing yourself from feeling? (James Clear)
24. If someone could only see your actions and not hear your words, what would they say are your priorities? (James Clear)
25. What is one small thing you could do today that would make a meaningful impact on your future? (James Clear)
26. Over the last 10 years, what has become more important to you? What has become less important? (James Clear)
27. Imagine the most important goal or project you are working on right now. Fast forward six months. Imagine the project has failed. Why did it fail? (James Clear)
28. Which areas of my life are in maintenance mode? Which areas are in growth mode? (James Clear)
29. What is something that feels productive to you in the moment, but usually ends up wasting time and energy? (James Clear)
30. What's one thing that gives you energy? What one thing that drains your energy?
31. What are two feelings you have right now?
32. Consider something that gives you anxiety right now. What are you most afraid will happen?
33. What is the one thing you won't compromise?
34. Are your obligations real or imagined?
35. Do you want more of God than you have right now?
36. What is one thing you can remove from your life that would improve it? (James Clear)
37. In any suffering/trial, imagine you intentionally planned it, how would you act?
38. What has been your biggest disappointment in your life?
39. Ask people close to you: What is it like to live on the other side of me?
40. Ask people close to you: What do I do that keeps you from knowing me?
41. If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in 2-3 sentences?
42. If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?
43. What is one thing you hate? What is one thing you love?
44. What do you do to quiet your inner state?
45. What question do you not want us to ask you?
46. What's a book that's impacted your life?

## Appendix D

### Discussion Questions

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47. What's a habit that's change your life?
48. What's something you would tell the younger you?
49. If you were in a city and had to choose between a good meal and a bad hotel, or a bad meal and a good hotel which would you prefer?
50. Tell us a time when you got lost.
51. Tell us of a time when you were an underdog.
52. What is your favorite story? Book, movie, fairytale. What do you love about it?
53. If you could be the best in the world at one thing, what would it be?
54. Tell us a story of a time you learned you were good at something.
55. Tell us a story of a time someone believed in you.
56. What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
57. What do you value most in a friendship?
58. What are your goals for the next year?
59. With one word: What is it to be human?
60. What is your most treasured memory?
61. What are the most likely sources of pain in my life over the next year? How can I prepare for or prevent them?
62. What is one thing making you feel a sense of hope?

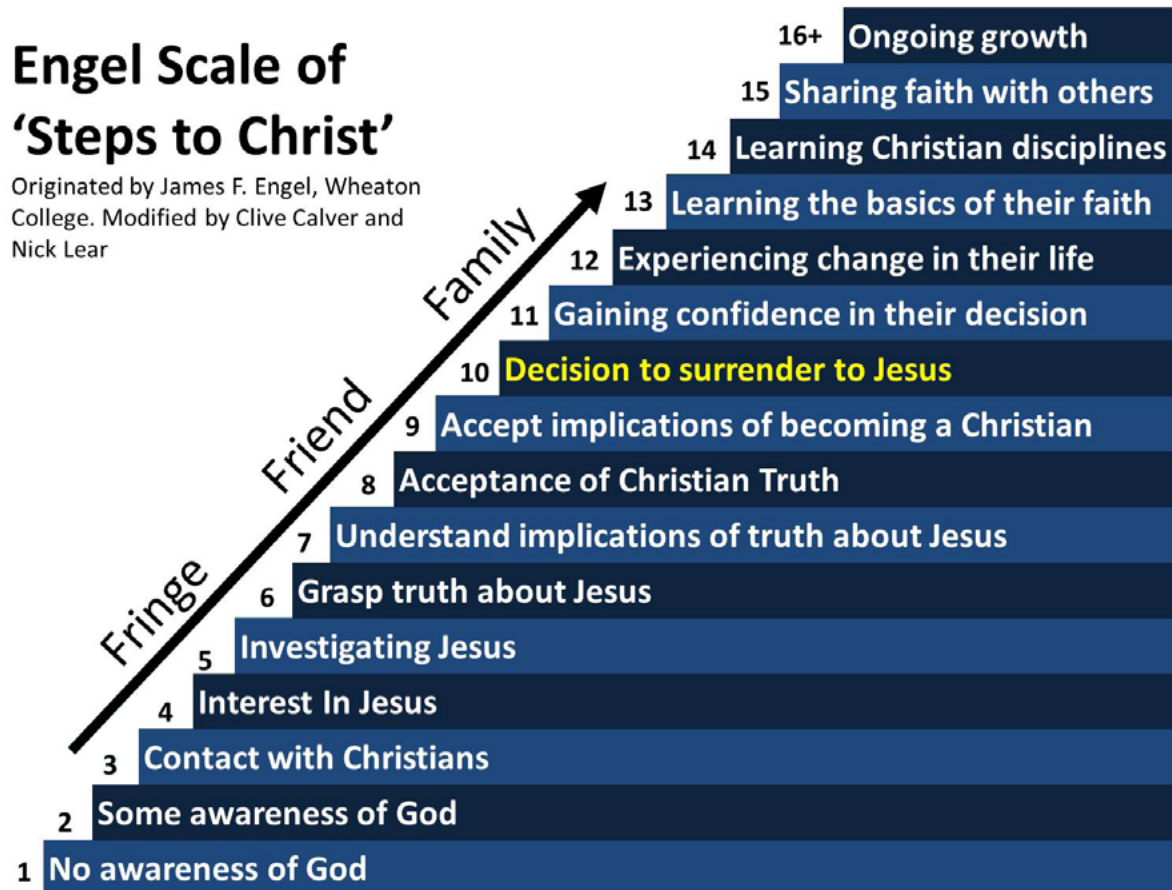
#### **Reflective Listening Questions:**

1. What was that like for you?
2. What do you make of that?
3. What do you mean by that?
4. What is it like to say that out loud?
5. How did you come to that conclusion?

## Appendix E

### Mission Hub - The Engel Scale

The Engel Scale creates space in evangelism for the relational journey that the Spirit leads not-yet disciples down as they come to follow Jesus. Success in evangelism is no longer limited to sharing the gospel and having someone repent and believe (conversion). Success in evangelism is walking with someone in meaningful relationship, loving them into the kingdom as they take their next step towards God.



#### How to Walk With Someone on the Engel Scale:

1. Begin with your weakness and inability to change anyone. Here is the only place the Spirit loves to come in power (Rom 8:26, 2 Cor 12:9).
2. Pray persistently and intentionally for the three people in your circle of influence.
3. Be a kind, humble, patient, welcoming, gentle, loving person. These are not personality traits, they are the fruit of the Spirit indwelling the disciple of Jesus.
4. Invite others into your life by eating meals together as in the Feast practice.
5. Asking the Spirit who you might bless with words, time, gifts, prayer, or service.
6. Be courteously curious. Ask good questions and listen intently to ask more questions (James 1:19).
7. Ask and listen to their story. Use some questions from Appendix B: How to Share Your Story.
8. Share stories of the difference Jesus makes to your suffering, sin, doubts, hopes, joys, dreams.
9. Consider with the Spirit and your Circle how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection matters to this person.
10. Describe (with humility and boldness) how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection meets them where they are.



## Appendix F

### Mission Hub - HEAR the Heart Tool

#### WHY THE WHOLE HEART?

In the Bible, the heart is the center or core of the person. It is the inner source from which all outer life springs (Prov. 4:23). The heart houses our thinking (Matt. 9:4), feeling (Prov. 14:13), desiring (Ps. 37:4), and choosing (Acts 11:23). Our basic orientation in life is directed by our heart. Our life goes in the direction our heart points.

But our hearts deceive us (Jer. 17:9), condemn us (1 John 3:20), and are unsearchable in depth (Prov. 25:3). Proverbs 20:5 says, “The purpose in a person’s heart is like deep water, but a person of understanding will draw it out.” In caring for others, we must become skillful in hearing the whole heart. Why the whole heart? Because we want to join the Spirit in leading others to trust in the LORD with all their heart (Prov. 3:5).

#### HOW DO WE H.E.A.R. THE WHOLE HEART?

##### **H - Holy Spirit is at work in their heart. We are listening to join Him.**

- Pray and ask the Spirit where He’s at work.
- Rely on Him to guide you in the conversation.
- Listen for where their heart aches for Jesus.

##### **E - Engage their whole heart (thoughts, feelings, desires, and choices).**

- Be intentional and curious about their whole inner life.
- Be careful not to prefer one aspect over the others.
- Engage the heart sequentially (i.e. from thoughts to feelings to desires to choices) or separately.

##### **A - Ask caring and curious questions to understand their heart.**

###### Thoughts

- What do you think about this?
- What do you make of that?
- How did you come to that conclusion?

###### Desires

- What do you want in this?
- What did you want to happen?
- What are you hoping for?

###### Feelings

- How do you feel about it?
- I’d be (emotion). What about you?
- Wow, it sounds like you’re really (emotion). Is that true?

###### Choices

- What are you going to do?
- How do you want to respond?
- How did you react?

##### **R - Respond with your whole heart (thoughts, feelings, desires, and choices).**

- You can learn about a person and their experience by paying attention to your own thoughts and feelings while listening to them.
- Offer them as a response where it seems appropriate.

# Appendix G

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## Mission Hub - The Resource Collection

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### Listening is the first act of love.

Francis Schaeffer, the twentieth century apologist, was asked if he had an hour with a non-Christian how would he spend it? He said, “If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first 55 minutes asking questions and finding out what is troubling their heart and mind, and then in the last 5 minutes I will share something of the truth.”

*“The pagan world today knows something about persons who often can be helped only by having someone who will seriously listen to them. On this insight it has built its own secular form of pastoral care, which has become popular with many people, including Christians. But Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been entrusted to them by the One who is indeed the great listener and in whose work they are to participate. We should listen with the ears of God, so that we can speak the Word of God.”*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

**Use these resources to learn together, ask good questions, listen, and discuss matters of substance.**

#### ARTICLES

- This is Water by David Foster Wallace ([PDF](#))
- Email is Making Us Miserable by Cal Newport ([online](#))
- Myth Became Fact by C. S. Lewis ([PDF](#) / [YouTube](#))
- On Fairy Stories by J. R. R. Tolkien ([PDF](#) / [YouTube](#))
- The Sermon on the Mount by Jesus of Nazareth ([PDF](#))
- Growing My Faith in the Face of Death (Atlantic) by Timothy Keller ([online](#))
- Being Public with Our Faith by Timothy Keller ([online](#))
- Equality by C.S. Lewis ([online](#))
- The Maniac by G.K. Chesterton ([text](#) / [video](#))
- Rebellion by Fyodor Dostoevsky ([online](#))

#### PODCASTS

- Racism in America (Part I-3) by Every Square Inch ([podcast](#))
- Unbelievable with Justin Brierley ([podcast](#))

#### VIDEOS

- This is Water by David Foster Wallace ([online](#), excerpts of [full speech](#))
- The Chosen ([video](#))
- The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost ([video](#) or [text](#))
- IF by Rudyard Kipling ([video](#) or [text](#))
- G.O.S.P.E.L. by Propaganda ([video](#))
- Lewis and Tolkien talk about the validity of Christianity based on myth ([video](#))
- Lewis Doodle: Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe ([video](#))
- Lower Still by My Epic ([YouTube](#))
- Arise by My Epic ([YouTube](#))
- True and Better ([YouTube](#))
- That's my King by S.M. Lockridge ([YouTube](#))

**Use the HEAR the Heart Tool (Appendix F) to engage in meaningful discussion.**

Follow me.



