

STUDYING THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lesson 12 - The Beatitudes - Matthew 5:1-12

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

MT 5:1 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, [2] and he began to teach them, saying:

MT 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MT 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

MT 5:5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

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

MT 5:7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

MT 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

MT 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

MT 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MT 5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. [12] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 12 - The Beatitudes - Matthew 5:1-12

143. What was the setting for this sermon? (5:1)
144. Who was Jesus addressing? (5:1-2)
145. According to Jesus, what is the reward for those who are poor in spirit? (5:3)
146. Why are those who mourn blessed? (5:4)
147. What is the reward for those who are meek? (5:5)
148. What can those who hunger and thirst for righteousness expect? (5:6)
149. What does God promise to those who are merciful? (5:7)
150. According to this passage, who will see God? (5:8)
151. Why are peacemakers blessed? (5:9)
152. What does the future hold for those who are persecuted because of righteousness? (5:10)
153. What unexpected command is given to Christians who are insulted, hassled, and lied about? (5:11-12)
154. What people in history have endured nasty persecution? (5:12)

Lesson 13 - Salt and Light - Matthew 5:13-16

MT 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

MT 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. [15] Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 13 - Salt and Light - Matthew 5:13-16

155. To what valuable substance did Jesus compare His disciples? (5:13)
156. What is an essential characteristic of salt? (5:13)
157. How did Jesus imply that a Christian's positive influence can wane or disappear? (5:13)
158. What happens to salt that loses its flavor? (5:13)
159. To what did Jesus compare His followers? (5:14)
160. How are we like light? (5:14)
161. What are improper and proper uses for a lamp? (5:15)
162. What use of a lamp teaches us about living? How? (5:15)
163. According to Jesus, how exactly are Christians to be like lamps? (5:16)
164. What kind of behavior should other people see Christians exhibiting? (5:16)
165. If believers live as they are supposed to live, how will others respond toward God? (5:16)

Lesson 14.- The Fulfillment of the Law - Matthew 5:17-20

MT 5:17 "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. [18] I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. [19] Anyone who breaks 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 practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 14 - The Fulfillment of the Law - Matthew 5:17-20

166. What rumor was apparently being spread about Jesus and His view of the Old Testament? (5:17)

167. What did Jesus say was His goal with regard to the Law and the Prophets? (5:17)
168. How much of the Law did Jesus say would be fulfilled or accomplished? (5:18)
169. According to Jesus, what cataclysmic event would have to happen before God's Word could be invalidated in even a tiny way? (5:18)
170. What two things result in one being called least in the kingdom of heaven? (5:19)
171. What happens if a person lives a good life and breaks only minor commandments of God? (5:19)
172. What warning was given to those who would encourage others to disregard the Word of God? (5:19)
173. Who is considered great in the kingdom of heaven? (5:19)
174. To what groups of religious leaders did Jesus make reference? (5:20)
175. What degree of righteousness is necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven? How is that accomplished? (5:20)

Lesson 15 - Murder - Matthew 5:21-26

MT 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, `Do not murder,* and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' [22] But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother* will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, `Raca,* ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, `You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

MT 5:23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

MT 5:25 "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. [26] I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 15 - Murder - Matthew 5:21-26

176. What age-old prohibition was Jesus addressing in this context? (5:21)
177. What was the penalty for violators of this law? (5:21)

178. How did Jesus explain the meaning of the law against murder? (5:22)
179. According to Jesus, what kind of name-calling made one answerable to the Sanhedrin? (5:22)
180. What kind of angry name-calling puts one in eternal danger? (5:22)
181. How did Jesus describe hell? (5:23)
182. What sort of realization did Jesus say should interrupt our worship? (5:23)
183. If a person becomes aware of a relational problem, how quickly should he or she act? (5:24)
184. What should be a believer's goal in strained or shattered relationships? (5:24)
185. When is it best to settle disputes? (5:25)
186. Where is it best to settle disputes? (5:25)
187. What bad consequences can occur if a dispute escalates into a full-blown court battle? (5:25-26)

Lesson 16 - Adultery - Matthew 5:27-30

MT 5:27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' [28] But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29] If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30] And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 16 - Adultery - Matthew 5:27-30

188. What commandment was Jesus interpreting? (5:27)
189. How did Jesus explain the meaning of adultery? (5:28)
190. How does adultery start? (5:28)
191. When does looking at someone become inappropriate? (5:28)
192. What did Jesus suggest we do with a sinning eye? Why? (5:29)

193. Why did Jesus make this radical statement about eyes? (5:29)
194. Where does sin ultimately lead if it is not dealt with? (5:29-30)
195. What did Jesus recommend for a sinning hand? Why? (5:30)
196. What was the rationale behind this graphic comment about hands? (5:30)
197. Why are our moral choices important? (5:30)

Lesson 17 - Divorce - Matthew 5:31-32

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

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 17 - Divorce - Matthew 5:31-32

198. Why did Jesus need to say this about marriage and divorce? (5:31-32)
199. What is the best way to think about marriage and divorce? (5:31-32)
200. Who is guilty of adultery? (5:31-32)
201. What does God want us to do when we feel tempted to divorce a partner? (5:31-32)
202. According to Jesus, what is the only acceptable reason for divorce? (5:32)
203. When can a person divorce his or her partner? (5:32)
204. When can a person not divorce his or her partner? (5:32)
205. How can adultery affect a marriage commitment? (5:32)
206. Why did Jesus give an exception to His "no divorce" command? (5:32)
207. What conditions are placed on divorce? (5:32)
208. In what way does a person who divorces a partner "cause" the other to commit adultery? (5:32)

Lesson 18 - Oaths - Matthew 5:33-37

MT 5:33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' [34] But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; [35] or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. [36] And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. [37] Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 18 - Oaths - Matthew 5:33-37

209. What ancient teaching did Jesus bring up? (5:33)
210. What oaths did Jesus' audience consider especially important to keep? (5:33)
211. How did Jesus update the ancient proverb about oaths? (5:34)
212. What exceptions did Jesus permit in vow making? (5:34)
213. Why was it inappropriate to swear by heaven? (5:34)
214. Why was it inappropriate to swear by earth? (5:35)
215. According to Jesus, why shouldn't people swear by Jerusalem? (5:35)
216. Why not swear by one's own head? (5:36)
217. How should believers respond to questions? (5:37)
218. What's wrong with swearing oaths? (5:37)

Lesson 19 - An Eye for an Eye - Matthew 5:38-42

MT 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' [39] But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 19 - An Eye for an Eye - Matthew 5:38-42

219. To what familiar saying was Jesus referring in this context? (5:38)
220. What did the ancients require if a person put out someone else's eye? (5:38)
221. What was the judgment for knocking out another's tooth? (5:38)
222. How did Jesus say we should respond to people who do us evil? (5:39)
223. What should we do to protect our rights and possessions? (5:39)
224. What should be the Christian's response to physical violence? (5:39)
225. What should a person do if someone else sues him or her? (5:40)
226. What should a person do if someone else forces him or her to "go one mile"? (5:41)
227. How should followers of Christ deal with those who ask them for things? (5:42)
228. What is the proper response to a request to borrow something? (5:42)

Lesson 20 - Love for Enemies - Matthew 5:43-48

MT 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' [44] But I tell you: Love your enemies* and pray for those who persecute you, [45] that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [46] If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? [47] And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? [48] Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 20 - Love for Enemies - Matthew 5:43-48

229. What ancient rule of life did Jesus challenge here? (5:43)
230. How did Jesus say we ought to treat our enemies? (5:44)
231. What did Jesus say we ought to do for those who persecute us? (5:44)
232. Why did Jesus suggest modifying this universally accepted law? (5:45)

233. How does God treat evil and good people in the same way? (5:45)
234. How does God treat righteous and unrighteous people equally? (5:45)
235. What type of people did Jesus cite as loving those who love them? (5:46)
236. What does God think of us when we love those who love us? (5:46)
237. Why is friendliness to friends and relatives not considered exceptional behavior? (5:47)
238. What kinds of people are mentioned as greeting only their brothers? (5:47)
239. What exceptional standard did Christ give us? (5:48)
240. Who has set an example for us? How? (5:48)