

STUDY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Hello Study Weeker!

By now, seeing as you have this notebook, you definitely know that Study Week 2022 is on The Sermon on the Mount. You might be asking yourself, why has Study Week chosen this particular subject?

Well, the Sermon on the Mount is one of the most powerful and revolutionary teachings of all time. Presented to his disciples on a summit overlooking the Galilee Sea, Jesus Christ provides an exhortation like no other. He instructed his followers now, and for generations to come, the true meaning of worship to Yahweh. Our Lord delves into several themes including: the 8 crucial characteristics of a disciple, the true meaning behind the Mosaic law, criticisms on the current way of Jewish worship and a reflection on our motives behind our worship to God.

This exhort is meaningful because its presenter is Jesus Christ, the son of God, not just another teacher or rabbi. Christ doesn't simply suggest a theoretical, idealistic way of living; instead, HE LIVES IT! As we'll see, when Jesus instructs his disciples on how to pray, he isn't just guessing, he spent time developing a relationship with his Father through continuous sleepless nights of prayer (Luke 6:12). Who else can tell his followers to turn the other cheek, than the man who endured mocking, beating and scourging to death for the sake of the cause he promotes in this Sermon.

The Sermon on the Mount has something for each of us at every stage of our life. It comes alive at every word, drilling down to dissect our motives and ensure we glorify God in our worship.

If this is your first time reading it - great! It's a subject so simple and beautiful in its meaning that anyone can understand it on the basest of levels. For those who have studied it, you will know all too well how hard it is to live out these ideal characteristics. It then gives us such great encouragement realising that we have the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

If we want to be true disciples and citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Sermon on the Mount is a 101 Guide to being perfect like our Father. These words of life are no more than ink on a page, unless we are prepared to **HEAR** the Lord's message **and DO** what he requires. If we are prepared for this, we must also be prepared for a positive, radical change to our lives which will lead to immortality in God's Kingdom.

As an introduction, it's important to get a full understanding of what Jesus is saying in this

sermon. So take a read or listen to an audiobook of **Matt 5:1-7:29** beginning to end.

Make a list of the themes that jumped out at you when reading this passage below.

BEFORE YOU START - BIBLE STUDY TIPS!

Pray: Always begin Bible study with a prayer. This is God's Word we have in front of us, so we must treat it with respect and realise the privilege we have. Who better to ask for guidance as we study it than the Author Himself?

Allocate Time: Try and utilise a set time during the week dedicated to this workbook otherwise, time WILL slip away from you. By building a habit you will be more productive and get more out of each session.

Have a place: Use a specific place to study which is out of the usual in your home. Take away any distractions and allow your mind to focus on the Word.

Careful Deliberate Reading is the Key: The more you read, notice details and immerse yourself into the Sermon on the Mount, the more you will begin to understand its message and the flow Christ is establishing. The more personal you make this, the more you, in turn, will be able to remember and apply these lessons in your own spiritual walk toward the kingdom.

Have a study partner: Try to find a friend that you can complete the notebook with. Just like a gym buddy, having a study partner will help you motivate each other, even when you don't feel like it and ensure each other is accountable. Having someone to talk to will also help you see God's Word from different perspectives and reinforce the lessons you both come across.

Don't be afraid to Mark up your Bible: Make your Bible personal to you. Make it come alive with quotes, colours and markings which bring meaning to the Word and triggers your spiritual thoughts on lessons you can take away when you read this next.

Finally, all this study is only practical if you **'Hear and Do'** so once you learn the principles of the Sermon, make sure you enact them in your life so you too may share with disciples of old a passage into the Kingdom of God.



FINISH THESE NOTES TO SUPPORT THE YOUTH IN KENYA!

Study week 2022 is excited to financially support the Agape in Action youth camps in Kenya this year - and YOU can help - without paying a cent!

“Agape in Action (AinA) was very excited to work in liaison with the Christadelphian Bible Mission to organise regional youth camps in Kenya last year!

Over 2,300 Kenyan young people, ages 15+, benefited from 4 day youth camps, which took place in October 2021! Many are from very poor backgrounds, and some have experienced extreme hardships in their short lives.

It was such an exceptional opportunity to study and learn lessons from scripture, to meet other youth and enjoy fun and fellowship together singing and praising our Creator. It was with much joy we received news of baptisms taking place at several of these camps, with a total of 94 young people baptised and choosing to commit their lives to Christ!” *Sis. Deb Flint (Agape in Action)*



If you complete the following by Study Week:

Section 1 & 2: A camp T-shirt will be given to an AinA young person!

Section 3, 4 & 5: Covers the cost for a young person to travel to an AinA youth camp!

Section 6: Printing of a Study Week 22 booklet for an AinA young person to prepare for a youth camp!

(\$15 donated per booklet completed - that's \$2.50 a section!)

You can visit the Study Week page and see how you can show you've completed your notes: <https://www.gotostudyweek.com/>

We encourage you to complete as much of the notebook as you can before Study Week! This will not only help you on your spiritual journey and give you great points to bring out in the discussion groups - It will directly support one of your fellow Christadelphian young people in Kenya!

You can also support this cause personally by donating to: www.agapeinaction.com/spiritualcareanddevelopment



THE BACKGROUND

the man matthew

To start our study off, it's always a good idea to discover who recorded the words of Jesus' sermon on the mount. Although ultimately it's Christ speaking these words, we find that the authors have their own spiritual perspective. Let's quickly take a look at the man Matthew and how Christ's Sermon would have impacted him.

We find Matthew (aka Levi) is called to be a disciple in **Luke 5: 27-32**. Read this from the ESV and fill out the character profile below:

MATTHEW

Name meaning:

Occupation:

Wealth Status & Possessions:

Address:

Family:

Friends:

People's opinion of him:

Characteristics:

Tax collectors or publicans were some of the most despised individuals by the Jews in these times and often synonymous with "sinners". These Jews would collect taxes from the common people for the Romans and therefore were hated by their brethren. These tax collectors were not actually paid by the Romans but earned their income by skimming some of the taxes for themselves. With this sort of temptation, many Jewish tax collectors were dishonest, taking far

too much from their Jewish people, leaving them very wealthy, however in bad rapport with their brethren.

What parts of Matthew's character stand out to you in this story when called by Jesus?

Write **Luke 5:31-32** out in your own words below. This is the purpose of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount!

From Matthew's life as a tax collector, we find that there are themes that resonate with him that he mentions a lot in his gospel. Let's take a look at some of them.

THEMES OF THE SERMON

the kingdom of heaven

One phrase that you might notice mentioned in the Sermon is ‘The Kingdom of Heaven’. First, search this phrase in e-Sword and note what books this phrase is mentioned in. Curious, hey? Now colour in every occurrence of “kingdom of heaven” in the Sermon on the Mount (or even better throughout all **Matthew!**) Don’t worry we’ll wait here for you.

If you look at the table below, we see some of these related words and their mentions in each of the gospels. Just notice the occurrences below and see how prominent these themes are in Matthew’s gospel in comparison to the other three gospels.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
‘Kingdom’	57	21	46	5
‘King’	11	5	4	5
‘Thone’	5	0	2	0
‘Kingdom of Heaven’	33	0	0	0

The direct context of the Sermon on the Mount is Christ preaching about the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (**Matt 4:17-25**). He states that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (**Matt 4:17**) and proclaims later that “the Kingdom of God is among you” (**Luke 17:21**). What do you think this means if we know that the Kingdom on earth begins after Jesus’ second coming?

Jesus was a living example of all that the Kingdom of Heaven will be. He embodies all of the heavenly principles and characteristics of the future Kingdom. He is the King by which righteousness will ultimately fill the earth (**Psalms 72:1-4**). Christ’s Sermon on the Mount is an expression of the character of those people who are citizens of God’s Kingdom (**Phil 3:20**).

jesus the king

This one starts right from the beginning of Matthew's gospel. So turn back to **Matt 1:1**. The first thing we find is that Jesus is named "Christ." Look up what this word means in Greek and write it below. What is the position that Matthew establishes Jesus as?

Matthew then draws our attention firstly to Christ being the son of David. What is so special about that? It seems as if Matthew is trying to take us back to **2 Sam 7:12-14**. What was promised to David here?

Jesus really establishes his authority as King in the Sermon. This bold claim to the Throne of God gives authority to his words and gives the people a reason to listen to him.

The future Kingdom of Heaven in which Jesus will return and reign as King on earth is the solution to the mismanagement and global problems worldwide. It is a message of hope and the very essence of God's purpose and plan. The Kingdom is coming. If we want to be part of it, we must learn from its King, hear his teachings and be motivated to display his perfect character today!

discipleship

In **Matt 4:18-22**, Jesus calls Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John to be his disciples. You may notice how they chose to leave a lot behind to follow him. How valuable is the call to follow Jesus in your life? What may you have to choose to leave or sacrifice in your life to follow Jesus as a disciple?

Read **Luke 14:25-27** and summarise below:

In the lead up to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, we find in **Matt 4:17-25** he went about preaching the "gospel of the kingdom" in all Galilee. We see in these verses that as a product of this, he also healed "every sickness (mental illness) and every disease (physical illness) among the people." However, these healing miracles were only a short-term solution to their long term, underlying

problem. Physical and mental healing is wonderful in the short term but is powerless in the long term without spiritual healing. The multitude had a long term "sickness" of sin resulting in death and the only true remedy being forgiveness. The lasting impact of Christ's ministry comes from his words of wisdom as he exhorted the people on the mount.

What do you think **Matt 4:23-25** is trying to draw your focus on? (Hint: there is a three-letter word that is repeated constantly). What do we find in **Matt 5:1-2**? Do you think Jesus is still ministering to all the multitude?

Only those who make the effort to go hear Jesus would have heard the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' words were more precious and remedial than all the miracles he did in the cities below. The purpose of Jesus' words in **Matt 5-7** is to spiritually heal those from sin who desire it. Notice what it says in **Matt 8:1** after the Sermon is finished, "*when he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him*". Some only want to reap the benefits associated with following Jesus Christ, however are reluctant to make the spiritual journey to hear his words and make a

lifelong change.

Let God guide you to understand the wonderful teachings of Jesus and give you the strength to follow the actions of Jesus as his disciple. In reading these words, you can ponder your own discipleship and be prepared to declare, *“Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that you are Christ, the Son of the living God”* (**John 6:68-69**).

the motivation behind your actions

One of the essential parts of Jesus’ teachings on the mount is to establish the correct motives behind our actions. So what are the true reasons you serve God in the first place? Is it because that is what your parents want you to do or because you want the approval of others? Or is it because you are personally motivated by Jesus and have a desire to know God?

The teachings of Jesus are challenging because they require us to actually think about what we are like on the inside. This is what God really cares about, the secret motives behind what we do in our lives. It’s the same lesson as **1 Sam 16:7** - paraphrase this in your own words below:

Jesus states: Worship and actions must be done with the absolute intention of giving glory to God (**Matt 5:16**). Jesus later warns us that if our actions are to impress or please others we have no heavenly reward from them (**Matt 6:1**). More than that, make sure you consider your own motives before you begin to criticise others (**Matt 7:5**). Jesus further emphasised this point by saying that they must be more righteous than the religious leaders of the day (**Matt 5:20**)!

What were the true motives behind the righteous actions of the religious leaders? (Hint: **Matt 6:2, 7:15**).

The Sermon teaches us that true service and actions are founded from our love of God. So let’s take a moment to examine our motives. Look deep into your heart and mind and think, why do you do the things you do? Is it because you do them for God? Or for the recognition of others?

the multitude of the day

Who exactly was the Sermon on the Mount directed to? If we can understand who it was spoken to, it will be easier for us to apply it into our own context today.

Jesus was not born in a comfortable, free society like we have grown up in. The Jewish people were under Roman occupation and so Rome was the ultimate world authority in Israel at the time.

However, the religious leaders of Israel were just as influential and comprised of three main groups:

Scribes- This group started as clerks in charge of copying out the Law, soon they became the official lawyers and doctors of the Law in Israel. Knowing Scripture like the back of their hand, they became self proclaimed rabbis's and instead of teaching people God's ways they preferred to quote other rabbis instead of God's Word. (**Matt 7v29**)

Pharisees- The title means 'separate' in Hebrew. They started with noble intentions of being holy to God and scholars of the Law. However, became corrupted by power and money and had oppressed the Jewish people while elevating traditions above God's Law (see **Matt 23v23, Mark 7v8**). The Pharisees invented lots of extra biblical traditions which were intended to exemplify their righteousness.

Sadducees- meaning 'righteous ones'. The most extremely wealthy individuals in Israel, who had bribed the governments to establish them in power. They also comprised part of the high priest's family! The Sadducees didn't believe in Angels or the resurrection (**Acts 23v8**) so they were in this life for as much as they could get out of it. They also only accepted the first 5 books of the bible as being divinely inspired.

Christ alludes to these leaders and their ways in the Sermon on the Mount, criticising their attitudes and behaviour in **5:20, 6:2** and **6:5**.

We get a lot of insight into the rulers of Israel from **Matt 23**. Take a read of the following verses and summarise what Christ implies about these people:

Matt 23:3-4 _____

Matt 23:6 _____

Matt 23:13 _____

Matt 23:23 _____

As you probably are well aware, these leaders have very little interest in what Christ had to say. However, they did pay careful attention to every word that Christ said to try to catch him out for blasphemy or wrong doctrine, we see this in **Matt 22:15** as they try to "entangle him in his talk".

The common people consisted of two major classes:

Peasants: The peasant workers were the largest social category, which included Jesus and his disciples. This group included the artisans, farmers, fishers, herders and workers.

Slaves: The slaves included the Household slaves and day labourers.

Have a read of **Luke 4:18** and list some of the qualities mentioned of the people Jesus preached to:

Below is a list of some New Testament verses which describe what the people in Christ's day were like. Then, as a bit of a fun activity, fill in the below find-a-word.

When you find them all, there is a secret message from the remaining letters. If you text us the secret message on instagram @thisisstudyweek, we'll shout you a free hot beverage during the week!

Luke 2:36-38 (1 word) _____

Luke 3:15 (1 word) _____

Luke 4:18 (4 word) _____

Matt 4:23 (2 words) _____

Mark 8:1-3 (1 word) _____

Matt 13:14-15 (1 word) _____

John 7:43 (1 word) _____

Luke 11:5-8 (1 word) _____

Secret Phrase: _____

N	O	I	T	A	T	C	E	P	X	E
D	I	N	P	U	D	E	N	C	E	O
E	H	I	R	O	O	P	A	H	S	P
T	N	O	I	S	I	V	I	D	E	P
C	H	S	S	I	C	K	E	B	V	R
I	U	L	L	U	D	Y	T	L	I	E
L	N	B	R	O	K	E	N	I	T	S
F	G	A	S	W	E	A	K	N	P	S
F	R	C	L	O	S	E	D	D	A	E
A	Y	E	S	A	E	S	I	D	C	D
K	G	N	I	T	I	A	W	I	E	I

THINKY THINGS

We can learn a powerful message when we consider the reactions that occurred as the different classes of people heard Christ's words. Everyone heard the revolutionary righteous sayings of our Lord and yet, in 3 years time, one of these groups had conspired to Christ's death (the Leaders), and the other happily cried out for his death at his trial (the Multitude).

What's the point then? Well, unless we look deep into our hearts and choose to follow our Lord, unless we are convinced he is Christ, the Son of God and unless we are convinced that Christ's words can give eternal life and can change our being... We are no better than those men and women who let this opportunity slip through their fingers and found themselves without promise, hope or life evermore.

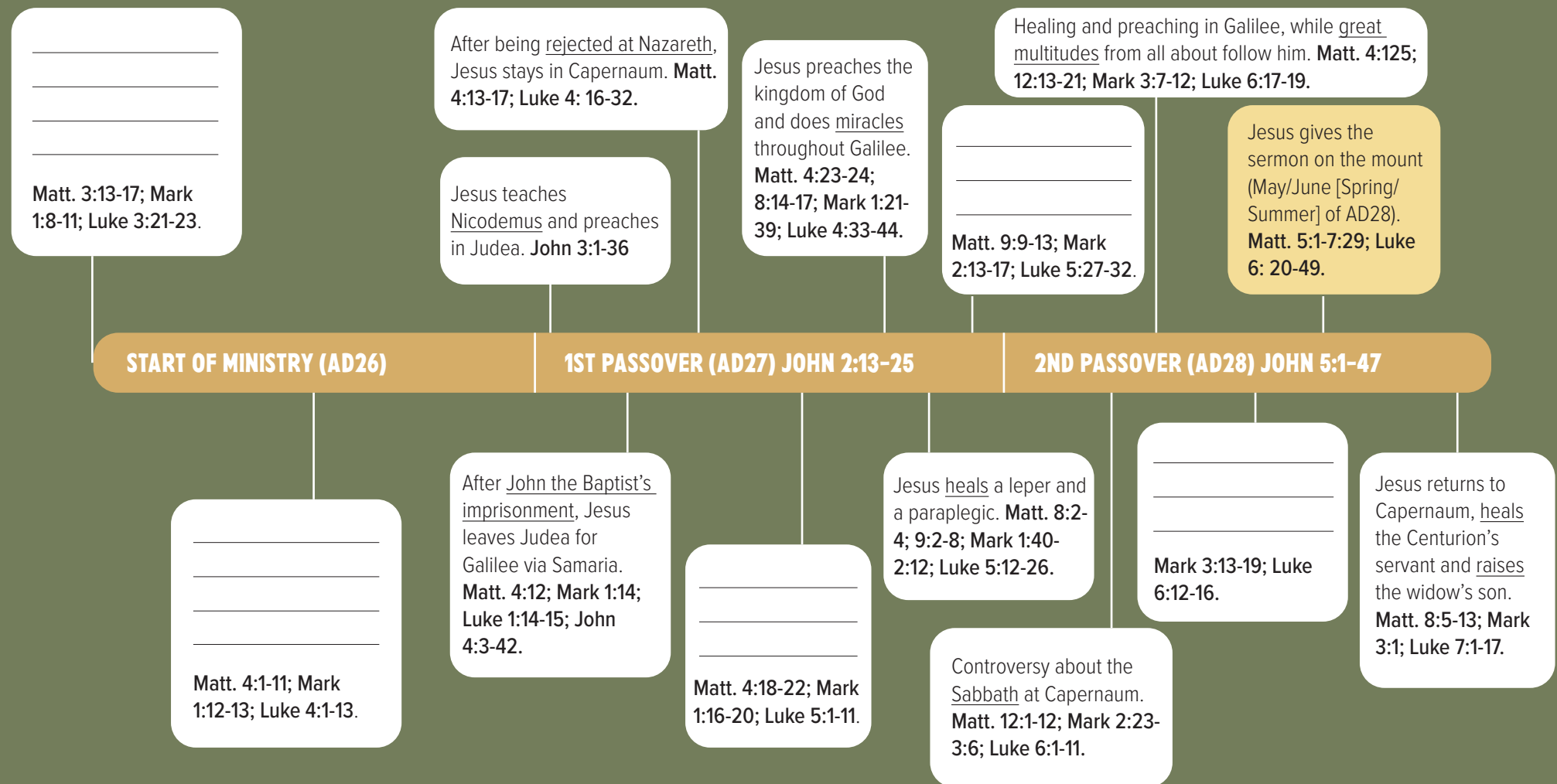
Jesus' teachings turned the Jewish social status on its head. However, it could be understood by the learned, poor and illiterate and it was actually those who were poor, meek, hungry and persecuted who were the most humble and teachable to hear the Lord's words. Although God's Word has depth, the Gospel is a simple message of hope that anyone can understand. If you consistently seek for answers in God's Word, then you will find them (**Matt 7:7**).

Look up the following references which summarises the spirit of Jesus' message on the mount and the social group to which he came to preach (**1 Cor 1:20, James 4:6, Isa 61:1-3**). What lessons can we take away from this?

An awesome resource to take a look at is 'The Life of Jesus', written by Melva Purkis, (I think almost every Christadelphian has it in their library, if not get on it!).

We know reading big blocks of text isn't always the most riveting exercise, but read pg. 39 -50 because this is excellently summarised what the people were like.

FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE TIMELINE OF JESUS' MINISTRY UNTIL THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT



location

The precise location of Jesus' teaching on the mount is unknown. The only real clues we are provided in the record are that it was on a mountain (**Matt 5:1**), that it is near Capernaum (**Matt 8:1**), and that it is likely somewhere in Galilee (**Matt 4:23**). Popular tradition suggests the location to be Mt Eremos, also known as the "Mount of Beatitudes." This is a mountain known for its amphitheatre-like structure which would have enabled Christ to easily speak with the multitudes surrounding him.

Also, you may or may not have noticed that **Matthew 5-7** and **Luke 6:17-49** both record a Sermon by Jesus Christ holding very similar messages, themes and Beatitudes as the other. There are many thoughts as to why this is the case, some say they are the same record recorded from different perspectives, whilst others say they were two completely different Sermons Christ gave.



SECTION 1

characteristics of true disciples

MATTHEW 5:1-16 (The Beatitudes)



"Who will ascend the hill of the Lord? And who can stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob."

Psalm 24:3-6.

VERSES 1-2: INTRODUCTION

The Sermon on the Mount begins with Jesus' disciples following him up to the mountain.

Already this is a pointed lesson, as Jesus called many people to be his disciples, but few choose to follow him (**Matt 22:14**). Only those who really put in the effort to trek up this mountain, and really wanted to hear Jesus's teaching would hear these life-changing words. If you want a real personal connection with Jesus Christ, you've got to put some effort in on your part.

We find Jesus opens up **Matt 5** by talking to his disciples. What does the word "disciple" mean and indicate about their relationship with him?

Look up at **Deut 18:18-19** - what similarities do you notice between this prophecy and **Matt 5:2**?

Jesus opened his mouth to speak his Father's words to the people. His words are "spirit and they are life" (**John 6:63**).

For this reason, the words Jesus speaks in this Sermon are truly revolutionary in the way he promotes the outliving of God's character, causing his disciples (us) to delve right into our core motives to make changes we didn't know needed changing. These words have the power to change your life... but only if you are willing to let them!

VERSES 3-12: THE BEATITUDES

From v3-12 we find what is commonly referred to as the 'Beatitudes'. What does this word mean? Look up the definition in the Cambridge Dictionary.

There are eight Beatitudes from **v3-12** that reflect the character of those who keep Christ's commands and who Christ notes will be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The first four focus on our own attitude between ourselves and God, whilst the second four focus

on how that should be outworked in our interactions with others.

Each verse begins with the word "Blessed". This word means more than just "Happy". It means to be joyful or supremely blessed. It is more than just an emotion, but a lasting, continuing happiness of the heart which creates an inner peace. It is not controlled by circumstance or the possession of material things, it is a state of character. These characteristics are what brings us happiness in our current life and in the life to come.

Look up the verses below. What do they tell you about the meaning of "blessed"?

James 1:25 _____

Psalm 1:1-2 _____

John 13:17 _____

Rev 1:3 _____

What's the objective then?

We are so glad you asked! Here are a couple of pointers to look out for before we get started:

- The Beatitudes are a list of characteristics that Christ describes the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven as having. These characteristics are in complete opposition to human nature and are challenging for anyone to complete, however that is what makes them stand out to God and they are all requirements for the blessings that follow. Young person, this means you really need to apply radical change to your natural characteristics to even hope to develop these principles!
- Each Beatitude is not just a singular characteristic we get to choose from, instead we must develop ALL of them. Only through the development of all 8 Beatitudes are we able to gain citizenship to the Kingdom of Heaven. We will touch on this later, but look out for how each Beatitude builds on the previous foundation, all stemming from us having a "poor and contrite spirit".
- It's worth noting that Christ takes these characteristics from specific verses in Scripture, often from the Psalms or Isaiah. Make sure you are looking out for these cross-references, as the themes are consistent throughout Scripture and have always been well-pleasing to Yahweh.
- The Blessings are not physical like we find they were in the law of Moses (**Deut 28**), instead these were eternal spiritual promises to last the believer an eternity!
- Christ uses principles that are attainable by anyone, rich or poor, as they are all centred

around the attitude and willingness of the individual. Thus even the most destitute of the multitude, could practice ideals such as meekness, peaceableness and mourning. Therefore we need to read these and look at how we can practically apply these in our lives.

So let’s dive in and start unpacking these building blocks of Christ’s Beatitudes

V3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

The Attitude: Poor in Spirit

What does the phrase ‘poor in spirit’ mean? Look up the meanings of these words in Strong’s/E-Sword to help you out.

Jesus references both **Isa 57:15** and **Isa 66:2** here. How do these verses describe God? How does he describe the people he wants to dwell with?

God is the most powerful Being in the entire universe, yet He still wants to be with the lowly, poor in spirit. The proud people of this world don’t have a need for God, but a humble person does. Do we sometimes find that we are so caught up in our own lives that we don’t have a need for God?

We find that Christ speaks about this principle a lot in his ministry such as in **Luke 18: 9-14** where we find Jesus gives a parable contrasting a Pharisee, who was rich in spirit, to a tax collector, poor in spirit. What is the conclusion of this parable?

Ultimately we all lack something, even though we might not recognize it. *You say, ‘I am rich; I have grown wealthy and need nothing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked (Rev 3:17).* It is easy to become self-reliant in the prosperous society we live in. In reality, we all share the desperate need for forgiveness and for life.

What might “poor in spirit” look like in your life? Reflect on some new ways you can develop this characteristic in your day to day life.

The Blessing: Poor in Spirit

We already touched on the Kingdom of Heaven in the background. Interestingly, this blessing both begins and ends the Beatitudes - tying them altogether! What this means for us is that only those who work to develop all the Beatitude characteristics in their life will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus gives 7 parables about what the Kingdom of Heaven will be like later on in **Matthew 13**. What will the Kingdom of Heaven be like? Fill in the table below:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like...”	Meaning of Parable	Link to Matthew 5-7
The Sower and the Seed (Matt 13:3-23)		7:16-20
The Wheat and Weeds (Matt 13:24-30)		7:16-20
The Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32)		
The Yeast (Matt 13:33-43)		
The Hidden Treasure (Matt 13:44)		6:19-20
The Pearl (Matt 13:45-46)		7:6
The Fishing Net (Matt 13:47-50)		

The Kingdom of Heaven is much more than the physical transformation of the world. At its core, the Kingdom of Heaven is all about the spiritual transformation undertaken by a disciple becoming like God. God’s ultimate purpose for this world is to fill it with people who display His perfect glory or character (**Hab 2:14**). This process has already begun in you when you choose

to overcome sin in your daily life and in its place put on the mind of Christ by thinking and acting like Him. The mind of the King is the mind His Kingdom subjects strive to imitate (**Phil 2:5**). While we wait for that day, Jesus' message on the mount calls us to begin to plant the seeds of the Kingdom of Heaven in our lives now.

Another important thing to recognise is that the Kingdom of Heaven is a gift from God, not a reward for our work. So let's channel our inner humility to realise all of these qualities are for God, not our own personal gain or recognition!

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."
Ephesians 2:8

V4 "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"

The Attitude: Mourning

It's funny that quite literally this beatitude is a paradox: "Happy are they that are sad". How can this be? Think about a time that you have mourned or grieved and channel that grief here.

What type of mourning is Jesus speaking of here? What should we be mournful about?

Matt 9:15 _____

Acts 20:30-31 _____

2 Cor 7:10 _____

Clearly this is a sadness that goes beyond just the emotion. **It is a deep rooted sadness around the state of humanity without Jesus**. And this should be our reaction too when we are poor in spirit!

When we begin to reflect on the magnitude of the wretched state humanity possesses, how separated we are from our Father and how tied we are to sin and death - there is a sudden drop in our heart as we recognise our unworthiness and doomed state when we are left by ourselves. It is this mourning and recognition of our sinful nature that should lead us to repentance.

The shortest verse in the Bible is **John 11:35**, "*Jesus wept.*".

We can easily read over this - but WHY does Jesus weep here?

Was he sad that his friend Lazarus was dead, or perhaps the impact his death had on the people?



Well maybe. But Jesus knew he was about to raise him to life again and change the attitude of the people; so there has to be more!

John 11:46- 53 shows that following Christ's undeniable miracle, some Jews were so hard-hearted that in the face of resurrection - they did not believe. Instead of glorifying God's mercy and power, their conclusion was that Christ must die. This is why Christ mourns; at human nature, at how proud and stubborn this miracle would make the people, who would refuse the power of God to preserve themselves and prefer Jesus being put to death than to seek salvation!.

There are actually some great benefits of mourning in our lives. What might some of these benefits be? (Hint: perhaps look up **Ecc 7:2-4** and **James 4:9-10**).

The Blessing: Comfort

Jesus bases this Beatitude from **Isa 61:1-3**. Take a read of these verses and note below what this mourning should produce?

How does **2 Cor 3:3-5** and **Rev 21: 3-4** portray God as a comforter both now and in the future?

V5 “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth”

The Attitude: Meek

What is meekness? Look up the meaning of the Greek word in Strong’s and write it below.

The word meek in the Oxford Dictionary means: “To be quiet, gentle, and always ready to do what other people want without expressing your own opinion.”

Biblical meekness is not about being timid and cowardly. **Meekness is not weakness.** People who are meek have confident reliance, not in themselves, but on God. That is where their strength, power and direction comes from.

In contrast, the people who the world promotes and aspires to be are people who are self-assertive and have self-promotion qualities. Jesus is not looking for these characteristics in his disciples. Meekness is something that is so foreign to us in our world today. The world promotes and pushes us to elevate ourselves above others in all aspects of our lives such as on social media, pursuing a career, even amongst our friends and family groups. In opposition to meekness is pride, the attribute of putting ourselves and our opinion above those around us. Compare the contrast of these two attitudes in **Prov 11:2, 16:18-19.**

What would you say is the biggest roadblock that prevents you from showing a meek character in your life?

Although men today might overlook a meek attitude, how does God perceive them? What is a meek individual like?

Isa 29:19 _____

James 1:21 _____

Meekness is about developing humility towards your brethren, being teachable (as in **Psalm 25:9**), being quick to listen to God’s Word (such as in **Prov 9:8-9**) and having a gentle and quiet spirit which is well pleasing toward God (**1 Peter 3:3-4**).

Below write one of the ways you can best show meekness in your own personal life?

Who is the person mentioned in the bible as the meekest man in all the earth (**Num 12:3**)? What are some examples in his life where he exemplifies himself as meek?

*Hint some verses to consider: **Ex 3:10-11, Ex 18:24, Ex 32:30-33, Num 12, Num 14: 11-21.**

Moses was not born with this characteristic of meekness. Initially, he tried to bring salvation to the Israelites through his own strength as a prince in Egypt. But God took him through a 40 year learning process as a shepherd in the wilderness before returning to deliver the Israelites. Moses had meekness because he was prepared to be taught. God can work with the meek because they are prepared to be taught.

Did Moses, the meekest man, ever inherit the earth or enter the promised land in his lifetime? When will those who are meek receive this promise? (Hint: **Num 20:12, Heb 11:13-14**).

The Blessing: Inherit the earth

Jesus bases this Beatitude on **Psalm 37**. Read **Psalm 37:9-11, 22**, and write it in the margin of your bible next to **Matt 5:5**.

The Psalm contrasts two people: the wicked and the righteous. Take two colouring in pencils and go through **v3, v9, v11, v18, v22, v27, v29** and **v34** of **Psalm 37**.

Colour in anything relating to inheritance and dwelling, and use the other colour to show why they inherit.

THINKY THINGS

What then does it mean to inherit the Earth?

This principle is rooted back in the Promise to Abraham in **Gen 13:14-17** where God promises Abraham, for his selfless attitude and undivided faith, the entire land of Israel. The physical inheritance of land has intense significance, especially for an Israelite who longed for the promise of an everlasting heritage. This is why Joseph requested his bones to be taken back to the land promised to his forefathers in **Gen 50:24-25**, it's why God's final gift to Moses is a view of the entire region of Israel from Mt Nebo in **Deut 34**, and it's why we too desire a heavenly country, a city whose builder and maker is God in **Heb 11:9-16**. Let us too value not ourselves, but instead lift up our eyes to the inheritance of a new heaven and a new earth in which we might remain forever (**Isa 66:22**).

The earth on which we live now is an incredible place perfectly suited to human existence. There is not much value in inheriting the earth if the bright future God has planned for true believers is to take place somewhere else! Here is some further evidence which establishes that God's future kingdom will be here on earth: **Zech 14:9, Jer 3:17, Matt 19:28**.

The inheritance of the earth is a sure and positive hope for you! It changes your perspective on how you choose to look after God's creation. It also provides a positive future vision to regenerate the environment into the pure state God designed it to be (**Rev 22:1-2**).

V6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"

The Attitude: Hunger and thirst after righteousness

Take a moment to think about a time when you felt very hungry or extremely thirsty. Maybe you have experienced the 40 hour famine or felt the anticipation for fast food after a long day's work or a late Sunday lunch? Think about how thirsty you felt after a hard game of sport in the hot sun or a long hike over a dry landscape?

Do you crave and desire God's righteousness to this extent?

What do you hunger for? Sometimes we feel hungry for what this world has to offer - riches, power, a gold medal, a top career. Some people will do whatever training it takes to get there, because they are hungry for it. But what does God want us to hunger for?

It may be something we struggle with, but let's look at what Scripture says about what we should be hungering and thirsting for:

Activity - Fill in the blanks below from the KJV:

GOD'S WORD

Isa 55:1-3 - "Ho every one that _____ come ye to the _____ and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and _____; yeah come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Wherefore do ye spend money for _____? And for your labour which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, _____ and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me: _____ and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

Deut 8:3 "And he humbled thee and suffered thee to _____, and fed thee with mana, which thou newest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that _____, but by every _____ doth man live."

1 Pet 2:2 "As newborn babes desire the _____ that ye may grow thereby."

GOD

Psalm 63:1-2 "O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee: _____, my soul longeth for thee in a _____, where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

Psalm 37:3 "Trust in the LORD and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land _____."

CHRIST

John 4:13-14 "Jesus answered and said unto her, _____: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never _____; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a _____."

John 6:35 "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me _____; and he that believeth on me shall _____."

KINGDOM

Rom 14:17 "For the kingdom of God is not _____; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, one of his last phrases was "*I thirst*" (**John 19:23**). Jesus felt an intense desire for the spiritual refreshment that comes from the word of God. While he was on the cross, Jesus' mind would have been taken back to **Psalm 42:1-2**: "*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul longs after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, the living God. When shall I come and appear in God's presence?*"

Blessing: You will be filled

Someone who is satisfied with this life is not spiritually hungry!

If we aren't hungering and longing for righteousness, which is what the kingdom will all be about - then why are we seeking Christ?

Someone who hungers and thirsts after God will gain eternal satisfaction. God promises that your thirst will be quenched, your hunger will be filled, and when you seek, you will find. Brainstorm some practical ways that you can increase your hunger and thirst for righteousness in your life?

V7 "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"

The Attitude: Mercy

What does it mean to be merciful? Look up the meaning of this word and write it below in your own words.

How can we be merciful? Take a look at some starter quotes:

Psalm 41:1 _____

Prov 14:21 _____

Isa 55:7 _____

Flick over to **Matthew 18:23-35** and consider the parable of the unforgiving debtor. Who is the king in the parable? How does this relate to you and how do you show mercy to others?

Have a chat with your study buddy about a time you struggled to show mercy. How does the above parable relate to **2 Peter 1:9**?

Christ takes this Beatitude from **Psalm 18:25**, a Psalm written by King David. The people associated the attribute of mercy with the character of David, for example a blind man wanting to be healed says: "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me*" (**Luke 18:38**). Why was David considered a man of mercy? (Perhaps consider **1 Sam 24,26**, **2 Sam 9**)

It's because of this, that later in his life, David receives great mercy himself. God showed David great mercy in forgiving his sins of adultery and murder in **2 Sam 12**. **Psalm 51** was written by David to express to God how much he appreciated the mercy God gave him. David realises God is more than just willing to be merciful, it's part of His character!

The Blessing: They will receive mercy

Read **Titus 3:5** and write below in your own words.

We can never earn God's mercy by doing righteous things. God "*does not treat us as our sins deserve.. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sin from us*" (**Psalm 103:8-12**). God's mercy and forgiveness towards our consistent failings should motivate us to show mercy to others.

An appreciation of our own need for mercy is essential when trying to develop the characteristic of mercy in our lives. Christ died for us: But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (**Rom 5:8**). Do you appreciate the mercy God has given you?

What do we learn about how God shows mercy in **Exo 34:7** and **Deut 5:10**?

To wrap up this idea, **Isa 16:5** depicts a beautiful vision of what the Kingdom will be like, when the Lamb will rule over Mount Zion. It notes:

"In mercy shall the throne be established and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgement, and hastening righteousness."

This is what the very basis of the Kingdom will be grounded upon - mercy! It is the only means that the Kingdom will be populated with the saints, as without this mercy we would be dead to our sins. Now instead of judgement, mercy triumphs for those who have previously shown mercy, as we see in **James 2:13**. It's not only a relief for us, but a reminder of the power we have to determine our own judgement in the future.

People make mistakes, we make mistakes. Are you holding a grudge with anyone based on what they have said or done to you? **Are you guilty of the same thing?** *Let us too then forgive our brethren so that we may obtain mercy from a God who dearly loves us and is prepared to blot out all our sins.* **Col 3:13**. God shows infinite mercy to us, but how can we expect to receive it, if we don't extend it to others? Allow yourself to let go of those grudges and extend mercy to those who have wronged you.

V8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"

The Attitude: The Pure in Heart

First of all, you might ask what is the heart of a person? Strong's definition says that it is: the thoughts and feelings/middle (of someone). Take a look at **Prov 4:23**, what does this indicate the power of the heart to be?

If then the heart has so much influence on our being, what then is our natural heart like? Jeremiah

gives us a pretty clear vision of who we are naturally in **Jer 17:9-10**.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart..."

How then might you be able to make your heart clean? Who then is responsible for changing our heart? Take a look at the following verses:

Psalms 15:1-2 _____

Psalms 51:10 _____

Ezekiel 36:24-28 _____

Jeremiah 31:33 _____

Hebrews 4:12 _____

In Christ's day, the multitudes believed purity of heart was in regard to their obedience to the law of Moses, and those set by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Instead Christ was turning this idea on its head to demonstrate purity is more than the outward actions we do (We can see this in **Matt 23:25-28**).

But what does it mean for our hearts to be pure? The word pure means: to be clean or undefiled.

Think about how gold is mined straight from the earth. When it is first brought out as an ore, it is mixed with many impurities, however it requires great effort, work and fire to turn that ore into purified gold, unmixed from any purity. Do you think you could describe your heart as unmixed, refined and pure to the things of God? **Psalms 12:6** compares God's own Word to being a pure metal, *"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."*

What do you do when you have spare time?

Could you honestly say that your heart is given undividedly to God's word? Or is it mixed with your love for the things of this world? Such as Netflix, Instagram or social events? What information are you filling yourself with daily? You become what you fill your heart (mind) with. Christ's intention here is to make us reflect on our lives - how much are you giving to God? What do you value in life? Is it pure?

God is interested in what comes from the deepest parts of our hearts, when no one else is around. In this world of distractions we should strive to prioritise God's words and ways.

Have a think below and give some suggestions as to some habits that you can implement to

purify your heart and mind?

Our aim in life should be taken from the spirit of **Titus 1:15**, “*Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.*”

The Blessing: They will see God

Where does Christ base this verse from? Take a look at **Psalm 24:3-6**, and note down any links you find to this Beatitude and the Sermon on the Mount as a whole.

We can only see God when we seek his face and strive to reflect his perfect character. The man Moses had no greater desire than to see God face to face in **Ex 33**, and yet he was informed that in our current sinful, impure state, no man can see God and live. Moses climbed Mt Sinai, wanting to see God, but was unable. But here Christ invites us to a mountain and provides us an opportunity to see his Father with our own eyes. Is this our genuine hope too? Young people, without a doubt this is a huge responsibility on our part, and something we cannot take lightly, however the reward of seeing the All-Power Creator makes this dedication all worthwhile.

To finish this verse take a look at **1 John 3:2-3** and meditate on this principle for a couple of minutes. Write it below in your own words.

Now let’s take a break! Grab a cup of tea and a bikkie (or two).

CHALLENGE

We want to challenge you now and ask you to message a friend or study partner with something you want to change this week to make your heart a little more pure before God.

In the box to the right, write down some ideas and then tick off each day that you accomplish them:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

V9 “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God”

The Attitude: Peacemaker

As humans in the society we live in, it is easy to be confrontational, argumentative, and contentious with one another. But God is not looking for people who are divisive.

James 4: 1-2 notes where divisions originate. List the causes below:

God is looking instead for those who replace this argumentative behaviour with peace making. What are the characteristics of the peacemaker? Take a look at **2 Tim 2:22-26**.

Peacemaking is not about avoiding conflict. **Psalm 34:14** says that we must “*depart from evil, do good, seek peace and pursue it.*” Peacemaking is active. It is about making a conscious effort to work to make peace. Peacemakers are people who actively repair conflict with those they don’t see eye to eye.

Read **James 3:17-18** and **Rom 12:16-19**. How can you practically make peace with others in your life?

Can you think of some examples of peacemakers in the Bible?

One of the most awesome examples of peacemaking can be seen in the upper room where Christ intervenes amongst his disciples arguing who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead Christ demonstrates the importance of being a servant, defusing the situation by washing his disciples feet.

Blessing: The children of God

1 John 3:1-2 emphasises that God’s children are those who act like him:

*“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called **children of God**; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are **God’s children** now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears **we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is.”*

What does it mean to be a child of God?

Gal 3:26-29 _____

Gal 4:1-6 _____

Mark 10:13-16 _____

Just like the child is much like their parents, so are we to be like our Father. God has gone to an incredible extent to make peace with us “*by making peace through [Jesus’] blood, shed on the cross*” (**Col 1:20**). God wants us to be peacemakers because he is a peacemaker.

V10-12: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

The Attitude: Persecution for righteousness sake

The final Beatitude is not a characteristic that we develop, but rather being persecuted comes as a natural result of displaying the previous 7 Beatitudes.

What does it mean to be persecuted and reviled? The Strong’s definition for persecuted is: to be pursued and to suffer. And revile means to be defamed and chided. **2 Tim 4:1-5** speaks of being persecuted - that if we preach God’s word and show His character long enough, we will find people who prefer to hear what they want to hear and do what they want to do, and will persecute the believers. So it most definitely is something we should expect in our own spiritual walk.

How does **Heb 11:36-40** show that faithful believers were persecuted?

Are we prepared to suffer the same for the Truth?

Earlier Christadelphians have suffered from being thrown into gaol for refusing to participate in conscription. In diverse places around the world, our brethren and sisters are cast out of their homes, beaten or murdered for their beliefs. However, persecutions today in Australia may be a bit different than those mentioned in **Hebrews 11**. Especially in a society which has been founded on religious principles and boasts tolerance of any perspective, religion or idea. So how does this relate to you? Have you experienced persecution for what you believe?

Perhaps persecution today can come from suffering criticism for standing up for God’s principles when a popular political view challenges the bible teaching? Or suffering mockery for choosing not to participate in the worldly behaviours that your peers are involved in? Call a friend and discuss how you have suffered or can suffer from persecution in our daily lives? Write some examples below:

This isn't new, Christ bases this Beatitude off **Isa 66:5** and **Isa 51:7-8**. Jesus makes it very clear to his disciples that fellowship with him would result in sufferings and they would share the impact of hatred and cruelty with him. Jesus notes this again in **John 7:7** and **John 15:18-21**.

What does **1 Peter 2:19-24** say about suffering? What is the example that is left for us in these verses?

Unlike the previous Beatitudes, it is almost as if Jesus is speaking directly to his disciples in **v11** when he says, "*Blessed are you*". The disciples were later to experience persecutions in **Acts 5:41**, and it is spoken of in **1 Peter 4:13-14**. Rather than losing hope and folding, what do these quotes note we can gain from persecutions?

The Blessing: Kingdom of Heaven

While going through persecution, how can we maintain perspective on the end goal of the Kingdom to help us through? Consider these words written for us:

Rom 5: 3-4 _____

Rom 8:35-39 _____

2 Cor 4: 17-18 _____

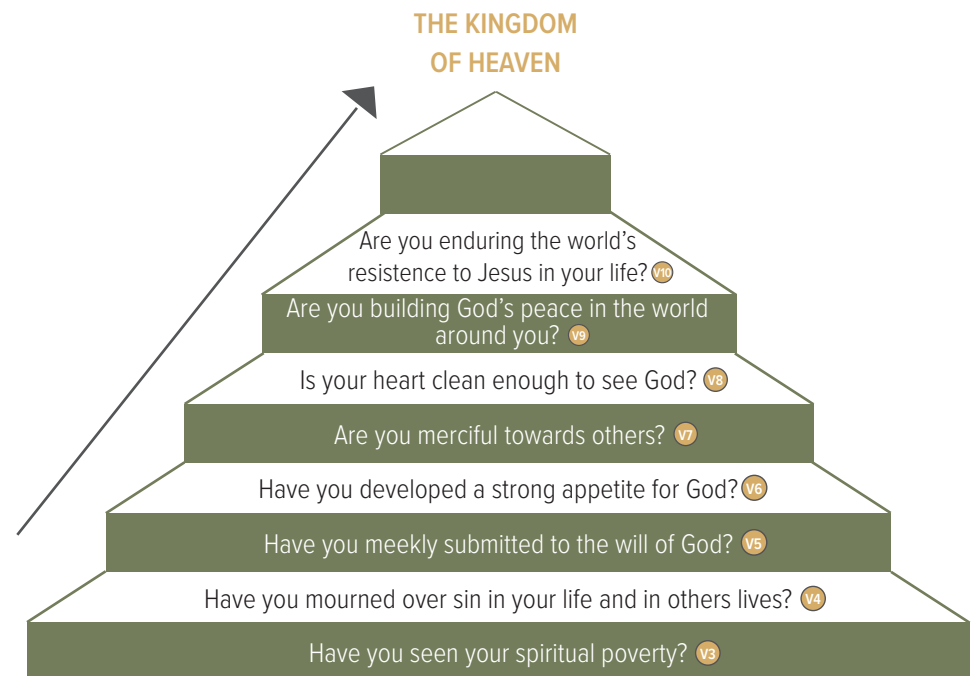
Are you suffering persecution in your life? If so take courage in the words of **Rom 8:35-39**, NOTHING is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you are not suffering persecutions, do not be discouraged, perhaps your time has not come yet, perhaps you are surrounded by many God-fearing individuals who are trying to develop these characteristics too. Or perhaps this is a wakeup call, that our actions in everyday life do not match the picture that is painted here by our Lord. So let's continue to ascend to this peak, and become as the prophets and apostles before us, suffering tribulation for our Lord!

SO WHAT ARE THE BEATITUDES?

As you may have been able to tell, these Beatitudes are not singular characteristics that a believer can pick and choose from to implement in their life. All of them have to be developed for one to be a citizen of Heaven. Each Beatitude builds upon the previous, with the foundation set in the poor in spirit. No one is able to mourn before making themselves poor in spirit; no individual has any reason to show mercy unless they have hungered and thirst after righteousness and seen God do the same!

Below is a picture which shows how we must ascend through these characteristics. We are all in different stages of this process, many would have developed some, and fallen back down this stairway, however this is an ongoing process that will never be complete until the Kingdom of Heaven has been established.



Which of these characteristics do you aspire to develop more of in your life? Where do you think you are/have been on this ladder?

So at Study Week, let's encourage our fellow young people in being poor in spirit, mourning for

the things of God, developing meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, showing mercy to one another, purifying our hearts, making peace and even suffering persecutions, because the blessings that are hidden there are offered for eternity.

EXAMPLES OF JESUS LIVING THE BEATITUDES

Jesus shows us the ultimate example of living these characteristics in his own life. Jesus certainly practised what he preached. In your bible margin, bible-mark the below examples of Jesus displaying each of the Beatitudes.

Beatitude	Bible Passage	Jesus' Active Example
V3 Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven	Matt 8:17	Jesus was touched by the feelings of the poor beggars
V4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted	John 11:35	Jesus wept over the death of his dearest friend Lazarus.
V5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth	Luke 22:26-27 John 13: 4-17	In the upper room where Christ intervenes amongst his disciples arguing who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead Christ demonstrates the importance of being a servant, defusing the situation by washing his disciples feet.
V6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled	Matt 4:4	In the wilderness when tempted by the devil.
V7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be given mercy	Mark 10:47 John 8:1-11	Christ's compassion to blind Bartimaeus Jesus forgiving the woman caught in adultery

V8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God	Heb 12:2, Psalm 16:8-11	Jesus endured his sufferings and kept pure from sin to the end by holding onto the vision of the future joy of seeing his Father and being in His presence.
V9 Blessed are the peace-makers, for they will be called children of God	Rom 5:1	Jesus provided us with the ultimate peace between man and the Father
V10-12 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...	Isa 53:3-5	Jesus was despised by mankind and was familiar with pain and suffering throughout his whole life and to the point of death on the cross.

Before closing off this section, Christ likens his future disciples as two symbols that they are meant to manifest. Both of these are not something that they are meant to become, but something that they already are. You either are or you aren't living up to these metaphors Christ gives. So let's take a look at these two now:

VERSES 13-16: A CONSISTENT AND SHINING EXAMPLE

V13 You are the salt

Jesus is saying that a person who demonstrates the characteristics of the above Beatitudes is the salt of the earth. What does this mean? How can a person be like salt? Well let's have a look at some of the valuable attributes of salt to help us understand this metaphor:

1. Salt adds flavour

Flavour is the attribute which Jesus is focusing on in this particular verse as he says *"but if the salt*

loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?" Salt adds flavour and makes something that is bland taste better by enhancing the flavours that are already there. As disciples of Jesus, our mission is to spread the gospel message through the earth and enhance it, adding the flavour of Christ into conversations and everyday situations we find ourselves in.

Read Col 4:5-6. How does Paul use the metaphor of salt in the life of a disciple?

Here Paul also emphasises the need to make the most of every opportunity when we interact with “outsiders” or people in the world. Make an effort to infuse the flavour of the gospel into your conversations and the way you act toward outsiders. The knowledge of the gospel is what makes a person stand out as different from others, just as the flavour of salt stands out from the dust that people walk over. Jesus emphasises that you are the salt, meaning that the living example of a person is what will give the gospel flavour and bring it to life. Consider your own life, what makes you different or stand out from those without Christ? How can you spread the flavour of the gospel to others?

2. Salt was representative of a covenant in the Old Testament

In every Old Testament sacrifice, God required his people to add salt to their offering (**Lev 2:13**). Why is this you may ask? Because God uses salt as a symbol of a strong and unbreakable covenant between people. For example, in **Num 18:19** God uses this very analogy to solidify His promise to the Levites of what is rightfully theirs.

“All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.”

3. Salt was used for purifying and healing

In **Ezk 16:4** we have an obscure reference to children being rubbed with salt after birth to cleanse the child. This is the only reference, however we know from history today that salt was often used in many cultures (including Israel) as an antiseptic to disinfect wounds and prevent infection.

4. Salt was a preservative agent

Perhaps most notably, yet never mentioned explicitly in the Bible, is salt’s ability to preserve articles of food well beyond their use-by date. As fridges and freezers did not exist, many ancient civilisations, including the Jews, would rub salt into their meats to ensure they would not rot.

All in all, salt was a valuable commodity in the ancient world. The Romans valued the mineral so much that they paid their soldiers in salt from time to time, stemming from the Latin root, this is where the modern word ‘salary’ comes from.

Given all these characteristics above, no wonder this is a perfect symbol for Christ to depict a believer as! God says you are like salt, don’t lose those characteristics which give you flavour, that make us stand out from the world around us. Ultimately, reflecting God’s character to others may preserve their life and lead to eternal healing.

Make sure you add the above 4 points about salt into your margins!



V14-16 You are the Light

Read **Isa 60:1-2** and write it in your margin beside **Matt 5:14**. What does the light represent?

Light is the production of all the principles found in the Beatitudes lived in the life of a believer. If you reflect God's character and put the Beatitudes into practice, people will notice and see that you are different from the rest of the world.

1 John 1:5 tells us that "*God is light*". This light is visible to us in the example of His son Jesus, in His Word, in His incredible creation and in the lives of His children.

We can learn of God's glorious light by studying His word - *The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.* **Psalm 119:130**. God's word will be like a light to guide your walk to the kingdom - *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.* **Psalm 119:105**.

What expression does Jesus use of himself in **John 8:12**?

Jesus' light was a reflection of the glory of God. Like Jesus, may all your intents of the heart, all your words spoken out loud, all the circumstances you enter into, bring glory to God, who is the source of all light.

Bible marking exercise: Jesus then gives two pictures of the way in which we should be the light of the world. Write the meaning of the metaphors in your bible margin beside **Matthew 5:14** and **15**.

1. City on a hill – The collective light of the ecclesia shines the gospel to those in the world
2. Candle on a lamp – Your own individual light shines within the ecclesia

Read **Psalm 50:2**. What is the mountain or hill spoken of here?

This city on a hill also has a future application, when in the kingdom "*the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it... let us walk in the light of the Lord*" (**Isa 2:2,5**).

"CANDLE ON A LAMP"

On the flip side, the candle represents our own individual lights that are placed together with other candles conjoined on the lampstand to shine within the ecclesia. Jesus says that it "*gives light to all that are in the house*", house literally being "the family" (Diaglott). By surrounding yourself with friends who also shine God's light, you can show God's righteousness to a greater extent, actively bursting forth the Father's glory.

It can be easy to make excuses as to your lack of involvement in the spiritual family – work, study, household chores, feeling tired or too busy. Yet Jesus does not want us to hide our light under the daily tasks of life. How are you contributing to your ecclesia's work? Or how do you plan to contribute going forward? List some ways you might be able to shine in your ecclesia, whether big or small:

If you are feeling like your light is flickering low, be encouraged by Jesus who "*a smoldering wick he will not snuff out*" (**Isa 42:3**). Get close to the people whose candles are burning brightly in order to reignite and fan into flame your faith.

If we are the light of the world, do we really shine it to the world around us? Does our habits, our clothing, the things we say and our entire way of life show that we are different? Are we willing to endure rejection or mockery for the sake of shining God's light to others?

"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." **1 John 1:5-7**

Let's look at an example of the man Daniel who lived in a society that did not know God, yet he continued to shine brightly. His daily life was observed by people who wanted to catch him out in doing something wrong, however they could find no fault in him. Instead, they found that he shone brightly by living honestly and praying regularly. What can you learn from **Dan 12:3** about what it means to shine?

Like Daniel, we are largely surrounded by the darkness of a society that does not recognise God. We are encouraged to *“live a good life among the Gentiles that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us”* (1 Peter 2:12). This is because *“you are all children of the light and children of the day, you do not belong to the night or to the darkness”* (1 Thess 5:5).

“GLORIFY YOUR FATHER”

Jesus says in **Matt 5:16** that the reason we shine is to glorify God and not ourselves. The glory of God is His perfect character (**Exo 33:18-19**). It is no use being a “good person” if you do not believe that God is the source of the good that you do. It is easy to accept praise for the good things we say or our good actions and let a sense of self-congratulation wash over us. Yet we should be channelling that praise to the Father in recognition that He is the source of all goodness. Jesus himself said *“Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God”* (**Matt 19:17**).

The purpose of doing “good deeds” is not so others may respect us for them, but so that they may come to know God. How can you ensure that those around you know that your good deeds are a reflection of the light of God?

Practical point: One idea is to let people know that you are a follower of God when you first meet them. Then they will be able to attribute the good that you do to God’s character. For example, do the people you spend time with at school, university or work know that you are a bible believer? If not, don’t worry, it is never too late to let them know (better late than never, ha)!

May we aim to *“become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain”*. **Phil 2:15-16**

SECTION 2

the new law in christ

MATTHEW 5:17-48

Christ begins the Sermon on the Mount with a complete set of attitudes for disciples of all ages to attain before entering into the Kingdom of God. But how do we live this on a day-to-day basis?

As we saw in the previous table, Jesus Christ fulfilled every aspect of the Beatitudes that he had spoken about, perfectly living what he had preached.

But now the responsibility is on us. For the rest of **Matthew 5**, Christ gives us some high standards to achieve; standards that go against everything we find natural and that require a complete change in mindset in the way we live, that can only be accomplished with earnest prayer and dedication to God.

Young people, this next set of laws that Christ provides is completely revolutionary. It requires **RADICAL CHANGE** in our lives to ensure that our motives and heart are pure and holy before God. Christ is asking us to elevate ourselves from a law that governs just our actions (the Law of Moses) to a law which governs our mind and motives. Peacemakers don't just abstain from violence, they will go to any extent to avoid conflict, even so far as to nip it in the bud.

Christ is asking us to give up more than just the bare minimum: he asks us to physically give our cheeks to those who smite us, and to love those who cause us incredible pain.

Young people, in this section Christ demands our hearts, our minds, our ALL, because without it we cannot hope to live up to the standard Christ expects from us. Yes, grace does the work and brings us righteousness, but only when we are prepared to give 100% and no less.

So let's prepare our hearts and minds to make that radical change, and dive into the words which Jesus has to say that we too might fulfil the Old law and the New.

When you read **v17-48**, which command of Christ do you think you will find the most challenging to implement?

VERSES 17-20: THE FULFILMENT OF THE OLD LAW

The question that must have echoed in many of the disciples' minds would have been, 'If the Beatitudes are what is needed to get us into the Kingdom of Heaven, what happens to the Law of Moses we follow so diligently now?

V17 Jesus fulfils the Law

Christ makes it very clear from the get-go that he has no intention of throwing away the Old Testament. Instead, he intends on fulfilling it!

The New Living Translation explains **Matt 5:17** perfectly - look this up and write it below:

The Law of Moses is sometimes cast aside by many churches around the world, along with the rest of the Old Testament, who state that it is now redundant. What does Paul say in **Rom 7:7-13** about what the purpose of the Law was? Do you think the Law was perfect in achieving this?

V18 One Jot and Tittle

THINKY THINGS

Jesus goes as far as to say that not even *"one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law"*. But what exactly was the Jot and Tittle Christ was referring to?

In the Hebrew alphabet, the 'Jot' was the 10th letter of the alphabet, the smallest of all the Hebrew characters. Meanwhile, 'Tittle' was a letter extension, a pen stroke that differentiated different letters. You can see the two examples below.



Christ is saying that even the smallest parts of the Law would be upheld by his doctrine! Similar to the cliché today “Dotting your I’s and crossing your T’s”

As an aside, this phrase goes to show that Christ could read the original Hebrew! Something that very few people could do in Israel at this time, let alone a Galilean. This, alongside with God’s understanding, is why Christ knew the Scriptures so much better than the Pharisees, who were astounded at his mind.

V19-20 The Righteousness of the Scribes & Pharisees

Christ emphasises how important it is to abide by these principles by telling his disciples that even the scribes and Pharisees had missed these elements of the law, and that only by exceeding their ‘righteousness’ could they enter therein.

VERSES 21-26: THE NEW LAW – ANGER AND DISAGREEMENTS

Jesus creates a formula here for us to easily follow in these verses. He starts off comparing what his disciples had previously heard through the Mosaic law or Rabbinical writings, and then compares this to the higher, original principle that was to bring glory to God. The key behind each of these is to ensure our INNER being is purified. A good introduction to this is seen in **Mark 7:14-23**.

What is the analogy Christ uses here and what is it teaching?

Colouring in Exercise

Go through and colour in “*Ye have heard*” in one colour, and then “*But I say unto you*” in another. There should be 6 occurrences for you to mark up.

V21-22 You shall not kill... but I say don’t be angry

Christ is referring his listeners back to the Mosaic law. We know the 10 commandments pretty well: **Ex 20:13** is where Christ is quoting from - what is the original law and punishment made clear in **Ex 21:12-14**?

The goal of Jesus in this section is to bring us to **v48**, so that we are to be perfect like our Father! Christ is pushing us to reach for a higher standard. Although we may not literally commit murder, we are as good as murderers in the sight of God if we even become angry with our brother.

A really good cross-reference to this section on anger can be found in **1 John 3:11-15** and we find an awesome reference back to the first murder in **Gen 4:1-11**.

Compare these two quotes and list 3 reasons Cain murdered his brother.

What does **1 John 3:11-15** suggest you can replace your anger with?

Prov 16:32 “*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*”

Galatians lists a number of sins together - what does Paul put on the same level as murder?

Christ ups the ante even further by saying, “*Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*”

Take a look in a concordance or e-sword what do these two Greek words mean:

‘**Raca**’ means: _____

‘**Fool**’ means: _____

Christ is telling us to watch our words, or else we can suffer severe punishment. How often do you throw insults around to your siblings, friends or enemies, calling them an idiot or stupid? How could you pull yourself into line in the future regarding your language?

How can we resolve this? Christ gives us the practical advice of resolution in **v23-25**.

V23-26 Reconcile with your Brother

The word 'gift' should really be translated, 'Sacrifice' in **v23**. What were sacrifices used for in the Law of Moses (generally)? Cp. **Ex 20:24, Num 28:24, Jonah 2:9, Heb 13:15**.

We don't give literal sacrifices today because Jesus is our sacrifice. Instead we come through Jesus Christ to establish a relationship with our God. Christ is then instructing us, before we approach our God in prayer, before we praise Him or worship His Name on high; are we mindful of the relationship that we have with our own brother?

How can you be more aware of the relationship with your brother before you come to God in your daily thanks and praise?

In **v23**, who has the onus or responsibility of resolving an argument?

Christ lists the danger of what would occur if we do not resolve the issue with our brother (the adversary). We are urged to resolve any quarrel we have with anyone quickly. Why?

On the superficial level, Christ is warning his disciples of the dangers of letting a matter escalate to being judged by the courts. In the law (**Deut 17:9-12**), it speaks of the judges decision being final and death resulting if this decision was disobeyed. Meanwhile **Prov 25:8** says, *"do not hastily bring into court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbour puts you to shame?"*

Quite literally, Christ is saying that we may find that if we let a matter go without resolving it, the courts may not rule in our favour and we will be stuck with an ill result. Notice also the three levels of judgement that Christ imposes:

1. If one has **ANGER** against his brother - He is liable for trial before the local court
2. If one calls his brother an **EMPTY HEAD** or '**RACA**' - He is liable for trial before the Sanhedrin

(a higher court)

3. And if he calls him **THOU FOOL** - He is under trial for the most disgraceful and severe judgement - death and burial in Gehenna (Jerusalem's rubbish tip).

These words emit a stark warning for all those listening on.

On a deeper level, Christ is issuing the warning that if we don't resolve our complaints with our brother now - in the present - we will soon be facing the ultimate Judge, whose hour of return we know not, and are in danger of everlasting judgement for not solving it before then. We are told in **Eph 4:26** to ensure that we never let the sun go down on our wrath, so even if faced with a situation where anger is necessary, make sure you make it your aim to resolve this in the present.

Do you have a conflict that needs to be sorted out? Take the opportunity now in the present! We need to make sure we do all that is in our power, even if it means that we are defrauded to ensure that we reach a resolution before the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

THINKY THINGS

In light of the reference made before, Cain's issue too could have been resolved if he had remembered his brother instead of approaching God's altar with such envy and hate.

The key in this section is realising that even the slightest inclination of sin is equivalent to committing the act in God's eyes. Murder is seen as the ultimate sin, however it is the last action in a long line of sins leading to it, including anger, envy and hatred of heart. May we learn to purify our inner man to ensure that we do not displease God or are the cause of hatred of our brother, so we might avoid the judgement too.

VERSES 27-32: THE NEW LAW - ADULTERY AND DIVORCE

Christ chooses another very practical way to demonstrate that our innermost being is the crucial factor which impacts how we are to act and think.

V27-30 Adultery

This time he refers to the command, *"Thou shalt not commit adultery"* from **Ex 20:14**.

What instead is Christ's verdict when it comes to lust? Where does it become sin?

CHARACTER STUDY

One of the greatest examples of this fatal flaw of a wandering eye in Scripture can be seen in the life of Samson.

Take a look at the following verses, what does Scripture draw our attention to? What was Samson's flaw?

Judges 14:1-3 _____

Judges 16:1 _____

Judge 16:21 _____

What does John say that the root cause behind many of our sins is in **1 John 2:16**?

Christ provides us with a very severe solution as to how we are meant to deal with sin originating within ourselves. In type, Christ is asking us to drastically remove anything in our lives that causes us to sin. The NIV makes the note, *"often only sin can be dealt with radical spiritual surgery."*

First of all, why do you think that Christ uses the example of an eye and hand?

Think about your own life, what sin do you struggle with the most? For the sake of the Kingdom, we are being asked here to cut off the very root of the problem. This means that we have to avoid anything that may lead us to this lifestyle, addiction or action. Paul notes in **Rom 13:14** that we must not give any room for flesh that would enable us to fall into lust or sin.

We all have our own sins that plague our lives. Have a think about what is pulling you away from Jesus Christ - list 3 goals below you want to achieve by Study Week of ways you can avoid sin in your life. Think about what triggers your sin - what in your life do you need to cut out for your own salvation?

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside it shall not cleave to me"

Psalm 101:3

Cutting off a limb is a super drastic and severe way of dealing with a problem. But this is the point that Christ is making! If we aren't prepared to go deep and cut out whatever cancer is causing the demise in our own life, reading the rest of this Sermon is almost not worthwhile!

Look at Joseph's temptation in **Gen 39** when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him, what did he do? He didn't simply just turn away or deny her request - in **v12** he *"fled and got him out"*. This phrase 'got him out' means to 'sever' or 'properly separate', exactly what Christ is asking us to do here when we are faced with temptation.

This is what we are required to do for the sake of eternal life. **Col 3:5-10** is great at demonstrating this in the spiritual sense, as Paul tells us that we are to mortify (aka put to death, amputate) our old way of life, and instead be renewed again as a new man for our Creator!

THINKY THINGS

This was the principle outlined through the principle of circumcision in **Gen 17** where God creates a covenant with Abraham, requiring circumcision of the flesh - the cutting off of the flesh so that the promise may be fulfilled!

V31-32 Divorce

In **v31-32** Jesus draws upon a serious issue that was impacting the Jewish community in his day. Jesus here is quoting from **Deut 24:1**; which tells Israel that if a man marries a woman and *"she finds no favour in his eyes because he finds some uncleanness in her"*... he can divorce her.

There were two interpretations of what this uncleanness meant to the Jewish elders:

1. The first was if the woman displeased the man in any way at all. Including her physical appearance or her ability to complete domestic duties. Some rabbis were even of the

opinion that burning breakfast was grounds enough to divorce a wife.

- Others however said that the only grounds to divorce a wife was if they found that she had committed sexual immorality (or cheated) on her husband.

As you can probably guess, many Jewish men abused this principle, using any reason to divorce their wives and remarry. So divorce and re-marriage was a common occurrence in this time, as we see in Samaria in **John 4:18**.

What Christ is telling his disciples in **v32** is that the original intended meaning was the 2nd interpretation, as *“everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”*

Why is this so important? Because God’s institution of marriage in **Gen 2:23-24** was between one man and one woman, and they were to cleave to each other for life. In the Old Testament book of Hosea, God makes it incredibly clear that His relationship with Israel was as a husband with his wife. Even though Israel time and time again turned to sin (committing adultery and cheating on God), even then God did not break his covenant with (or divorce) Israel. Instead we find in **Hosea 2:14-20** that through His everlasting mercies, He speaks tenderly to her, forgives her and re-establishes the relationship in love and mercy forever.

This is the same with us; when we turn to sin, we are in effect cheating on our husband, the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet he does not abandon us, forsake us and divorce us - instead we find in **Eph 5:25** that he gave his life for us. So let’s make sure that we too honour our marriages as they are meant to symbolise the greater marriage to come with the Lamb of God!

VERSES 33-37: THE NEW LAW - OATHS

Jesus draws his disciples to another major aspect of Jewish life - their dependence on swearing oaths. The Jews, (especially the Pharisees) required that whenever they made a vow, that it was sworn in conjunction with an element that would make the oath binding.

List below the items that Christ noted that the Jews swore on:

Christ goes into greater detail of how the Pharisees swore oaths in **Matt 23: 16-22**. Why did the Pharisees go to such great efforts to make distinctions in their oaths?

The original reference Christ is drawing from in the law was in **Number 30:2** which says, *“If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”*

Deut 23 goes further, where God tells Israel that they should not be making an oath unless they were prepared to fulfil it.

The lesson Christ is drawing here is that our word should be our word - both binding and true; it should not need any clarification or additional statement. Why?

Well, who is our God? Does God need to put disclaimers on the oaths he makes? Take a read of the following quotes - what lesson comes out and how does this impact us?

Ex 34:6, Deut 32:4, Heb 6:13-18

There are countless examples of oaths which either are not followed through or have dire consequences when rashly made in Scripture. For example, **Ezk 17:11-19** speaks about King Zedekiah, the last King of Judah who makes a covenant (oath) with Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon to stay loyal to him. We find there that Zedekiah breaks his word, and severs ties with Nebuchadnezzar for Egypt, what do we find that God thinks about this broken covenant in **v16-19**?

V37 Honesty & Trustworthiness

How often are we keeping our word? God expects us to be like Him, and be true to our Word as He is to his covenant to us. **Ecc 5:2** summarises this nicely - look this up and perhaps put this in your margin.

Christ concludes therefore simply, in **v37**, *“Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”*

VERSES 38-42: THE NEW LAW – NON-RETALIATION

V38-39 An eye for an eye... but I say turn the other cheek

Jesus turns his focus to one of the most well known statements in the law of Moses, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.”

This quote is taken from 3 parts of the law: **Ex 21:24, Lev 24:20, Deut 19:21.**

Jesus turns this statement on its head in the next few verses, but remember, Jesus aims to **fulfil** the law (**v17**), not to write it off. The true meaning was always under the surface for the Jews, but here Christ was to reveal its true meaning!

This law of retaliation, when read in its context, was meant to be a limitation on the punishment a brother dealt to his brother. For example, if a brother accidentally cuts off your finger, God is restricting you from cutting off his entire arm, or condemning him to death. Here Jesus is correcting the popular opinion of the Jews that you **HAD** to exact revenge!

So then, what does Jesus adjure his disciple to do? To turn completely against your natural response and give yourself to be cheated by your adversary!

Jesus doesn't just speak empty words that he isn't prepared to live himself. Take a look at the following passages and write down where Jesus applied these.

Luke 22:64 _____

Isa 50:6 _____

Luke 23:34 _____

Just think for a second: imagine one of your ‘friends’ has been spreading rumours behind your back after you have landed yourself in debt and have been having a hard time. A year later, that same friend finds themselves going through a hard time. Would you be prepared to reach out to them and give them a hand, putting the past away and not expect anything in return from them?

Think of a couple of scenarios, where this could, or has happened in your life. List below how you could do better in turning the other cheek.

Paul draws an awesome principle to live by in **Rom 12:19-21**:

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

V40 Sue at Law

In the same light, Jesus also instructs his disciples to go above and beyond when we are defrauded by our brother. Rather than holding back, fighting for your pride and pursuing compensation - Jesus tells his disciples to give more than what is required! Not just your inner garment, but give your outer garment to be taken too.

Read **Prov 24:29**, what does Solomon advocate here? Who is the I in this sentence?

V41 Go the extra mile

The example found in **v41** seems a little odd and off topic as Jesus seemingly changes topic from people defrauding you, to how generous you can be. However this is perfectly related, as Christ is referring to the Roman practice of forcing Jews to carry their burdens for a mile.

Christ is teaching us here that when we are defrauded and imposed burdens from higher authorities, we are meant to bear them with ease and happily accept to go further. An example of this can be seen in **Luke 23:26** where the Romans force Simon the Cyrene to carry Jesus's cross.

Any position of power can impose demands we may initially be unhappy with: governments, bosses or teachers. However Christ is asking us to be prepared to go further than what is asked of us.

V42 A Spirit of Generosity

In the same way that we may be forced to do something and we are meant to give double. How in **v42** are we prepared to give to those in need?

What is the overarching principle seen right throughout Scripture that we should apply?

Deut 15:7-8 _____

Isa 58:6-8 _____

Matt 25:31-40 _____

How can we live this though?

This is the perfect opportunity for us to give to those in need overseas. How prepared are we to openly give to those in the Philippines, Kenya, Solomon Islands, India?

Take a moment and check out: <https://www.agapeinaction.com/> and read through their website. Helping our brethren and sisters across the world has never been so achievable, so think about how you might give today, or when you are in the position to in the future.



VERSES 43-48: THE NEW LAW – LOVE

V43-44 Love your enemies

This is a rabbinical saying quoted from **Lev 19:18**: however, since the times of Moses the Jewish Rabbis had added the converse “*Hate thine enemy*”. Christ tells us this was never the intention!

Take a read of where this quote came from, and look at its context, because God shows how Israel could practically live this out. Read **Lev 19:9-18** and list below how Israel was to show how they could love their neighbour - then think of a modern day application.

Lev 19 Example	Modern day Equivalent
“You shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner”	Are you amassing your paychecks and wealth in this life. Don’t spend everything on yourself, instead be generous to the poor , the homeless and needy when you can.

Who is our neighbour? Well this is the question the scribes ask Christ in **Luke 10:29**. How does he answer? Through the parable of the Good Samaritan in **v30-37**. Who then was the neighbour?

Where does this love come from? Read **1 John 3:14 -18**. What does John say the motive should be for loving your brother here?

Romans 5:10 shows that God has already done exactly this thing for us! *“When we were **enemies** we were reconciled to God by the death of His son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”*

So God had already shown us love when we were His enemy, and gone as far as providing us a sacrifice to give us life. God is setting the standard here for us too, to love our enemy, because if He had not first loved, we would never have the opportunity that we have to do the same.

V45-47 The blessings of the sun and rain for all

This is continued in **v45** where God does not show favouritism to those on earth in His temporal blessings of the sun and rain. We are then meant to replicate God’s love and show kindness and love to all that we come across.

Jesus noted that it was always easy to show love to those who could reciprocate it back to you: even the tax collectors and Gentiles could do this! Instead we shouldn’t be guided by the standards set by society and expect a return on our love. We should be extending this love to all those we come across, even those who don’t seemingly deserve this love or cannot pay it back, because God first showed this to you and I in providing us the gospel!

V48 Strive to be Perfect

Finally we conclude this chapter with an overarching principle in which sums up these last 2 sections to a T. We are told we have to be perfect, just as God is.

Now you might be thinking that this is an impossible task that Jesus is asking us to meet. And

you’d be right, however Christ is teaching us that our purpose must be God’s righteousness and perfection, nothing less.

The word perfect means to be *‘Complete’*. And this is exactly how God is described in the Old Testament, for example we see in:

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgement: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.”

Deut 32:4

“As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in him”

Psa 18:30

In these two occasions, for God to be perfect, it is for Him to be **TRUE, TRUSTWORTHY** and filled with **INTEGRITY**.

This is what this whole chapter 5 has been about! Christ asking us to have pure motives, not just externally good actions or accords, but to have a pure core that matches God’s!

What does it mean to be perfect in these 2 verses for us:

Eph 4:13

James 1:2-4

Use a Bible search engine and find 3 other people who were described as perfect in the Bible and mark why they were labelled this.

We’ll give you one to start you off.

Gen 6:9

And so that concludes Section 2! The main lesson from this section is that Christ has highlighted we need to do more than just have pure actions to live an upright and holy life for the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead we need to go above and beyond and purify our intentions and motives, and strive to be like our God, who is perfect, true and complete in every way!

Of course, this whole section, (as you may have noticed) builds off the Beatitudes in ensuring we are putting meekness, righteousness and peacemaking into action in our everyday lives!

Nice work young person! Give yourself a pat on the back - remember to prove you have finished this section so that a young person in Kenya will receive a t-shirt because of your work here!



SECTION 3

how are you worshipping god?

MATTHEW 6:1-18

Matthew 6:1-18 summarises three key ways we can worship God:

1. Alms (**v1-4**): Worship in relation to others - Doing things for other people
2. Prayer (**v5-15**): Worship in relation to God - The way we approach God
3. Fasting (**v16-18**): Worship in relation to self - Represents our self-denial

Christ chose these three issues as they are all fundamental parts of a disciple's relationship with God that cross the boundaries of time. We are all expected to practice these 3 elements in some way or other in our walk to the Kingdom, the question then is, how are we doing it and with what motive? Do we do this to better our relationship with our Father, or to increase other people's view of us? That is a question only you can answer...

This section is based on **Matt 5:20**: *"Except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven."* After showing the principles of how to live as disciples in **Matt 5**, Jesus now goes on to show what a disciples' internal motivation should be in true worship. When you worship, are you seeking the temporary reward of praise or self-satisfaction, or the eternal reward that comes from God?

Colour in the phrase "reward" throughout **Matt 6**.

Jesus (not so subtly) is contrasting this to the Scribes and Pharisees in his day. Take a read of Matt 23:5-7 and **v27-28** and list some of the ways they chose to be praised by men.

Summary of the three aspects of worship (Matthew 6)				
		Alms (v1-4)	Praying (v5-15)	Fasting (v16-18)
Hypocrites	Don't	Be seen of men, sound a trumpet	Pray standing in open places, use vain repetitions	Be of a sad countenance
	Where	In synagogues and streets	In synagogues and corners of streets	Everywhere
	Purpose	Glory of MEN	Seen of MEN	Appear unto MEN
	Result	They have their reward		
Believers	Do	Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth	Enter into thy closet and shut thy door	Anoint thine head and wash thy face
	Where	In secret		
	Purpose	Do alms for thy Father	Pray to thy Father	Fast unto thy Father
	Result	Thy Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly		

Table from New Zealand Youth Conference 2015 Notes

VERSES 1-4: WORSHIP IN RELATION TO OTHERS – ALMS

So what exactly is alms giving? 'Alms giving' comes from the Greek root word 'eleēmosunē' meaning *compassionateness* (as exercised towards the poor). It also means beneficent, what does this word mean in the dictionary?

In **Acts 9:36-42** Tabitha was a woman *“full of good works and alms deeds (helping the poor).”*

What is one way we can show alm-giving in a modern day context? (This doesn't just have to be money...)

Another great example of almsgiving can be seen in **2 Cor 8-9** where Paul is encouraging the Corinthian ecclesia to give to the Jews who were suffering from famine in Jerusalem. We find that Paul asks the Corinthians to consider the example of the Macedonians who in **8:2**, despite their harsh persecutions and their own extreme poverty, had *“overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part”* (ESV). The Macedonians were prepared to put themselves out, begging Paul that they could take part in relieving their Jewish brethren and sisters, and in like fashion Paul encouraged the Corinthians to follow suit.

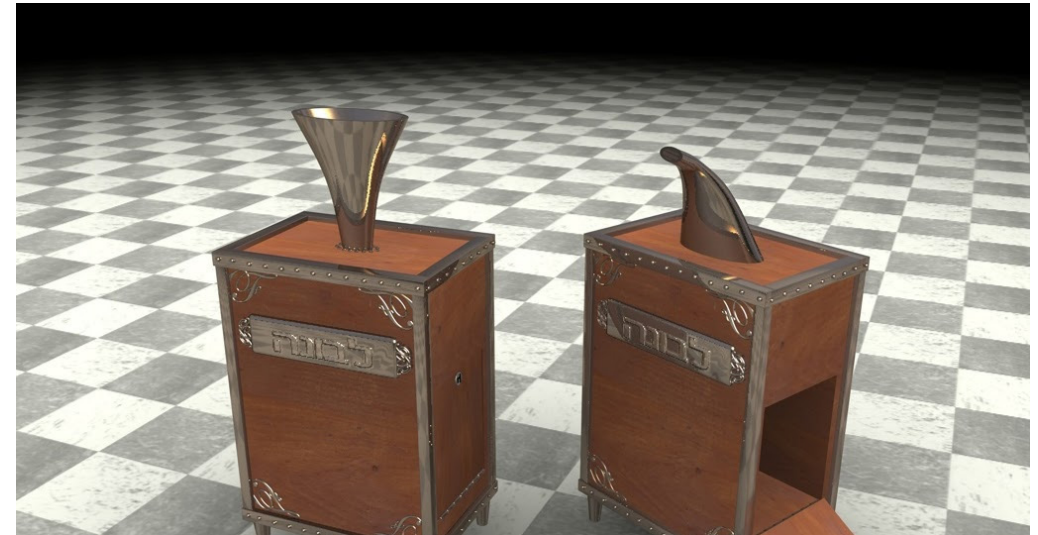
God wants us to give cheerfully and not reluctantly. What reasons does Paul give to motivate us to give generously in **2 Cor 9:6-10**?

So then, clearly Christ is emphasising the importance of giving alms. However the focus of this is not about **why** we should give but **how** we should give!

What is the principle that Christ tells us to follow in **Luke 14:12-14**? What is our reward then?

Acts 10:4 Cornelius is a Gentile, a good example of someone who truly fulfilled what it means to be a perfect almsgiver with a pure motive as seen by his reward in **v30-31**.

The trumpet in **Matthew 6:2** may have been describing the donation boxes in the temple (also called the shofar boxes) which were shaped similarly to the bell of the trumpet, however it is more likely here that Christ was talking about a metaphorical trumpet.



The trumpet is a metaphorical way of drawing attention to your “good works”, similar to the saying “toot your own horn.” Jesus here was forbidding his disciples to make an outward show of their works. How can we avoid sounding the trumpet when we serve God?

Look up the word Hypocrite in the Dictionary and compare this to what the Greek word means in Strongs. What is this teaching us about the Pharisees and Sadducees?

V3 “Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does”

How can this be? This is medically impossible as your mind is constantly aware of what each limb is doing! But Jesus tells us to not even let ourselves know when we are doing good works. That internal feeling of self-praise is just as dangerous as searching for praise from others. Therefore give with the right motivation and from the heart when the need arises, so that even you yourself are not conscious or keeping track of the good that you do.

Take a look at **Matt 25:35-40**. To the righteous people here, giving and doing good works becomes their way of life, up to the point that they don’t even recognise they have done the Lord’s work. What a mentality to have! We need to continually be meditating on these things so we are not caught up in looking for praise in our good works, but instead it becomes second nature to us that we are doing good without knowing.

V4 “That your alms may be in secret”

Christ ends this little section acknowledging that human nature is always looking for a reward. This isn’t always a selfish or bad thing, as long as it’s done in the right context. Clearly in **v4**, Christ is telling us we need to reorient our priorities to ensure our desire is towards God’s reward, not man’s.

What do we find God is looking for in us in **Heb 11:6**?

So then young people, we know that doing good works is a necessity in our walk with Christ. However we need to consider the motives in our own heart. The question you must continually be asking yourself: is this good work being done for God and God alone?

VERSES V5-15: WORSHIP IN RELATION TO GOD – PRAYER

V5 Don’t pray with the wrong motives

Just as Jesus tells us in **v1-4** that our good works should be done in secret, not looking for the reward of men, because you want to serve your Father in Heaven; Jesus too tells us to do the same in regard to prayer.

Jesus urges all of his disciples to pay particular attention to how they pray as well, warning them against being hypocritical. Jewish history notes that some of the most pious Jews would follow the sayings of ‘Shema’. These were observed at certain points during the day, and wherever the individual was, they were obliged to pray.

What does Jesus tell us that the Pharisees were doing in **v5** to take advantage of their public prayers?

Matt 23:14 tells us that clearly all these long prayers were simply a facade or act done for the praise of men. If we want to have a true relationship with God, Jesus is telling us that we need to push aside human pride and the seeking of a reward.

Turn up **Luke 18:9-14**. The contrast between these two individuals is their mindset and approach to prayer. How do these two contrast in their attitude to prayer?

There is one word that continues to appear in the Pharisee’s prayer, colour this in.

When you pray, do you get sucked into this mindset?

This is not a struggle unique to the Pharisees alone, Jesus brings it up here as it is a universal struggle. Do you sometimes feel like your prayer isn’t a genuine communication with God? Do you find yourself repeating the same things in your prayer? Do you sometimes struggle to think of what to pray for? Do you pray in front of others hoping to be seen as godly? Do you struggle in how you address God in prayer? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. Let’s look at how Christ teaches us to pray.

Take a look at **Luke 11:1**, what questions do the disciples ask of Jesus here? How does he answer

them?

V6 Pray in Secret

So then Jesus begins to provide some advice as to how we should pray. First of all in **v6** we should be mindful of our location. The key here is that we are to be alone and in absolute privacy between the Father and yourself. Seek to be in absolute privacy where you aren't impacted by other people and their perceptions. Jesus goes as far as to say to pray in your closet!

First of all we want you to start thinking about the location of where you could pray. Find your own secret spot to establish your relationship with God. This should be a place with limited distractions, for example you might want to switch your phone off before you pray.

Where is your secret place? If you don't have one yet, have a think of a private place where you can pray to God. For example, this could be on your favourite couch in the morning with a hot drink, outside while you are going for a run or kneeling by your bedside at night. If you're really tight for time, this could be when you are in the car driving to work, school or uni!

List 3 quiet places you can find in your daily life to pray:

For the prophet Daniel, he formed his own personal ritual to ready himself to pray. **Dan 6:10** tells us what his exact routine was to establish a mindset of prayer. What things can we take away from this verse to help us focus on praying?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE!

We want you to start considering how you can establish better prayer habits over 7 days.

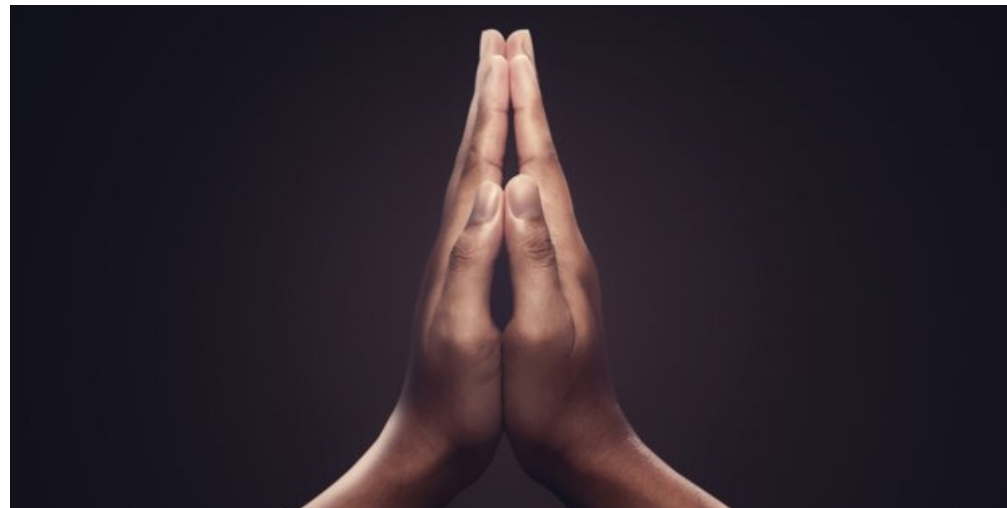
When - The key is setting apart some time to pray each day. List below some cues or prompts that can help remind you to pray during your week. Perhaps it's when you walk to or arrive at work. Perhaps before eating? Maybe it's before reading your Bible, or before you begin to exercise? Find this time and make this your cue to pray.

Where - Think about some specific locations you could pray at and list them below. By setting a physical place for prayer, your mind will be able to associate the location with God and help you to mentally prepare for the conversation you will have.

How - How do you prepare for prayer? Do you do a Bible reading before? Do you pray in a certain position - kneeling? Standing? How do you limit your distractions? We recommend making a Prayer Journal to record what you pray about each time.

Now fill out the boxes on the next page. Make this as achievable as you can!

	Time	Place	Preparation
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			



V7 Avoid Repetitious Prayer

Another aspect of prayer which Jesus focuses on is the content of our prayer. The first warning is against vain repetitions, or the thoughtless repeating of words or phrases in our prayers. What does **Ecc 5:2** advise us to do when communicating with God?

I think we can all admit at some point that we have been lost in our prayer and begun to say meaningless words from time-to-time. How then can we prevent ourselves from being sucked into mindless repetitions?

Some suggestions we have is:

1. Spend a couple of minutes before the prayer to be mindful and prepare your mind. Stop and think about the structure you might take and what you are intending on achieving in praying to the Father. Do you want to give thanks? Lay a petition? Praise His Name.
2. Pay attention to what you are actually speaking to God about.
3. If you are really struggling with your prayer life, there are plenty of prayers already recorded in the bible! Try going to a prayer passage in the bible to read out to God and make it your own. Take some time now to choose one of the below prayers to contemplate on and write a few notes you took away from the prayer you chose:

Psalms 86 - A Prayer of David

1 Sam 2: 1-10 - Hannah's Prayer

1 Kings 8:1-66 - Solomon's Prayer

Neh 1:4-11 - Nehemiah's Prayer

Dan 9: 3-19 - Daniel's Prayer

V8 God knows what you need

v8 tells us exactly why we shouldn't use vain repetitions, it's because God knows exactly what we are thinking and what we need! This is a relieving knowledge to have, because we can take courage that our Father really does care and know us intimately.

It's interesting to note here that this verse does not say: "*God knows our wants*". But He says He knows what we need. The truth is that we don't always have insight into what is best in the long term or what we really need, but our Father does! So let us keep in mind the bigger picture and have faith that God will answer according to His will.

What then should we use prayer for? Look at the following verses and write what purpose prayer has:

James 5:13-17 _____

Phil 4: 6-7 _____

As we alluded to, God does not always answer prayer in the way we want or expect, perhaps it's a "Yes", perhaps it's a "No", or perhaps it's "Yes... but in my time".

What Paul does guarantee us though in **Phil 4:7**, is that God will provide us with a peace in our hearts after we empty them to Him in prayer. Now that is an encouraging thought!

VERSES 9-13: THE LORD'S PRAYER

From **v9-13**, Jesus gives his disciples a prayer that they can use to base their own personal prayers in form and structure. This is why Jesus leads with, "*After this manner therefore pray you.*"

So let's delve into this prayer and see how we can make this our own prayer too.

V9 "Our Father in heaven"

Christ tells us that prayer should monumentally begin with a God-focus. First and foremost we must establish that prayer is to God's honour and glory! How often do you let your prayer sink into praying about yourself before giving God the praise due to His Holy Name?

More than that, notice what Jesus calls God - "Our Father". He mentions the title "Father" right throughout the Sermon. **Colour** in this phrase throughout Jesus' message on the mount.

It is incredible that the Creator of the heavens and earth wants to be called your Father and adopt you as His child. **John 1:12** tells us that those who believe in God will become His children.

Look up 'Father' in your Bible search engine and find 3 of your favourite references to God as a Father. List some of the characteristics He has toward us as children. Here is one to get you started:

1. **Gal 4:4-6** _____
2. _____
3. _____

We may take it for granted, but why do you think it is such a monumental thing for us to be able to call God our Father? What does this mean for us?

V9 "Our Father in heaven"

"Hallowed" literally means to make holy, to purify, to sanctify. As our Father, God wants to have an intimate relationship with us, yet we must also show Him reverence and respect as He dwells in the heavens and is the Creator of the universe. God is an approachable father, yet he is also a Holy God.

To an ancient Israelite, a person's name defined the very identity of that person! For example:

- David was the 'Beloved' because of his status with God
- Jacob had his name changed from 'Supplanter' to Israel, a 'Prince of God'
- Jesus means "Yah shall save", defining his purpose on earth.

In the same way, God's name, YAHWEH, means more than just a title, it encapsulates HIS identity, purpose and character!

What is so significant about the Holiness of God's Name? Look at **Ex 33:18-19; 34:5-7**, what are some characteristics tied hand-in-hand with God's name?

The power of God's name and its holiness can be seen in **Ex 36:22-24**, take a read of this and perhaps put this in your margin!

We see David follow this same pattern of honouring God's Name first in prayer in **Psalms 103:1** *"Bless the Lord, o my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"*

God's name and purpose with humankind will be complete when the earth is filled with people who reflect His character in their thoughts and actions (**Hab 2:14**). To pray "hallowed be your name", is to align your desire with God's and to declare that the end we long for is His purpose and glory (**2 Corinthians 3:18**). If this is our true desire for the future, we need to "hallow God's name" or reflect his character in every aspect of our present lives.

V10 "Your Kingdom come"

Zech 14:9 *"And the Lord will be King over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one."*

Jesus then expresses his great desire for the establishment of the coming Kingdom, and this is something we should share! How else could we fulfil what he says in **vs 33** to *"Seek you first the Kingdom of God"*?

Christ later describes the kingdom of heaven as being *"like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it"* (**Matt 13:45-46**). The kingdom to come will be a priceless experience - worth selling everything you own, worth going through every trial in life, worth making every sacrifice for now!

What does the Bible tell us what the Kingdom will look like?

1 Cor 15:51-53 _____

Isa 2:2-4 _____

Dan 2:44 _____

Isa 35:1 _____

Psalms 72:1-2 _____

Luke 23:43 _____

Rev 22:2 _____

How can this become meaningful in our prayers unless we can envision this in our own mind?

Prov 29:18 tells us that without a vision we will perish. Do you have a Kingdom Vision? Do you see yourself there?

Use the space below to brainstorm, draw pictures or make a list of some things you are personally looking forward to in God's kingdom.

V10 "Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Is the focus and desire of your prayer that God's will be done, no matter what is to happen to us and nothing else? If this is at the heart of our prayer motivation, we can never be disappointed with the result of our prayer. We also then are confident God is always in control and will outwork His Plan.

Peter tells us that we must ensure that we have the same mind as Christ, who didn't live to satisfy his own flesh, but instead to magnify God's will (**1 Peter 4:2-3**). In what circumstance do we see Christ living out this principle in **Luke 22:42**?

THINKY THINGS

This phrase is a great one to keep locked away and use against Christians who believe that we go to heaven when we die. How can Christ possibly say that we should pray for God's will to be done on earth if the Kingdom is in heaven?!

V11 "Give us this day our daily bread"

After directing our focus to God, the Lord's prayer then moves to 3 petitions we are to make to our Father.

The first of these requests should be the essentials of life, but no more. Literally this phrase translates to "Our needful bread, our necessary food." It's a phrase which demonstrates our complete trust in God to provide for our needs and also our humility in realising we cannot provide for ourselves.

Christ takes this phrase from **Prov 30:7-9**, have a read of this passage. What is the challenge for the rich? What is the challenge for the poor?

THINKY THINGS

In a world that is becoming increasingly more self-reliant, with Coles and Woolworths down the street to provide our food, there can be a serious disconnect between what we experience today and the relationship the disciples would have had with God to provide them with their basic needs. Even in times of drought, we rarely find ourselves without food. Even today though, we are completely reliant on our God who created everything and who could cease everything in a moment. Young person, never forget to be grateful and recognise where the food on your plate truly comes from!

You may very well know that 'bread' isn't always literally food. What do the following two passages say about what true bread is?

Deut 8:3

John 6:27,35,51

If this is the case, are you praying that God gives you this important daily bread too? How much more important is this over just literal food?!

Just like the children of Israel needed mana "*morning by morning*" in **Exod 16:21**, so too did Christ need God's word "*morning by morning*" in **Isa 50:4**. Could we say the same?

V12 "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"

A true prayer to God is one of humility, and that includes the acknowledgement of our sinful state and specifically the trespasses we commit when we miss the mark of Christ's high calling. Prayer requires honesty, God knows our every thought and sin. But to forgive us, he requires our recognition that we have done wrong and that this is a behaviour that cannot be tolerated in God's Kingdom. God wants us to open up to Him with our struggles and to ask for His help for you to overcome. Paraphrase the two quotes below and tell us what they say about admission of sins.

Prov 28:13

1 John 1:8-9

Just remember that it is one thing to say to God "*I have done this wrong thing*". There has got to be a desire to make a change. Yes we will sin again, but there has to be a genuine attempt to change for the sake of those sins.

Notice however that this is conditional, or else the word "as" would not be here. Circle this word, because when we are praying, we not only must be constantly mindful of our sins, but also aware of any grievances we haven't forgiven amongst our brethren.

One great example of this in practice can be seen throughout the life of David. In **2 Sam 11**, David commits multiple sins: adultery, lying and murder; yet in **2 Sam 12:13**, after David confesses his sin, God instantly forgives him for trespasses that he deserved to be stoned for. Why?

Well one of the reasons is that David continually had mercy against those who wronged him.

Who does David have mercy on in the following verses and what had they done to him?

1 Sam 26:6-12; 18-20 _____

1 Sam 30:1-6, 21-24 _____

2 Sam 16:5, 16;19:18-23 _____

THINKY THINGS

If you are looking for some examples of how to confess your sins, take a look through **Psalms 51**, the song David wrote to confess to God after he committed his sin with Bathsheba. This should be the humbled and distressed attitude we have when we sin before God.

Christ reinforces this point directly after he finishes this prayer, (back in **Matt 6** again) in **v14-15** where he says, if you do forgive, God will forgive you, but if you refuse to forgive, God too will not forgive you when you ask. This of course goes back to the Beatitudes, *“Blessed be the merciful for they shall obtain mercy”*. Let’s make sure we are prepared to hold a forgiving spirit if we want our sins forgiven first.

V13 “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

If our prayer is that our sins be forgiven, then our next logical thought should progress to a cry to our Father to ensure we do not fall when evils and temptations arrive in our life.

The word temptation literally means: a trial or a test and so does not necessarily mean it leads to sin. For example, Christ was tempted multiple times in his life, like in the wilderness (**Luke 4:13**) and Jesus even says so himself in **Luke 22:28**, yet we know that each time it was without sin from **Heb 4:15**.

What do we find out about temptations in the following verses?

James 1:12-13 _____

1 Cor 10:13 _____

2 Peter 2:9 _____

Trials and temptations come in so many different forms in our lives, and clearly when they come they can be difficult and discomfoting. Christ is teaching us here that prayer is crucial to helping us be able to be delivered from these tests of life. Although God does not lead us to sin, these discomforts of life can really rock our faith, and so here we pray with an earnest heart that God helps us to endure.

The earlier we embrace this mindset of trusting in God to deliver us, the easier it will be for us to endure. Just remember, God’s deliverance may not always come in the way you expect it with the trial ceasing.

Look at the life of Joseph in **Gen 37**. Betrayed, sold and abandoned by your brothers is a trial we would struggle to endure, but Joseph remains faithful to God in **Gen 39**, just for him to be falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife for his good deeds! Was God not delivering him from his trial? Well look at how Joseph sees his ordeal at the end of his life in **Gen 50:20** - *“God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”*. God had a different way that He would deliver Joseph and his entire family, which required Joseph enduring deeper trials in prison.

Wait on God young person, He will deliver, whether now, or for eternity in His Kingdom.

Obviously sometimes, despite our prayers, God does still put circumstances that are trialling and tempting. When you find yourself there, what do these verses tell us to do?

James 1:2-3 _____

Heb 12:5-7 _____

“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

Psalms 34:6-8

V13 “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.”

Jesus finishes the prayer in the same way he started it, with a focus on God, His Kingdom and His glory. Just as the prayer is surrounded by God, so should we make the effort to ensure our life is encapsulated by a God-based focus.

Christ picks this ending up from **1 Chron 29:11**, take a read from **v10-20** and tell us what you

- First focusing on God's Name, Purpose and Kingdom
- Then lay out your requests before God with a focus on these requests giving Him glory
- Finally finish on a focus again on God's Kingdom

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The paper has rounded corners and is framed by a thin black border. There are 20 evenly spaced horizontal lines across the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or note-taking.

We find we finish Section 3 on the slightly obscure note of a believer and his worship to God through fasting.

So then what is fasting? Look up the Greek word for fast in e-Sword or a Concordance. Write the definition below.

Once again though, Christ warns his disciples of the dangers of seeking attention and self-gratification when they are fasting. Clearly from **v16** the Jews would draw a scene around their affliction, disfiguring their faces, appearing depressed so that they may “*appear unto men to fast*”. No longer was this about God, but about the perception others had of them!

Christ is teaching us not to use fasting as a way to draw attention to ourselves, nor was it to be perceived as a negative affliction. Take a look at **Isa 58:3-7** and note the two differences in opinions on the purpose of fasting between Israel and God and write them below.

What Israel thought of fasting	What God thought of fasting

The lesson that Christ teaches us once again is that the focus of our worship should be to praise the Father, not to seek praise or approval for ourselves from man.

How can we apply this today? How should we be fasting?

Perhaps we should be fasting literally from food, if that helps us to draw closer to God. However there are plenty of other ways however that we can deny ourselves things of the flesh to promote God and achieve a clarity of mind in our worship.

What things (other than food) do you think you could withhold from for a short period of time that could help you focus on worshipping and meditating on Yahweh?

Awesome! Another section done - you are halfway there!

Just remember that these are the words of life spoken by the Son of God, so make sure they sink into your heart! We are so happy that you have finished the workbook here, but take the time to make sure that you can practically apply these things to develop a relationship with your God. Be fervent in prayer, and do so without ceasing!

SECTION 4

what are you seeking?

MATTHEW 6:19-34

Our fourth section contains a simple lesson, but a confronting one - especially for us living in the 21st century. Reading the latter half of Matthew 6 is challenging when read in a society that lives to promote materialism, affluent, comfortable lifestyles and get-rich-quick schemes at every turn. Everyone reading this is impacted by it, whether it is manifested in our desire for cars, designer labels, investment properties or our crypto wallets, the world continually pursues the ideals of status and appearing to be physically wealthy. Although there is nothing sinful with being wealthy, the pursuit and obsession of gathering wealth can become a huge issue for any disciple! Remember though, a true disciple will have the mindset of the Lord's Prayer and only desire to have the basic necessities which is enough for our life!

VERSES 19-24: WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?

Now why is Jesus talking about what we treasure? Take a look back through the context of Chapter 6 and see if you can see the link?

V19 Treasures on Earth

Jesus begins this section with a warning against the material wealth and treasures of this world. It's interesting what the phrase '*Lay not up*' means - look this up in e-Sword or Strong's concordance and write this in your margin.

When Jesus mentions treasure, he doesn't necessarily mean literal gold or silver, but instead anything that we might value. What do you 'treasure' or value in life?

A good check of this is assessing how much time you spend either doing or thinking about something in your day. Be honest with yourself and fill in the below.

There are _____ free hours in my week, what is occupying my time and how much of my time is laid up in worldly treasure vs spiritual things? (Don't include sleep and be honest!)

Occupier	Time Spent Daily	Weekly Total (Daily time x7)

Solomon is a great example of someone who had all the material wealth in the world. Historians have estimated that Solomon was worth \$2 trillion (yes trillion with a T). Solomon lists all his accomplishments in **Ecc 2**, take a read between **v4-10** and list some of the things that Solomon had heaped up.

Now that you know how wealthy Solomon really was, what do we find he concludes as important in life? Read **Ecc 2:11** and **5:10-15** to help you with your answer.

It's not just Solomon who critiques this lifestyle of desiring riches and treasures, there are plenty of other examples in the Bible of what this lifestyle brings you spiritually. Take a look at the following verses and summarise what they say about gathering material wealth:

1 Tim 6:6-10 _____

James 5:1-3 _____

Remember the key to all of this is that money in itself isn't bad, it is the love and pursuit of wealth that can take us away from God! In **Gen 13:2** and **24:35**, Abraham was one of the wealthiest men in the Middle East - and yet he is listed as the Friend of God! Why? Because he wasn't interested in the riches, instead we find that *"he looked for a city ... whose builder and maker is God."* Abraham had no interest in the number of cattle, servants or gold pieces he had, instead he prioritised his love and belief for Yahweh who promised far greater!

V20 Treasures in Heaven

James 2:5 tells us God chooses the poor in wealth, yet rich in faith to be heirs of the Kingdom. Are you investing in that kind of wealth?

A great show of this is seen in the parable of **Luke 12:16-21**. Where was the focus of this man? Write it below and colour it in (Hint: it's a one letter word!)

Interestingly, what is the context which sparks Jesus to speak this parable? What is Jesus's warning?

Christ makes the picture pretty clear. If your focus is on wealth, it will consume you - and for what? Our lives shouldn't be defined by our possessions, because they will definitely not define us when we are dead! Why do we take value in earthly things which will deteriorate, break or get stolen over time? Moths will eat clothes. Rust will destroy metals. Thieves steal gold. So why invest in these when you can invest in spiritual things which can never be corrupted!

Paul makes this exact point in **2 Cor 4:18** (a great reference to write in your margin). Everything we can see, is tangible and will eventually be destroyed. Yet what is unseen, lasts forever.

Interestingly, Solomon also comes to this conclusion in **Prov 2:1-5**. What are we told to value here and how highly?

Meet a couple of wealthy individuals in the Bible, what do they value most?

Matt 13:44-46 _____

Heb 11:25-26 _____

1 Tim 6:17-19 _____

V21 "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"

Christ makes a very simple but powerful statement in **Matt 6:21**. It's worth pondering, because the choice is yours. What do you place value on? Where is your heart?



In Australia we are a country which thrives on materialism and wealth. If you are attending this week it means you are in one of the top wealth percentiles in the world. To put things in perspective, you paid at least \$350 to be at Study Week (which is an awesome investment btw), but the average yearly income in Somalia 2020 was \$320. You have spent more for a week than some people earn in a year.

Now this isn't meant to make you feel horrible, or cancel your booking at study week (please don't do that!). Instead it's meant to highlight the luxury we have, and how easy it is to get lost in the pursuit of money!

The question then is young person: can you say that you really treasure and value the Kingdom of God above all else? Do you dedicate all your time and effort into it, thinking about it every spare moment? Or perhaps it's time to reassess what you value in this life?

V 22-23 The light of the body is the eye

Verses 22-23 can be a little hard to understand in the KJV, read this in the ESV. What do you think this means from an initial reading?

What is the symbol of light? (Hint: **Eph 5:8-9, 1 John 2:9-10**)

What is the symbol of darkness? (Hint: **John 3:19, Rom 13:13**)

Jesus says the same thing in **Luke 11:34-36**. The quote finishes saying that "*if the whole body is light, it is only filled with light and cannot have any darkness.*" Our eyes can only either perceive light or dark, there is no in between! The definition of darkness is the 'absence of light' - you can't have half darkness because as soon as it's not dark, it's light! The same is with our lives - we can only truly value either light (God) or darkness (the world) and let it fill our entire life. This is why we need a singleness of purpose that keeps us from the trap of thinking we can have a double treasure or a divided heart.

The eyes are what we use to focus. We need to be focused with both eyes on one purpose. What does **James 1:8** tell us about what happens when we set our focus on more than one purpose?

If our focus is the Kingdom, our whole life will be light, but if it's the world, our vision is entirely dark. What are you focusing your attention on?



V24 You cannot serve both God and money

Verse 24 continues this theme, where Christ tells us that we can only serve one of two masters - God or money. There is no other third alternative where we can choose to be the master!

Turn up **Rom 6:16**, what does this tell us?

Being a slave to your wealth and assets is not something we often recognise - you may think that money can give you freedom. However, Jesus puts it all into perspective - you may think you own your wealth, but it will own you!

Sometimes there are things that we do that we wouldn't really consider as wrong or sinful but are still very much 'serving money'. Can you think of any examples below?

The word ‘mammon’ (KJV) literally means “*confidence (in wealth)*”, telling us that anything we put our confidence in, other than God, is against God.

Eph 5:5 takes it that step further and instructs that if you are covetous (or greedy), you are as good as an idolater. This is because wealth becomes all you serve and spend time working for. This attitude will cause you to have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. That’s how serious this choice is. Who will you choose to serve - God or worldly money?

Summarise the below quotes to help show how serious God makes this principle:

1 John 2:15 _____

Rom 12:2 _____

Matt 22:37 _____

Let us take on the same attitude that Joshua has in **Josh 24:15**, “*as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*”

Sometimes all it takes is some perspective to realise how fortunate we really are. We get caught up with our possessions, that we forget it was really God who owns everything anyway! So what are you spending God’s wealth on?

VERSES 6:25-34 DON’T BE ANXIOUS & SEEK GOD FIRST

‘Well then, if we completely part ways with the wealth of this world - what happens when we can’t afford to live in a house or feed and clothe our families?’ Jesus reassures the disciples that if you trust in God you don’t need to worry about material possessions. Just look at the world around us and you’ll see God cares for all His creation! Therefore, of course God will provide you with your necessities if you serve Him.

V25-26 Don’t Be Over Anxious

Take a read through **v25-34** - Colour in “take... thought” (There are 6 occurrences in the KJV)

Look up what this Greek phrase means and write it below.

The phrase “Do not worry” (NKJV) or “Don’t be anxious” (ESV) is repeated three times in this chapter! These three words are possibly one of the most challenging words that we can ever try to put into practice in our lives.

Although food, water and clothes are the basic necessities needed to keep us alive, Jesus is making a point not to worry excessively for them! We should not be overly anxious about our life, or the results of our work. We must remember that in all things, God is at work in our lives, and the outcomes of everything we do are in His hands. Any worry that we might have isn’t going to change the outcome of that one part.

There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking in itself, but what happens if we are caught prioritising first and excessively being preoccupied with these things as described in **Luke 17:26-30**?

Read through **Matt 6v26-30** in the ESV. Jesus lists out some examples of God taking care of certain aspects in creation. List them below and how God shows his care for them.

Christ is reassuring us not to excessively worry about the basic things in life. We are much more valuable to God than birds or lilies, so instead, trust in Him and He will provide completely!

V27 What is the use of worrying?

How true is **verse 27**; even if we do worry about these things, there is no possible way we can add a single hour to our life, so it’s wasted time we could redirect to better serve our LORD. Have a think of how many years you have lived... every day of your life God has provided your every basic need.

V28-30 Consider the Lilies

Haggai uses this same word “*consider your ways*” at the beginning and end of **Haggai 1:5-7**. What does Haggai have to say about relying on our own strength to work, eat, drink and clothe ourselves?

It’s ironic that Christ mentions that God even clothes the grass in v30, as what do we learn from these two quotes?

Isa 40:6-8 _____

Psalms 37:1-3 _____

V30 “Oh you of little faith”

In fact, by worrying about something, we are showing a lack of faith, or trust in God! We are doubting God’s ability to work in our lives and handle the situation. We are essentially saying that we do not think that all things work together for good for those who love God.

How important is it to have faith (**Hebrews 11:6**)?

Our worries and stresses about the events in our lives are inevitable and natural – part of who we are as humans. But when we worry, God is looking for OUR RESPONSE! A great saying is, ‘*if it’s worthy worrying about, it’s worth praying about*’. If we do not take this worry to God, and instead remain in a worried state, then this is where we fall short of Christ’s command to us. It shows a lack of trust in God’s power and wisdom, and His ability to provide and guide our lives. However, if our worries lead us to turning to Him and pouring our hearts to Him, then this is exactly what God wants.

V31-32 God Already Knows Your Needs

Christ gives us certain reassurance that we don’t need to worry because God already knows exactly what we need. Remember this follows on from **Matt 5:45**!

Take a speed read of **1 King 17**. In what ways did God provide for the needs of His believers in this chapter?

What perhaps are YOU most worried about? List it below and either pray about it, or talk it over with your friend. Will you still be worried about it in 5 years time? If the Kingdom came tonight, would it still be a worry for you?

THE ANTIDOTE TO WORRY

What can we do instead of worrying? **Proverbs 3:5** says:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct your paths.” (NKJV).

By trusting in God, we eliminate our worries, we do not have anything to worry about as we trust that He is now in control of whatever we were worrying about.

Paul speaks of this in **Phil 4:6-7**, read these verses. What is the antidote to being over-anxious?

The antidote to worry (Phil 4:6)	Definition	How can you practically include this in your daily life?
Prayer		
Supplication		
Thanksgiving		

Take a look at the next verse, **Phil 4:7**! The result of giving your anxieties over to God is the resounding peace of God in your life! Jesus says to his disciples *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”* (**John 14:27**).

The solution to over-anxiety is to give EVERYTHING over to God. 1 Peter 5:6-7 says:

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast ALL your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” (NIV)

Often in life, we can take our large troubles to God, but forget to (or feel we cannot) take much smaller or more trivial problems to God. But God wants us to cast EVERYTHING we have on Him, by emptying ourselves of every worry, concern, doubt, and fear, He can more effectively be at work in our lives.

When we cast ALL our worries on God, we will begin looking for everything from Him. Rather than looking for solutions from our own strength, we make God our strength. We are encouraged to look for His hand at work in our lives, and the solutions God has provided already in the bible.

V33 What do you prioritise first in your life?

Jesus brings the message here to a climax in **v33** by providing us with a rule for life:

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

This then should be our mindset for all things we put our hands and minds to. Do not underestimate the power of this word **“First”** - this is an absolute, a directive for us to take! God’s Kingdom and purpose should take complete priority in our lives, **above all else**. The Kingdom of God should be the final destination and central point for any disciples who are prepared to hearken to the Sermon on the Mount.

What is your first priority in life? Is it your family, your work, your study, a relationship, your friends, a pet, your sport, your travel, your possessions, your smartphone? Or is it the Kingdom of God? Are you seeking Jesus above all these things?

What are you doing everyday for Jesus? Everyday we are faced with choices to prioritise - shall I hit snooze or get up to fit in a bible reading before school or work? Shall I have another night watching a movie or make time to catch up with that friend who may be struggling? Shall I go out to the nightclub or youth group with my friends?

Copy out **Deut 6:3-5** in your own words in the box below, what is the repeated here?

Read **Deut 6:7-9**. Where could you talk about God’s Kingdom and how can you prioritise God in your everyday life?

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house [write out your address _____]

and when you walk by the way [write a place this could be for you _____]

and when you lie down and when you rise [write a time/place at night and in the morning that you could do this [_____].

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates [write what reminders you can put up in your home or on your phone_____].

Young person, if you haven’t realised this yet, this is a huge deal and Jesus paints it in black and white. You have a choice that you need to make on your own. The gift has been put in front of you: an incredible opportunity of eternal life in the Kingdom of God surrounded by His righteousness - but will you accept this gift? It requires a consistent and complete change of mindset. It means we can’t casually cruise on into the Kingdom after we are baptised.

We need to continually be seeking the Kingdom **FIRST** in every endeavour of life - before wealth, before love, before friends, before family, before hobbies, **BEFORE EVEN YOU**.

Rom 14:23 expresses it: *“Whatever does not proceed from faith - is sin”*. If our mindset isn’t one that wants to glorify God in our big and small decisions in life, if it’s not done to praise and glorify

God, then it is sin. That's not saying we need to be perfect and sinless, but it requires us to have a consistent God-fearing attitude, where we are constantly aware of His presence and of His Kingdom - something we forget very often.

Don't be discouraged if you have failed to prioritise God in the past. God is here to help you make the right choices for your ultimate good! **Luke 12:32** adds:

"But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added unto you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom."

God wants to give us the kingdom, but we only get it if we show we want it more than anything else in all the world.

Isaiah 55:6-7 also encourages us to seek God. Read these verses and write it in your own words below:

The beauty is, if we do seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness first, then He will provide all our necessities without fail, that's the promise here in **Matthew 6:33**. If you are seeking Him first, nothing else will worry you and you will appreciate how He works in your life.

Without a doubt **verse 33** is the crux of Christ's message in this section. Now we want to make this verse stick so that you are reminded of it every day! Have a think of a creative way that you can remember this principle and write it below. Send it to our Instagram so that other attendees can get some ideas that might help them!

Some more ideas:

- Change your phone lockscreen to a picture of **Matt 6:33**
- Write out the verse and stick it next to your bed when you wake up
- Print out a sticker of this verse to put on your debit card to remind you each time you buy something!



V34 Live each day at a time

Jesus concludes this section in **verse 34** with another remarkable one-liner: *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble”*

“As humans, we live in an inherently unpredictable universe. We can never be 100% sure that things are going to work out the way we want them to. Therefore, we often try to think of all the potential negative outcomes, so that we can potentially avoid them. The problem is, most of the time we cannot do anything about the things we think of! To worry about what you cannot change is useless. To worry about something you can change is stupid – just go ahead and change it!” (Perth Youth Conference 2015 Notes)

THINKY THINGS

Studies show that worrying falls into three categories: 40% about the past, 50% about the future and only 10% about the present. This means we can eliminate 90% of our worries by just living one day at a time!

Disciples of Christ don't need to worry about their future. Instead they focus on the present and how they can best use the current time to serve God and others. If we make small changes to prioritise God first in each day, we can be confident that God will provide for us!

8 Reasons from Jesus: Why we don't have to be anxious about our life

1. Get perspective - There are more important things in life than material possessions (**v25**)
2. God values us and will provide for us (**v26**)
3. Worry doesn't achieve anything anyway (**v27**)
4. Worrying is a lack of faith (**v30**)
5. We are no better than those around us (**v32**)
6. God knows our needs already (**v32**)
7. The things we need will be added to us (**v33**)
8. Live in the present – it is useless to worry about the future (**v8**)

We encourage you to bible mark these 8 reasons in the margin of your bible beside each verse!

SECTION 5

doing unto others

MATTHEW 7:1-12

VERSES 1-6: JUDGEMENT AND JUDGING

V1 “Judge not, that you be not judged”

Christ begins this section with a blunt statement, (seemingly) commanding his disciples not to judge. Many new-age christians today use this as reasoning not to judge at all, but is this what Christ really meant by this statement?

First of all, take a look at the Greek meaning of the word ‘judge’ in a concordance- write it below.

It’s pretty clear, even from **Matthew 7**, that God is the ultimate Judge of all (**Heb 12:23**), both **Gen 18:25** and **Psa 82:8** also tell us this. However, does this mean that God precludes us from judging amongst each other?

What does Scripture say about the necessity of judgement in the below verses?

Lev 19:15 _____

John 7:24 _____

1 Cor 6:1-4 _____

God also makes a clear distinction between those who love judgement and those who do not.

Look up the following verses and summarise in the table below:

Those who despise judgement		Those who love judgement	
Prov 19:28		Psalm 106:30-31 (Read Num 25:1-9 for context)	
Prov 28:5		Isa 1:16-17	
Isa 59:7-15		Isa 61:8	

With all that said, clearly God wants and expects us to show judgement in our lives. Then, the question is, how do we practice righteous judgement in our lives to all mankind?

The question you must have in your mind is, what does Jesus mean when he says, “Judge not that ye be not judged?” in **verse 1**? Well, it’s answered for us in **verse 2**!

V2 “For with what judgement you judge, you will be judged”

Circle the word ‘For’ in your Bibles, this is linking the two verses!

What is the principle that Christ tells us to follow in **verse 2**?

How does this lesson play out in the below parable?

Matt 18:23-35 _____

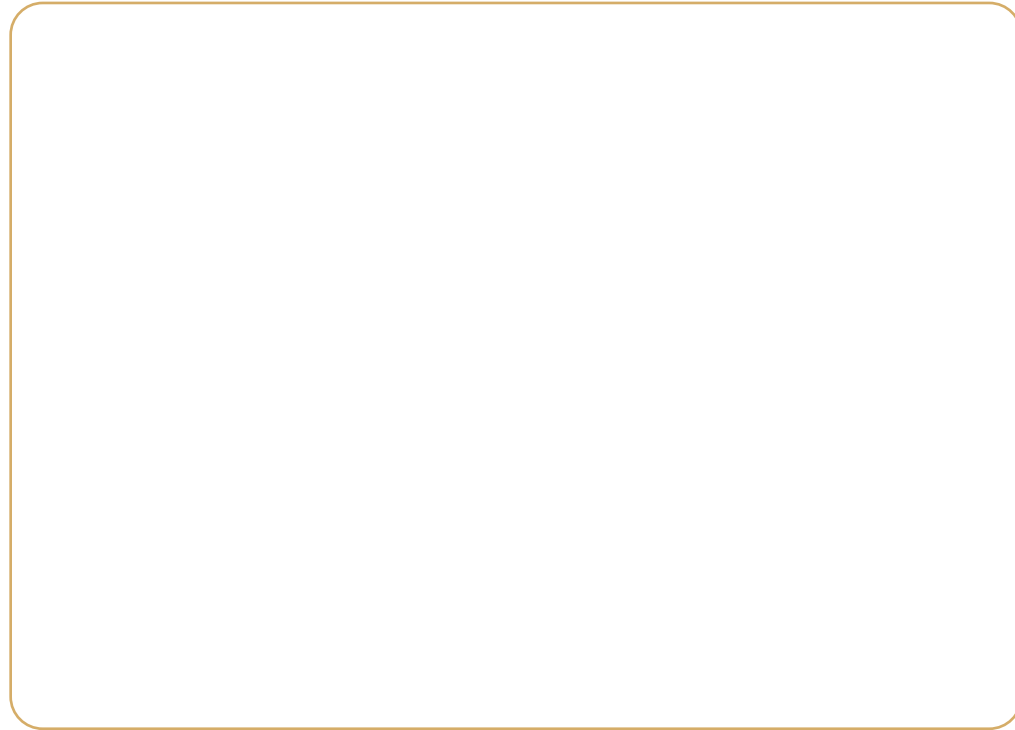
Paul mentions this exact thing to the Romans ecclesia in **Rom 2**, where he warns them not to judge others and to be wary in not committing the same sin themselves. For whatever judgement you mete out, you will be judged in the same manner and not “*escape the judgement of God*” (**v1-3**). Paul makes the believers consider whether they follow the same teachings they teach: ‘do you tell others not to steal, yet are you stealing yourself? Or do you teach others to hate idols and worship them yourself?’

Paul’s ultimate warning for hypocrites is that Gentiles (non-believers) will see you and have cause to blaspheme or think that God is an unjust God if you justify your own evil actions (**Rom 2:24**).

To emphasise this, Jesus makes a pointed analogy in **v3-5** about hypocritical judgement.

V3-5 Discernment: The ability to judge well

Read **Matt 7v3-5** in the ESV and draw the parable on the next page in a cartoon. Submit your cartoon by directly messaging the Study Week Instagram and the best one (judged by the attendees) will win a free drink on the Week.



Jesus is using a hyperbole to highlight how foolish and hypocritical it is for us to criticise each other when we are blinded to our own immeasurable faults!

This is very similar to the situation that Jesus puts the Pharisees in when they try to get Jesus to pass judgement on the woman caught in adultery back in **John 8:1-11**. What are the words of Jesus in **John 8:7**? They are very powerful in instructing us on the mindset we should hold when judging one another.

Beware young people of judging others in a way you would not like to be judged ourselves! Often we expect others to consider our mistakes with our good intentions, yet we are blindsighted to any of these when judging our brother, proclaiming judgement before we have heard any witnesses or the full story!

Do we consider our own sins before we judge others for the sins they commit? If we remember how many times we have committed the exact same sin previously and how much we needed God's forgiveness for it, should we not be the same to those who sin against us?

What does **Heb 4:12** say our judge should be?

The lesson behind **Matt 7: 1-5** is this: We need to practice righteous judgement in the right capacity, however we need to do so whilst also considering our own sinful position!

Notice what Jesus says at the end of **Matt 7:5**. We are told to judge and take out the mote in our brother's eye, but only after we have taken out the beam in our own eye! Christ still expects us to help our brother remove the sin from his life, but as long as we are non-hypocritical in our judgement.

So how can we judge practically in our life?

Scripture repeatedly exhorts believers to evaluate carefully and choose between light and darkness, between the good and evil. With this discernment we must honestly judge our brethren with righteousness, but also remember to show the mercy and meekness like we would need at the Judgement Seat.

There are countless examples in the New Testament when this kind of judgement was necessary, for example, take the Corinth ecclesia in **1 Cor 5**. They had a brother in their midst who openly was committing sexual immorality! Paul instructs the brethren that they were to cast such a wicked man from their company as it went against God's virtues and commands (**1 Cor 5:11-13**). But what was the point of casting him from the ecclesia in **1 Cor 5:5**?

Clearly this worked because by the time **2 Corinthians** was written, the man had repented from his sin, and Paul advises the ecclesia to welcome him back and reaffirm their love for him (in **2 Cor 2**)!

So when you find that you are in the position that you need to "judge" your friend or another believer, make sure you are doing it in the spirit of Christ. First, make sure you pray to God, ask for His guidance, wisdom and patience to deal with this matter.

What does **Gal 6:1** say about the purpose of confronting a brother with a fault?

What does Paul say about how we should conduct ourselves whilst judging in this verse?

V6 “Do not throw your pearls before pigs”

This verse seems a little out of the blue, but it’s still following the same train of thought regarding judgement towards others. Without ‘judging’, we would be unable to discern who is worth giving pearls to and those who are considered as dogs and swine.

First of all, what were dogs and swine associated with in the Bible? Look up the verses next to each one:

Swine (**Lev 11:7, Prov 11:22**) _____

Dogs (**Psa 22:16, Mk 7:28, Phil 3:2**) _____

The warning from the Bible is that we don’t want to waste our valuable ‘pearls’ on those who will despise them and have no reverence towards God’s Word.

Prov 23:9 is a really good verse to keep in mind when you come across these situations. Copy it below:

We often hear **Matt 7:6** quoted in the context that we shouldn’t preach the gospel to those who are unlikely to listen. Although to a degree this is true, the New Testament makes it very clear that we should preach the gospel to every man (**Mark 16:15, Rom 1:16**). In the direct context though, this is Jesus talking about those who refuse to listen to Godly ‘judgement’. Christ is saying that we need to determine ourselves who is willing to listen to the Word and make spiritual changes to become more like Christ, whether they are a current believer or a stranger in the world.

The warning from Christ however is that there is a very real danger, that when you are trying to bring someone back to the sheepfold, or preach the Truth - beware that you aren’t pulled away in the process and let the dogs and swine of this world tear your faith apart! Don’t waste your time on someone who doesn’t want to hear, if you feel you could be led astray from Christ whilst trying to win them over.

As with everything, there is balance though. Some of the most convincing preaching is done through persistence in the face of someone initially refusing to have any part in the gospel. So if you do have the spiritual strength, PERSIST!

Always remember young person, we can’t use this verse to justify why we shouldn’t intervene

or preach the gospel. If God calls the low and despised of this world rather than the strong wise (**1 Cor 1:24-31**) and considers the heart of man not the physical appearance (**1 Sam 16:7**); so therefore we should exercise spiritual patience and discernment to look for the signs of someone who may turn to Christ at a later point.

Trust and pray to God that you are making the right choice and let Him guide your path in these challenging things!

VERSES 7-12: THE FATHER’S GOOD GIFTS

V7-8 Keep Asking, Seeking and Knocking

To encourage us to fulfil this spiritual discernment, Christ develops an encouraging lesson:

God is both willing and able, to provide for any of our spiritual needs if we are humble enough to **ask, seek or knock**. This can apply in a range of contexts, whether for wisdom, for help judging a brother, or preaching the gospel; but the point is that Jesus instructs us to develop an intimate relationship that God can answer our every call. The condition is, we have to be active in our asking, seeking and knocking - they are verbs that require our continuous input!. A similar lesson is found in two other parables of Christ’s’.

Summarise the parables below, and think about the lesson being taught regarding how we should go about asking God and what reaction God would have if we did the same to Him.

Luke 11:5-8 _____

Luke 18:1-8 _____

THINKY THINGS

In context, this includes praying to God, and asking for his help when judging our brother or discerning whether to give our pearls before someone or not!

James really latches onto this lesson in his letter to the ecclesia. The focus of James is that if we develop a relationship with God, He too will answer and draw close to you (**James 4:8**)

So let’s take a look at some of what James says. What is the motive we should have when we ask God? **James 1:5-6, 17**

What is the motive we should not have when we ask God? **James 4:2-3**

How should we ask? **James 5:16**

God is so willing to be part of your life, young person, and is prepared to listen to our every prayer! Read the below quote from Jeremiah and colour in some of the things that really encourage you about God's invitation to us.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile."

Jeremiah 29:11-14

God has given us the time we have NOW to ask, seek and knock. In the parable of the 10 virgins in **Matt 25:1-13**, Jesus instructs us to *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour where the son of Man comes"*. It is sometimes easy to be apathetic or lazy when it comes to filling our lamps by reading God's word, praying and practising God's ways. Those virgins who put off preparing for His coming were found knocking on Christ's door when it was too late: *"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."* Don't wait until a later time to start knocking, use your time NOW to find Jesus, so you will be ready to enter the kingdom when it comes.

An interesting picture of Jesus knocking on our door – do we open it to him? **Rev 3:20** Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

V9-11 "Your Father will give good things to those who ask Him"

Jesus follows this statement with some bizarre rhetorical statements in **verses 9 and 10**.

"If a son asks his father for bread, will he given him a stone?"

"Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent".

What is the point that Jesus is making here? It's a really relatable and obvious answer: 'Of course we wouldn't give our children something that was useless or could harm them!'

So how does this relate to God as a Father? Summarise the point Jesus makes in **v11** below:

THINKY THINGS

Primarily Jesus is speaking about the literal here, undoubtedly God is a much better Giver than us humans. But do you think Christ is speaking of deeper spiritual symbols than this?

What do the below symbols represent:

Bread (**Matt 4:4**) _____

Stones (**Matt 4:3**) _____

Fish (**Matt 4:19**) _____

Serpent (**Gen 3:14-15**) _____

In context to these symbols above, if you asked God for a better understanding of His Truth, could you expect Him to give you a stumbling block? YAHWEH wants nothing more than for us to spiritually grow and develop ourselves, so if we are prepared to ask, have no doubt He will grant it!

Do we truly believe that when we ask God for knowledge to understand His word and wisdom to think and act like Him, that He will give it to us? Perhaps now is the time to give it a shot.

Our Father is a much better giver to us than we are to our own children! When it says we are 'evil' it means that we possess human nature and are flawed, yet despite this if we can still give good gifts, how much more will our Heavenly Father?

Prov 2: 1-9 makes this abundantly clear. Take a read of these verses in the New Living Translation and list below what God is prepared to give us.

There are a few other references back to some themes in the Sermon on the Mount in **Prov 2:1-9**, can you spot them?

Look at the below quotes, each of them draws on a unique aspect of the manner in which God provides us with gifts. Read through the below passages and note what they tell us we can take away from God's providing character:

Rom 8:31-32 _____

1 John 5:14-15 _____

Eph 3:20 _____

Finally, it's important to truly believe that God will give us what we ask for! Trust that He will provide for our spiritual needs. God loves us as His children and it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom (**Luke 12:32**). He WILL answer our prayers and give us what we ask of Him if it is His will. **Heb 11:6** tells us that our very salvation is dependant on this fact:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"

Heb 11:6

God is a Rewarder, so lets seek His rewards above anything else!

V12 "Whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them"

Christians all around the world call **verse 12**: 'The Golden Rule' and there isn't a more apt name for it! Jesus created the perfect maxim for us to conduct our lives around!

How does this link to Jesus's later statement in **Matt 22:36-40**?

Notice that Jesus tells us that this attitude should be upheld to all people. A great practical example of how this is outworked is seen in **Luke 10:30-37** through the parable of the Good Samaritan. Here Jesus tells the story of a man who had no regard for the ethnicity of the individual

he was helping, instead he showed care and love to his "enemy" - we too can do the same.

Jesus has already briefly touched on the principle established in verse 12 back in the Lord's Prayer, **Matt 6:14-15**, where we are told if we want to be forgiven, we ought to forgive others. Back in **Matt 7:12**, doing to others what you would have them do to you isn't just about forgiveness, or judgement - this is a rule for every aspect in life and to all mankind!

We sometimes just interpret this and focus on the negative, however it includes the positive flip side too. We aren't just being asked to cease from harm, but also to overflow with the good that we wish would be done to us too!

But how does this relate to the context of **chapter 7** which we just read?

Read back through the divided sections below and think about how you could apply this Golden Rule to these situations in your everyday life:

V1- 5 _____

V6 _____

V7-11 _____

(If you are struggling to answer the above, chat about this with a friend or hit up a committee member for some thoughts).

Verse 12 really emphasises that we have free-will to act however we would like. Jesus reminds us to keep in mind that we will reap what we sow. Remember this whole principle is grounded on the fact that we want to be more like God.

Do you think this will change how you will conduct yourself with everyone you meet?

What is something you really want to be done for you this week?

Think about someone you can do this very thing for this week and do this same thing you want, for them! Don't make it an idea or an intention, tell your study buddy and make sure you follow through with this!

So that concludes Section 5 for us! Christ really makes us think both on our own spiritual needs and the needs of our brothers and sisters in the beginning of Chapter 7. Remember that judgement is crucial, but be cautious of the spirit in which it is done. When we are struggling to preach or judge, just ask, seek and knock for God, who will graciously provide like the Father He is.

Finally, never underestimate taking a moment in situations in life and consider how you would like a situation to be handled if it was you, give to others generously as you God gives to you and live out the Golden Rule in every aspect.

Congratulations! You have finished section 3, 4 & 5 - which means one more young person will be able to travel to a youth conference in Kenya this year!



SECTION 6

a choice between two

MATTHEW 7:13-28

Our final section draws our minds to decide between two choices that Jesus is asking you personally. Which will you choose? One option leads to eternal life and the other leads to eternal death. You are the only one who can answer this, but the consequences are everlasting. It's a question that has been asked right throughout Israel's history, and a choice needs to be made! Take, for example, the prophet Jeremiah's words:

"Furthermore, tell the people, 'This is what the Lord says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death.'

Jeremiah 21:8

You have to choose what direction you want to take in life. It can be easy to think we can sit on the fence, but clearly we must make one choice - We cannot serve both God and the world (**Matthew 6:24**). God has always presented us with a choice between two roads:

- The two ways (**Matthew 7:13-14**)
- The two trees (**Matthew 7:15-20**)
- The two builders (**Matthew 7:24-27**)

These choices actually line up quite well with **Psalms 1**, as Bro Jim Luke notes in his book the Sermon on the Mount:

- **Psalms 1:6** *"For the LORD knoweth **the way** of the righteous"*
- **Psalms 1:3** *"And he shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water that **bringeth forth his fruit in his season**"*
- **Psalms 1:4** *"The ungodly... like the chaff which the **wind driveth away**"*

One of the prime choices in Scripture can be found in **Deut 30:15-20**, where Moses gives a final choice for the Children of Israel before they enter into the Promised Land. What makes these words so powerful is that these are Moses's final words before he dies on Mt Nebo in **Deut 34**.

Read through **Deut 30:15-20**

What does choosing the good way involve? What are some of the benefits that result in choosing the good way?

What warnings does Moses give that can turn us from this good path? (**v17**)

Moses leaves this decision up to Israel, however he pleads in **v19** that they make the right decisions and choose to live! The same decision now is placed before us in **Matt 7**, the choices we make in life, each day - are ultimately up to us. So young people - Choose.

V13-14 The Two Ways

The first decision a disciple must make is between which way or path they will choose to take. What is the image and contrast that Christ is painting here in this parable? What is the choice between?

1. _____
2. _____

The KJV here may seem confusing as to what the 'strait' gate is here, but read it in the ESV. What has the ESV translated 'strait' to?

The word 'wide' implies that this path is flat, broad and spacious. It's a way of life that is comfortable, without trials and work - which is why so many people choose the way that leads to destruction.

Look up **Acts 14:22**. What is the core encouragement the apostles give to the disciples here?

THINKY THINGS

Naturally we find that we are set on the path of destruction from birth, *"the soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (**Ezek 18:20**). However, now through the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a new and living way has opened for us so that we can be sanctified in Christ's flesh! (**Heb 10:20**). So then it's up to us to change our path to the one which Christ has laid out for us. This alone leads us to eternal life!

Jesus states that we cannot have the best of both worlds and walk down both paths. Instead we can only TRULY choose one. The narrow way is difficult - it requires effort, endurance through

trial, analysis of our heart and it requires some kind of transformation of our life. **Romans 12:2** *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

So young people, the lesson Jesus is making here is that the narrow way is difficult, it cannot be deviated from and can be a lonely path. But don't be discouraged when you are faced with these obstacles because this is a pretty good indicator, if you are obeying His Word, that this is truly the narrow way.

Let's look at some of the other choices we need to make in scripture.

Turn up Proverbs 2:16-20.

This passage also clarifies that there is a choice in life to make. What does this passage say is the result of the two paths and who walks down them?

Path 1: _____

Path 2: _____

Prov 2:8-22 mentions the word 'paths' 7 times. Go find them and colour them in. Then write **"Matt 7:13-14"** in your margin there.

Back to **Matt 7: 13-14**, why do you think most people chose the way of destruction?

Isa 30:9-11 tells us the quickest way we can turn away from the strait and narrow way, and lead to the path of destruction:

"For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the LORD; who say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."

It's a crucial reminder, make sure you are prepared to HEAR God's Word or you will quickly find yourself lost in the way of the unrighteous!

V15 "Beware of False Prophets"

Jesus goes on to warn his disciples that not only do many disciples fall into the way of destruction, but there are also disciples out there who choose destruction and will bring many others with them too!

Christ teaches this lesson by likening us to sheep within a sheepfold. (It's a similar lesson to **John 10: 1-18**, where he compares himself as being the Good Shepherd who would lay down his life for his sheep). However, here he warns his disciples that there will be threats from inside the ecclesia who would devour the flock themselves.

Look up the following verses. What warnings are given here by the apostles? (Note the progression of these warnings!)

Rom 16:17-20 _____

Acts 20:28-30 _____

2 Tim 4:3 _____

2 Peter 2:1-3 _____

The problem with these false prophets is that, through their cunning lies and untruths, it can be extremely difficult to distinguish them from the true prophets who teach the Truth.

Luckily for us, the Old Testament teaches us a lot about how to discern between false prophets and true prophets:

How to determine a false prophet	How to determine a true prophet
Deut 18:20-22	Deut 18:18-19
1 King 22:6-8, 12-13	1 Kings 22:14-18
Jer 23: 16-17, 32	Jer 23:18, 21-22

So how do we know who is true or false?

The Old Testament makes it quite apparent that false prophets enjoy making a name for themselves and love to speak appetising lies that gullible people will accept with open arms. The lesson: consider God's Word first and compare its principles to the words spoken by any teacher to make sure they are consistent!

1 John 4:1-5 definitely helps reinforce this principle - read it out aloud and then summarise its words below.

So always ask yourself “What does the Bible say on the topic? Is the message I am hearing consistent or just a nice sounding opinion? Is this what I think is right or what God says is right?”

The words of Prov 14:12 echo here: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

V16-20 The Two Trees

Back in Matt 7, Jesus offers another way to discern the false prophets from the true - and that’s by analysing what sort of fruit they are producing! Look at v16-20.

There are clearly two types, the good and the evil, but what fruits is Jesus speaking about exactly?

Read through Gal 5:19-23. Here we see the choice between two types of fruit (works) listed by Paul.

First of all list out what evil fruit/works look like:

Write out what Gal 5 identifies good fruit to be. Also write out a practical example of each one. You may have to look up Strong’s definition to help you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

THINKY THINGS

Funnily enough Gal 5:25 finishes up on telling us to make sure we “walk” in the Spirit! Reference back to Matt 7v13-14.

So these are the things Christ tells us to look for when hearing the words of any teachers in the ecclesia. If they too produce good fruit (and it corresponds with God’s Word), then we can surely know that we can listen to their voice!

This of course has a carry-over effect on the reader. Christ knows inevitably that the true disciples reading this passage will also, at some point, teach the Gospel message too. This could be to our future children, to interested friends, at seminars or generally in the ecclesia. Therefore are WE producing good fruit to match our words so that others (and the Lord Jesus Christ) can discern our good fruit?

A fruit tree can only produce one fruit, either good or evil - which one will it be for us?

An awesome poetry technique that can be seen right throughout the Bible is a Chiasmus. Now a Chiasmus is a device where the message is mirrored on either side to bring the reader to the central point of the poem/message. The Bible is scattered with them, and you can see them on: www.chiasmusxchange.com.

But Jesus produced one right here for us in **Matt 7:16-20**. Look at it below and work out the pattern.

- A **V16. YE SHALL KNOW THEM**
- B **BY THEIR FRUITS.**
- C Do men **GATHER** grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
- D **V17. Even so every good tree BRINGETH FORTH GOOD FRUIT;**
- E but a **CORRUPT TREE**
- F **BRINGETH FORTH EVIL FRUIT.**
- G **V18. A good tree**
- F' cannot **BRING FORTH EVIL FRUIT**
- E' neither can a **CORRUPT TREE** bring forth good fruit.
- D' **V19. Every tree that BRINGETH NOT FORTH GOOD FRUIT is hewn down,**
- C' and **CAST** into the fire.
- B' **V20. Wherefore BY THEIR FRUITS**
- A' **YE SHALL KNOW THEM.**

You can colour in the above mirroring parts in your Bible to make it stand out. What is the central point of this Chiasmus?

Inward thoughts and motivations are revealed in our actions. **Luke 6:43-45** Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The thoughts of our heart flow into what we say and what we do and therefore produce fruit.

Take a look at the table below and fill out the missing spaces:

Bible Passage	How does good fruit grow literally?	What does this mean spiritually?
Psalm 1:1-3		Consistent refreshment from the reading of God's Word
Isa 11:1-3	Strong roots	
Matt 13: 3- 23		
Luke 13:6-9		

So then, young person, are you growing in your spiritual life?

V21-23 “I Never Knew You”

These verses serve as a reminder of the standard which Christ expects from us if we wish to enter his Kingdom. Jesus doesn't want us just saying the right things or calling him 'Lord' - those won't earn us a place there. Instead, Jesus is telling us that those who do the will of God will be the ones entering into His Kingdom. Jesus is looking for those people who produce good works, rooted in the fruits of the spirit.

Actions speak louder than words is a lesson **James 2:14-17** picks up. How should the disciple have acted here?

Matt 7:21-23 should serve as a deep sense of self-reflection for us. Are we just saying the right things without producing any real fruit? Or are we even doing the right things but only out of obligation? Do you call Jesus 'Lord' yet not change your actions to follow our Master?

It's a scary thought in **v22** that many will call Jesus, 'Lord' yet Christ will firmly profess "*I never knew you*". Judas Iscariot was one of these examples, calling Jesus Master in **Matt 26:25**, yet hours later turns his friend over to the Jews to be murdered. In these verses we can see that Jesus IS the judge, and therefore our response has to be a personal one which follows the will of our God if we want to enter in on that day!

V24-27 The Two Builders

Jesus finishes our study of the Sermon on the Mount with a straightforward but resounding parable that we all know and love. It is also where we get our theme: Hear and Do!

Simply put, if we are going to hear the words of Jesus, think they are excellent, but do nothing about them... we are on the course to certain doom!

What does **James 1:22-27** compare to a hearer of the Word but not a doer?

It's an important lesson to remember; just listening to Christ's words is not enough. Let his words transform you, because obedience is the key to salvation! Jesus depicts it through a very powerful parable in the last 4 verses of the Sermon.

Scan the Spotify code below and listen to the relevant audio to this. What does this make you think of?



When you read through this story, what are the similarities between the two houses and what are the differences between these houses?

Similarities _____

Differences _____

Take a read of **Prov 10:25**, what is the connection which Jesus may be using to base this parable upon?

This parable shows the importance of Christ's words and how we can make them our foundation. As you saw above, there are many more similarities than differences here. Both individuals put in hard work to build the house. Both individuals suffered from the storms of life. Yet from the outside, they were indistinguishable. The only difference was that one had built on a solid foundation, whilst the other on volatile ground and it was only until the trials had come that others could perceive which house had the effort placed into it.

If both houses experience storms, floods and winds - what do you think Jesus is teaching us here?

In the days of Noah, storms, floods and winds are used to bring judgement on the ungodly.

1 Peter 3:20 tells us that these judgements were for the "*disobedient*" (those who do not listen to His Word) and instead "*the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,... (saved) eight souls by water*". Peter goes on to say that "*Baptism... now saves you... as an appeal to God for a good conscience*". The choice is up to us what we want to do with this gifted salvation.

So remember, nobody may notice your foundation, but God will know. Through Christ's words we can build a platform to build our life upon so we can endure through the trials of life! Sometimes it is challenging to apply God's Law, BUT when has it ever been easy to drill a foundation into rock?

It might be easier to build on sand in the interim, but the results will show when the Kingdom comes. So build that relationship with Christ by listening to his words and develop them for our own benefit for that future coming day.

Quickly, another example in Scripture of this story is found in **Ezek 13:10-14**. It's a bit more challenging to work out its meaning, but can you figure out how it relates?

On the next page we want you to pull together a mind map. Write the words 'Rock' and 'Foundation' in the middle and link them to quotes and ideas in the Bible. (Start with these quotes: **Psalms 18:1-3, Deut 32:3-4, Eph 2:19-22, 1 Cor 3:9-17**).

V28-29 What is your response to Jesus' words?

Our study ends at **v28-29**, where Jesus has finished speaking. But look at the reaction of the people! *"When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."*

The people who heard his words, whether believers or not, could not deny the power behind them. It was rare to see a man who spoke with confidence, wisdom and sincerity; a man who was convinced of his own doctrine and was prepared to live it. Here was a man, different from the Pharisees and scribes, who loved God's Word, and practised every syllable of it! He wasn't looking for power, but a path of hope and inspiration to those around him to transform their very being!

John 7:46 puts the words in the people's mouths, *"Never man spake like this man!"*

How will we walk away from this Sermon, will we be transformed enough to build upon the foundation set in front of us? To be a light unto the world, to be perfect like our Father in heaven? To offer genuine prayer to God? And trust Him to provide above the riches of this world?

The question for you, young person; What is your response to the teaching of the Master? Will you

Hear and Do?

Congratulations on finishing the whole booklet! What a huge effort! We encourage you to mark your favourite points from your study into your bible or bring the booklet into the groups, so that you have points to add to the discussion groups during the week!

Your ability to finish this final section of the booklet has raised enough money to give a young person from Kenya their own Study Week 22 booklet! This will help them prepare for their youth camp later in the year on the Sermon on the Mount! How powerful that you can impact your fellow Christadelphian young people around the world in such a way!



"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Col 3:6-7



REFERENCES

There are tons of great resources out there on the Sermon on the Mount. Below are just some of the ones we used to help us on our journey - and we certainly recommend that you look at them too when you have time!

- **Climb: The Sermon on the Mount**, 2021
- **Attitude in Action**. Australasian Christadelphian Youth Conference 2015 (New Zealand Conference Notes)
- **The Sermon on the Mount: Study Notes by Jim Luke**. Christadelphian Scripture Study Service 2012.
- **The Teaching of the Master: A Study of the Sermon on the Mount**. L.G. Sargent. 1981
- **The Discourse on the Mount**. 26th Australasian Christadelphian Youth Conference Tasmania, Launceston. 2001.

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