

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

August 2013

The Sermon on the Mount

Lesson #7: Motives

INTRODUCTION

Whose prayer life do you admire? Why?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Note: The three cardinal components of Jewish piety were alms giving, prayer and fasting. (Tobit 12:8) Jesus reemphasizes that correct actions without correct motives still don't please God. "Matthew 5:21-48 focuses on the teaching of the law, on what men believe, and 6:1-18 focuses on the practice of the law, what men do. The first section emphasizes inner moral righteousness; the second section emphasizes outward formal righteousness." ¹

Read Matt 6:1-4

1. How does Jesus imply that acts of righteousness are not voluntary? Why is this more than just good thoughts? Lev 25:35
2. How do the motives in verse 6:1 compare to those in verse 5:16? How are the sins different?
3. Some say that there are two groups of church hypocrites – nonbelievers masquerading as believers and believers masquerading as spiritual when they are really sinning. To which group does Jesus' warning apply?
4. What are some of the subtle trumpets people use today to call attention to their good works?

Read Matt 6:5-15

Note: A common practice of pagan prayer was to recite a long list of divine names in hopes of reaching a god. They also uttered nonsense syllables common to magic incantations. The term "father" was hard for the Jews to understand & accept since they revered and honored Him so much. The prayer is also for our need, not our greed. "Our plea for continued forgiveness as believers, requesting the restoration of fellowship with God following the alienation that sin produces, is predicated on our having forgiven those who have sinned against us. As v. 15 stresses, without this interpersonal reconciliation on the human level, neither can we be reconciled to God." ²

5. If God knows what we need before we ask, why do we need to pray? Vs 8; Jas 4:2
6. In light of vv 7-8, why is this prayer repeated mechanically in many Christian gatherings?
7. Some people's view of God is the "wind up watch" – that He set things in motion and views from afar. How do these verses show that even though God is in heaven and honored (hallowed) that He is still interested (loving) and personally involved?
8. Why does God want to rule over all of His creation (not just heaven)? Vs 10. Why should we want that?
9. How does prayer enter into your daily living?

Read Matt 6:16-18

Note: Pharisees usually fasted on Mondays and Thursdays... no food but OK to drink.

10. If Jesus implies that fasting should be a normal spiritual activity, why is it so rare today? Matt 9:14-15
11. How does Jesus say we should fast?
12. What do you do with the extra time and money from fasting?

APPLICATION

- What challenges you the most about living out these verses of the Sermon on the Mount?

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (351). Chicago: Moody Press.

² Blomberg, C. (1992). *Vol. 22: Matthew*. The New American Commentary (120). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.