

# Study Guide



**Matthew 5:13-16— September 10, 2017**

## **Salt and Light**

**Word (45 Minutes)**

**Welcome (40 Minutes)**

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

**Worship (5 Minutes)**

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

As we look at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, we see Matthew and the other disciples "at the feet of Jesus." These teachings are in the context of Jesus' calling and equipping the twelve apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. In our nine months of studying Jesus' five discourses of Matthew we will be sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the ins-and-outs of being disciple-makers ourselves. Our prayer is that we will be challenged to understand that we were saved in order to be disciple-makers and that we will be inspired to sit at the feet of Jesus to be equipped for our calling to be disciple-makers.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

## **Action Step**

This week strive not to let anything unwholesome come out of your mouth and instead use your words to build up others at home, church, work, around town.

## **Calendar**

September 15th-17th— [Hurricane Relief](#)  
September 17th— [Connection Group](#)  
September 17th— Kid's Shine  
October 7th— [Parenting Conference](#)

## Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

## Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[I Stand Amazed](#)":

I stand amazed in the presence  
Of Jesus the Nazarene,  
And wonder how He could love me,  
A sinner, condemned, unclean.

O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
And my song shall ever be:  
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
Is my Savior's love for me!

He took my sins and my sorrows,  
He made them His very own;  
He bore the burden to Calvary,  
And suffered and died alone. (2x)

O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
And my song shall ever be:  
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
Is my Savior's love for me! (3x)

When with the ransomed in glory  
His face I at last shall see,  
'Twill be my joy through the ages  
To sing of His love for me.

O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
And my song shall ever be:  
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
Is my Savior's love for me!

**Commentary: Read Matthew 5:13-16**

If the beatitudes describe the essential character of the disciples of Jesus, the salt and light metaphors in verses 13-16 show the disciples influence for good in the world. **Disciples of Jesus can not live out the essential character qualities in private. As we saw in verses 1-12 these characteristics express our relationship with God and our relationship with the world. Jesus shows us that the church and the world are distinct communities and the church can exert a healthy influence in the world.** Disciples are not to conceal the truth we know or the truth of what we are. We are not to pretend to be other than we are, but we are to be willing for our Christianity to be visible to all.

John Stott's article, "[Four Ways Christians Can Influence the World](#)", is very helpful when learning about influencing the world with who we are in Christ. Below is a snippet from his article:

"In both these metaphors of the salt and the light, Jesus teaches about the responsibility of Christians in a non-Christian, or sub-Christian, or post-Christian society. He emphasizes the difference between Christians and non-Christians, between the church and the world, and he emphasizes the influences Christians ought to have on the non-Christian environment. The *distinction* between the two is clear.

The world, he says, is like rotting meat. But you are to be the world's salt. The world is like a dark night, but you are to be the world's light. This is the fundamental difference between the Christian and the non-Christian, the church and the world. Then he goes on from the distinction to the *influence*. Like salt in putrefying meat, Christians are to hinder social decay. Like light in the prevailing darkness, Christians are to illumine society and show it a better way. It's very important to grasp these two stages in the teaching of Jesus. Most Christians accept that there is a distinction between the Christian and the non-Christian, between the church and the world. God's new society, the church, is as different from the old society as salt from rotting meat and as light from darkness. But there are too many people who stop there; too many people whose whole preoccupation is with survival—that is, maintaining the distinction. The salt must retain its saltiness, they say. It must not become contaminated. The light must retain its brightness. It must not be smothered by the darkness. That is true. But that is merely survival. **Salt and light are not just a bit different from their environment. They are to have a powerful influence on their environment. The salt is to be rubbed into the meat in order to stop the rot. The light is to shine into the darkness. It is to be set upon a lamp stand, and it is to give light to the environment.** That is an influence on the environment quite different from mere survival."

We are to be ourselves in Christ, our true Christian selves, openly living the life described in the beatitudes, and not ashamed of Christ. People will see us as salt and light, they will see our good works, and seeing them will glorify God. They will recognize that it is by God's grace we are what we are, that our light is his light, and that our works are his works done in them and through them. Our Christian responsibility to the world is to be salt and light.

## Discussion

1. In verses 3-12, Jesus talks about the character qualities of those who are his true followers. By using the metaphors of salt and light in verses 13-16 what is he saying about his true followers? Are they similar to the world or very different from the world?
2. Do his true followers keep to themselves, having little influence on the world around them, or do they openly practice their distinctiveness in such a way as to influence the world around them?
3. What was the function of salt in the ancient world? What does this imply about what our purpose as Christians should be as we live in this world?
4. What does Jesus say will happen if his followers lose their saltiness? In what ways could Jesus's followers lose their saltiness?
5. If Jesus followers are the light of the world, what does that say about the world?
6. In verses 14-16, do Jesus's words sound like it is possible for his followers to hide their light? What does he say they should do or not do with their light?
7. What are some ways that we can become a "city on a hill" whose light cannot be hidden?
8. Does letting our light shine involve speaking as well as doing good works? What part does speaking have in letting our light shine?
9. What are some specific ways we can function as salt and light in our families and communities?

## Action Step

**We must never forget that we have been sent by the Son of God to make disciples who make disciples.** Each week we are giving you action steps to take. Jesus has sent you out to make disciples and it begins by engaging people. **This week strive not to let anything unwholesome come out of your mouth and instead use your words to build up others at home, church, work, around town.**

## Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased  
Young life  
Heart of hope  
First priority  
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center  
Community renewal  
Grief counseling  
Celebrate recovery  
Samaritan counseling  
Last call ministries  
Golden age ministries  
Rescue mission  
Luke's lighthouse  
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

## Walk Prayer & Missions

For further information visit  
[norrisferrychurch.org](http://norrisferrychurch.org) or contact Jared  
Clary ([clary@norrisferrychurch.org](mailto:clary@norrisferrychurch.org))

## Calendar

September— Hurricane Relief  
October— South Sudan  
March— NOLA  
June— Serve Shreveport  
July— Central America