

Study Guide



Matthew 6:1-6;16-18 – True Religion

November 5, 2017

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.

Word (45 Minutes)

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 we want you to continue to invest. Share stories of gospel conversations had the previous week and continue to pray and ask God to provide you with opportunities to talk about Jesus with someone.

Calendar

November 5th— Baptisms
November 12th— Member's Meeting
December 3rd— Family Christmas Program (One Service)
December 24th— Christmas Service

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 "[Cornerstone](#)":

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus name

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus name

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

When Darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
My anchor holds within the veil

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all
He is Lord
Lord of all

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong; in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless stand before the throne.

Jesus began his instruction for the Sermon on the Mount by portraying in the beatitudes the essential elements of Christian character, and went on to indicate by his metaphors of salt and light the influence for good which Christians will exert in the community if they exhibit this character. Jesus continues and described Christian righteousness which must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees by accepting the full implications of God's law. Christian righteousness must be allowed to penetrate beyond our actions and words to our heart, mind, and motives, and to master us even in those hidden, secret places.

Jesus continues in Matthew 6 on his teaching of righteousness. Matthew 6:1 begins, "Beware of doing your righteousness before others." He is talking about the same righteousness as he was in chapter 5 but the emphasis has shifted. In chapter 5 righteousness related to kindness, purity, honesty, and love. Now righteousness concerns such practices as giving, praying, and fasting. Jesus is moving from the Christian's moral righteousness to his "religious" righteousness. According to Jesus, Christian righteousness has two dimensions, moral and religious. The Christian's life, authentic Christianity, does not seclude or focus on one dimension of righteousness. However, Christianity includes religious devotion in church and active service in the world, loving God and loving our neighbor. This is a different righteousness than the Pharisees and the scribes. Christians are to be different from both the religious and irreligious, the church and the world. Christian righteousness is not just an external manifestation only, but one of the secret things of the heart.

Jesus is not contradicting what he said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see...", he is now speaking against different sins. It was our lack of faith and boldness, our cowardice that cause him to say "Let your light shine before others", and our pride and vanity that made him to caution us to "beware of doing your righteousness before others." Christian, our good works must be public so that our light shines and our religious devotions must be secret so we won't boast about them. Both instructions from Jesus end with the idea to glorify God in what we do. So, Jesus gives us three examples of religious righteousness: giving, praying, and fasting.

To summarize these three topics, Jesus follows a pattern for each of them. These three religious obligations ("when you...") express our duty to God, to others, and to ourselves. To give to others is to seek to serve our neighbor, especially the needy. To pray is to seek God's face and to acknowledge our dependence on him. To fast (to abstain from food for spiritual reasons) is intended at least partly as a way to deny and to discipline oneself. Jesus paints us a picture of the hypocrite's way of being religious and the Christian way. The hypocrite receives the reward they want, the applause of men, and the later, which is in secret, receive the only reward Christians want, the blessing of God who is their heavenly Father and who sees in secret.

The hypocrite (Pharisee and scribes) is not just obsessed with the praise of men but is obsessed with himself. Jesus is pointing this out, as Dr. Lloyd-Jones says, "our only reason for pleasing men around us is that we may please ourselves." Christian religion is secret, motivated by humility and rewarded by God. So the question is, whose attention are you seeking? Which spectator matters to you the most? The earthly or the heavenly? Men or God? Who is your audience as you give, as you pray, as you fast? We can fool others that our giving, praying, and fasting are genuine. But God is not mocked, we cannot deceive him. God looks at the heart. That is why John Stott says, "anything in order to be seen by men is bound to degrade it, while to do it seen by God is equally bound to ennoble it."

Discussion - Read Matthew 6:1-6; 16-18

1. Having spoken about true moral righteousness in chapter 5, Jesus turns now to the righteousness his disciples are to display in their religious activity. What is the difference between Matthew 5:16 and 6:1?
2. Define "hypocrisy." How does the conduct described here demonstrate hypocrisy?
3. How did Jesus say hypocrites gave, prayed, and fasted - (6:2; 5; 16)? What was wrong with this?
4. How did Jesus say Christians should give, pray, and fast - (6:3-4; 6; 17)?
5. The idea of 'reward' is brought up several times in this passage. What reward is granted to the hypocrites? What reward is granted to the Christian?
6. Think about your religious activities in light of this passage. Does anything need to be changed?
7. What is your motivation when you give, pray, or fast? Are you seeking a reward from men or from God?

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 learning God's Word and engaging people. **This week we want you to continue to invest.** Share stories of gospel conversations had the previous week and continue to pray and ask God to provide you with opportunities to talk about Jesus with someone.

Last week I asked the Community Group Leaders, to challenge every member of their group to put on a wristband and to wear it everyday until group the following week. The purpose of this is to take an action step using the wristbands to start conversations to be salt and light in our community. Look forward to hearing about conversations the next week in Community Group. Below are a few examples of conversations.

Conversation Examples:

Question: "Hey, what is your wristband for?"

Answer: "Oh it is just something my church is doing." Response: "Oh" (Person walks away)

PLEASE DON'T DO THIS. God is answering your prayer for conversations please be bold in your opportunities.

Question: "Hey, what is your wristband for?"

Answer: "It is something our church is doing to remind us of what Jesus has called us to. Our culture is so divided right now and culture says to "hate your enemies" but Jesus has called us to be different and "love our enemies." The only way I can do this is if God changes me and I realize that Christ loved me when I was his enemy. What do you think about that?"

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 or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

November— South Sudan
February 22nd- March 3rd — South Sudan
March 29th- April 1st— NOLA
June— Serve Shreveport
July— Central America