

WEEK 1

Anger

This Week's Reading: Matthew 5:21-26

Matthew 5:22 (NLT) 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

Small Group Discussion

1. How do you feel about expressing anger? Are you comfortable with it or do you downplay it?
2. What's your typical way of expressing anger? How has that worked out for you?
3. What injustices make you angry? (When you're treated wrongly or when others are treated wrongly?)
4. What's the difference between forgiving someone and being reconciled with someone? Why is reconciliation harder than forgiving?
5. What's love got to do with all of this?
6. Looking back at this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WEEK 2

Divorce & Adultery

This Week's Reading: Matthew 5:27-32

Matthew 5:32 (NLT) 32 But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

Small Group Discussion

1. Let's define terms. What is lust? What is adultery? What is divorce?
2. Why does Jesus set such a strict standard with adultery and divorce?
3. When does Jesus permit divorce?
4. What is the Bible's solution to overcoming lust?
5. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WEEK 3

Integrity

This Week's Reading: Matthew 5:33-37

Matthew 5:37 (CSB) 37 But let your 'yes' mean 'yes,' and your 'no' mean 'no.' Anything more than this is from the evil one.

Small Group Discussion

1. What is integrity?
2. What's a story from your life where integrity made a difference?
3. What does Matthew 5:34 mean for us today? Is there a difference between a promise and an oath?
4. What is an area in your life where you need more integrity? What is the temptation that creates the dilemma?
5. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WEEK 4

Love Your Enemies

This Week's Reading: Matthew 5:38-48

Matthew 5:46 (NLT) 46 If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much.

Small Group Discussion

1. What does it look like to love your enemy? Is it more than tolerance?
2. Who's the one person in your life (beside Jesus) who has modeled love best?
3. Who are YOUR enemies right now?
4. How does fear play into your struggle with loving your enemies?
5. What habits can we develop to become more effective with enemy love?
6. With all we've discussed, what action steps are you going to take this week?

WEEK 5

The Secret Things

This Week's Reading: Matthew 6:1-18

Matthew 6:1 (NIV) 6 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Small Group Discussion

1. What's the principle point Jesus is addressing in the three areas covered in Matthew 6:1-18 (prayer, fasting, & giving)?
2. How do you reconcile Matthew 5:14 and Matthew 6:1?
3. Does this mean giving up public praying? Why or why not?
4. Would someone who knows the "public you" be surprised at the habits of your private life?
5. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WEEK 6

Money

This Week's Reading: Matthew 6:19-24

Matthew 6:21 (NIV) 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Small Group Discussion

1. What does Matthew 6:21 mean?
2. How do we store up treasure in heaven?
3. What does it mean for God to be master or money to be master of your life? How is tithing connected with identifying the master in your life?
4. Why statistically, do most Christians disobey in this area?
5. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WEEK 7

Worry

This Week's Reading: Matthew 6:25-34

Matthew 6:34 (NIV) 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Small Group Discussion

1. When was the last time you didn't feel anxious about anything? Why were you so worry free?
2. Why do you think God desires for us to be anxious about nothing?
3. What kinds of situations create the most anxiety in you? What's your usual first response to anxiety?
4. What's the connection between faith and worry?
5. What steps can you take to surrender to God and break the cycle of anxiety this week?
6. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

WEEK 8

Seek First

This Week's Reading: Matthew 6:33

Matthew 6:33 (NIV) 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Small Group Discussion

1. What does it mean to seek first God's Kingdom with your...
Marriage? Money?
Work? Free time?
Hobbies? Relationships?
2. What things will be "added to you" as you seek first His Kingdom?
3. What are the areas where you're seeking something else first, before His Kingdom?
4. How is seeking first His Kingdom connected with our identity? How is it connected with a walk of faith?
5. Looking back at your notes from this week, was there a particular point, verse, or comment that caught your attention, challenged you, or raised a question?

WEEK 9

Judging

This Week's Reading: Matthew 7:1-6

Matthew 7:1–2 (NIV) “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Small Group Discussion

1. What is one of the first times you remember being judged? How did it make you feel?
2. Do you ever have standards for others that you struggle to meet yourself?
3. What are the situations in your life where you feel most judged? When are you most judgmental of others?
4. How would you define a hypocrite? How do you think people become hypocritical?
5. Where do you sometimes hold non-Christians to Christian standards?

WEEK 10

Prayer

This Week's Reading: Matthew 7:7-11

Matthew 7:7-8 (NLT) 7 “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.
8 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Small Group Discussion

1. When was a time God clearly answered your prayer? What happened?
2. What are you asking God for right now?
3. What part does faith have in answered prayer?
4. What does it look like to “keep on asking?” Is there something you’ve been asking for a long time?
5. How has Matthew 7:7-11 changed the way you pray?
6. Looking back at your notes from this week, was there a particular point, verse, or comment that caught your attention, challenged you, or raised a question?

WEEK 11

A Tree and its Fruit

This Week's Reading: Matthew 7:13-23

Matthew 7:20 (NLT) 20 Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

Small Group Discussion

1. What is good fruit? What is bad fruit?
2. What do you think Matthew 7:21-23 means?
3. What's the difference between Jesus' prohibition on judging and His apparent encouragement to judge the fruit in people's lives?
4. What is the fear of the Lord and how does it enter into the discussion about fruit in our lives?
5. Looking back at your notes from this week, was there a particular point, verse, or comment that caught your attention, challenged you, or raised a question?

WEEK 12

Two Foundations

This Week's Reading: Matthew 7:24-29

Matthew 7:24 (NIV) 24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Small Group Discussion

1. What does it mean to build your life on the rock? The sand?
2. Why do you think Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount with this parable?
3. Can you think of a difficult time you have faced that could have been avoided if you had applied the principles of scripture? What about a time you overcame because you did apply Jesus' principles?
4. What part does trust play in building a strong foundation? How does trusting God influence our obedience?
5. Looking back over the last 12 weeks of this series, where has your life been impacted the most? What is one specific area you know you need to take action in now?