

# Matthew Life Application Bible Study

In person at the Apple Place Children's Room or

## Join Zoom Meeting

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**Meeting ID: 813 9799 8415 / Passcode: 814012**

## Lesson 1: Family Tree

### [MATTHEW 1:1-17](#)

#### Reflect on your life

- 1 Briefly describe a time when you met someone you considered very important.
- 2 How did this meeting affect you positively or negatively?

#### Read the passage

Read the introductory material to Matthew, [Matthew 1:1-17](#), and the following notes:

[1:1](#)  [1:1-17](#)  [1:16](#)

- 3 What is the main purpose of the Gospel of Matthew?
- 4 How far is it from Jerusalem to Caesarea Philippi? What town or city is about that far from where you live? (Use the map "Key Places in Matthew" in the introductory material.)

#### Realize the principle

- 5 There are four women besides Mary mentioned in Jesus' genealogy. Why might they have been included in a list of fathers?
- 6 Why was it important for Matthew to include a list of Jesus' ancestors in his Gospel?

The purpose of the Gospels is to give us a clear picture of Jesus so we can get to know him better. They tell us who he is, what he came to do, and what he wants us to do. Matthew's unique snapshot gives us a picture of Jesus the King. By the time you reach the end of the Gospel of Matthew, your knowledge of Jesus should be deeper, your picture of him should be clearer, and your understanding of what he wants you to be and do should be more mature. In the end, if you are willing, you will know him better, too.

#### Respond to the message

- 7 Roughly how many times have you read the Gospel of Matthew all the way through?  Never  Once  A couple of times  Quite a few times  Many times
- 8 Which of the five Megathemes (from the introductory material) are you most interested in understanding better?
- 9 Briefly describe how you would like your understanding of Jesus to change.

**10** In what specific ways do you think you would be different if you knew Jesus better than you do right now?

### **Resolve to take action**

**11** What will you do this week to get to know Jesus better?

**12** Throughout the coming week, pray that God will enable you to benefit from your study of Matthew by helping you to understand yourself and Jesus better.

### **More for studying other themes in this section**

**A** Which of the Old Testament people in Jesus' family tree do you recognize? What do you know about them? Which people would you like to learn more about?

**B** Use the timeline and the Blueprint outline in the introduction to figure out the length of time covered in each of the main sections of Matthew. How did Jesus spend most of his time during his ministry? What does his example say about our priorities? How might you adjust your priorities?

**C** Several titles and names for Jesus are used in the introductory material. Which one means the most to you? Why?

**D** What was the world's political situation at the time of Jesus' birth? What longings did this create in God's people? How did God address those longings? What longings or desires does our world's present situation create in you? Which of God's provisions meets your desires most?

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## **Lesson 2: Decisions, Decisions**

### **MATTHEW 1:18-4:25**

#### **Reflect on your life**

**1** What are some small decisions in life?

**2** What are some big decisions in life?

#### **Read the passage**

Read [Matthew 1:18-4:25](#), Joseph's Profile, Herod's Profile, and the following notes:

□ [1:18](#) □ [1:18-25](#) □ [1:19](#) □ [1:24](#) □ [2:3](#) □ [2:4](#) □ [2:8](#) □ [2:13](#) □ [2:16](#)

□ [4:1](#) □ [4:1ff](#) □ [4:1-10](#) □ [4:3, 4](#) □ [4:6](#) □ [4:8-10](#)

**3** What helped Joseph make his significant decisions ([1:18-21](#), [24, 25](#); [2:13-15](#), [19-23](#))?

**4** How did Herod make decisions ([2:3-8](#))?

**5** How did Jesus handle the tempting choices offered by Satan ([4:1-11](#))?

#### **Realize the principle**

**6** How was God involved in the choices of the people in this passage?

**7** What was so tempting about the offers the Devil made to Jesus?

## 8 How can temptations hinder us from making good decisions?

Herod made many wrong choices. Although he built fortresses and palaces, he destroyed lives. And other people paid dearly for his bad choices. In contrast, Jesus made the right choices. Even though the Devil tempted him directly and tried to lure him with offers of fame, power, and authority, Jesus chose correctly in every decision. Likewise, Joseph had only one desire whenever he was faced with decisions: to do what God wanted. Whatever God desired was Joseph's desire. We learn from these examples that every opportunity to make a wrong choice is also an opportunity to make a right choice. The right choice will always honor God. How often do you consider God in your day-to-day choices?

## 9 Why should Christians include God in their decision making?

### Respond to the message

10 What kinds of choices require Christians to actively seek God's guidance?

11 Why do people leave God out of small decisions?

12 Why do people leave God out of big decisions?

13 How can you include God in more of your decisions?

### Resolve to take action

14 With what day-to-day choices do you need to seek God's help more often?

15 For what big decision will you seek God's wisdom this week?

### More for studying other themes in this section

A What were some of Joseph's strengths or virtues ([1:18-2:23](#))? How did he handle difficult or unexpected circumstances? What does this challenge you to do when you face difficult or unexpected circumstances?

B Why is the Virgin Birth ([1:18](#)) important to the Christian faith? What makes it important to you personally?

C What role did angels play in the birth and early life of Jesus ([1:18-21](#); [2:12, 13](#), [19-22](#))? What role do angels play today? How might an awareness of their role boost your confidence in God's ability and willingness to look out for you?

D Why did the wise men seek Jesus ([2:1, 2](#))? How did they express their devotion to him ([2:9-11](#))? How can we express devotion to Jesus?

E Why did John the Baptist call people to repent ([3:1, 2](#))? Of what do you need to repent?

F John the Baptist said harsh things to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to see him ([3:7-10](#)). When is it good to use harsh language with people? How can you be sure to use harsh language only when it is necessary?

G How was the Trinity evident at Jesus' baptism ([3:16, 17](#))? How does God make himself known today?

H Why do you think Peter and Andrew chose to leave their nets and follow Jesus when he asked them to ([4:18-20](#))? What have you been challenged to leave in order to follow Jesus?

I What were the main aspects of Jesus' early ministry ([4:23-25](#))? How are these same ministries carried on today? What is your role in God's work here on earth?

# Lesson 3: True Happiness

## MATTHEW 5:1-48

### Reflect on your life

- 1 Complete this sentence in as many ways as you can: Happiness is...
- 2 To what do people typically turn for happiness today?

### Read the passage

Read [Matthew 5:1-48](#), the chart "Key Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount," and the following notes:

□ [5:1ff](#) □ [5:1, 2](#) □ [5:3-5](#) □ [5:3-12](#) □ [5:11, 12](#)

- 3 Listed below are the attitudes that make a person "blessed" in God's eyes ([5:3-12](#)). What do you think it means to...

realize your need for God? \_\_\_\_\_

mourn? \_\_\_\_\_

be gentle and lowly? \_\_\_\_\_

be hungry and thirsty for justice? \_\_\_\_\_

be merciful? \_\_\_\_\_

have a pure heart? \_\_\_\_\_

work for peace? \_\_\_\_\_

be persecuted because you live for God? \_\_\_\_\_

### Realize the principle

- 4 How are the Beatitudes related to each other?
- 5 What response to this part of the Sermon on the Mount do you think would have pleased Jesus the most?

Although Jesus' disciples had left everything to follow him, they still had little idea of what he wanted them to do. With this list of Beatitudes, Jesus began their initiation. His description of the person whom God blesses surely cut across the disciples' natural experience, as it does ours. We don't expect happiness to come from being poor, pure, or caught in the cross fire while making peace. Yet those who follow and obey Christ are more than happy—they are *blessed*. They are blessed because they have a hope and joy that isn't based on feeling or circumstance. Following Jesus means living by standards entirely different from public opinion. Rather than making us eminently popular and famous, it often means facing opposition and misunderstanding. Yet all of this makes us blessed.

- 6 In what ways is a person who lives out the Beatitudes blessed?
- 7 How can a person exhibit the Beatitudes in his/her life?

### Respond to the message

- 8 What natural tendencies go against the qualities that make a person blessed?
- 9 What qualities that Jesus mentioned in the Beatitudes are already a part of your life?
- 10 What Beatitudes are most lacking in your life?
- 11 What changes in your lifestyle or priorities would help you conform more to Jesus' description of the blessed person?

### **Resolve to take action**

- 12 Which Beatitude do you want to be more evident in your life?
- 13 In what ways can you live out this Beatitude?
- 14 This week, pray that God will help you to value what he values. Use the chart "Key Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount" to shape your prayer.

### **More for studying other themes in this section**

- A Describe what you imagine the scene was like when Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. What characteristics of good teaching did Jesus demonstrate ([5:1-48](#))? How do you think you would have reacted to the things Jesus said? What response do his words evoke in you now?
- B Describe in one sentence what Jesus taught about the following subjects ([5:1-48](#)): the identity of believers in the world; God's law; anger; lust; divorce; the dependability of our words; revenge; relating to enemies. Which of these areas are you challenged to change? What change do you need to make?
- C Why should Christ's disciples be happy when they are persecuted ([5:11, 12](#))? When are you persecuted? How can you be happy?
- D What was Jesus referring to when he said that salt and light have a powerful effect on the world ([5:13-16](#))? What can you do to have a significant effect on your part of the world?
- E What did Jesus mean by saying he wasn't abolishing the law but fulfilling it ([5:17-20](#))? What steps can we take to avoid misusing or misapplying God's Word?
- F What is your understanding of Jesus' statement "You are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" ([5:48](#))? How is God helping us toward this goal? What should you be doing in the process?
- G As Jesus moved from subject to subject in this sermon, what phrase did he keep repeating ([5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43](#))? What points did he emphasize with the repetition? Which of these points hits the area of greatest need in your life now? What can you do about this need?

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## **Lesson 4: Hidden in Plain Sight**

### **MATTHEW 6:1-34**

#### **Reflect on your life**

- 1 What is a show-off...

in sports? \_\_\_\_\_

at your place of work? \_\_\_\_\_

at church? \_\_\_\_\_

2 Why do people show off?

3 In what ways do Christians sometimes show off?

## Read the passage

Read [Matthew 6:1-34](#) and the following notes:

[6:2](#)  [6:3](#)  [6:3, 4](#)  [6:5, 6](#)  [6:16](#)  [6:17](#)  [6:20](#)  [6:22, 23](#)

[6:33](#)

4 What did Jesus tell his disciples to avoid ([6:1](#))?

5 Summarize in a sentence what Jesus taught about showing off in each of the following areas:

Giving ([6:2-4](#)) \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer ([6:5-8](#)) \_\_\_\_\_

Fasting ([6:16-18](#)) \_\_\_\_\_

## Realize the principle

6 Why would Jesus express so much concern about the outward actions of his followers?

Tax deductions, appreciation by others, power, prestige, obedience to Christ, care for others—the reasons for doing good are frequently mixed. The same action can be done with any number of different motives. Actions tend to be public, but motives are almost always hidden. Jesus expects his disciples to keep their motives focused on him. Christians cannot keep people from noticing what they do. The mistake Jesus wants us to avoid is doing good so others will notice. Asking ourselves one question will help keep our motives clear: Are we willing to obey Christ when no one else notices? Life will present us with many opportunities to test our answer.

7 Which of the three areas Jesus mentioned do you think a follower of his would find most difficult keeping private? Why?

8 In what situations is it good to let your acts of devotion be seen by others in order to set an example or be a Christian witness?

9 What role do motives play in where and how we choose to give, pray, or fast?

## Respond to the message

10 If you were taking classes in giving, praying, and fasting, what grade would you give yourself for the last three months? (Give a separate grade for actions and motives.)

Actions

Motives

Giving

\_\_\_\_\_

Praying

\_\_\_\_\_

Fasting \_\_\_\_\_

11 Which act of devotion do you find easiest to keep private?

12 Which act of devotion do you find the most difficult to keep private?

### **Resolve to take action**

13 What are some concrete steps you could take this week to make sure you are doing your acts of devotion with proper motives?

Giving \_\_\_\_\_

Praying \_\_\_\_\_

Fasting \_\_\_\_\_

14 As a part of each day, ask Christ to help you have godly motives in all you do.

### **More for studying other themes in this section**

**A** What does Jesus' teaching about prayer have to say about praying in front of groups ([6:5-13](#))? In what ways can public prayers be made appropriate or inappropriate? How can you be sure to follow Christ's guidelines when you pray in front of others?

**B** If the Lord's Prayer is meant to be a model for our prayers, what specific areas ought we to keep in mind when we pray ([6:9-13](#))?

**C** When will God withhold forgiveness from us ([6:14, 15](#))? Whom have you not forgiven? How can you take a step toward forgiving this person?

**D** What is the difference between *planning* for tomorrow and *worrying* about tomorrow ([6:25-34](#))? For what do you need to plan? What aspects of the future do you need to entrust to God?

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## **Lesson 5: Rock Solid**

### **MATTHEW 7:1-29**

#### **Reflect on your life**

1 What's the worst storm you've ever been in?

2 What's scary about storms?

#### **Read the passage**

Read [Matthew 7:1-29](#) and the following notes:

□ [7:21](#) □ [7:21-23](#) □ [7:22](#) □ [7:24](#) □ [7:26](#) □ [7:29](#)

**3** Who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven ([7:21-23](#))?

**4** What is the main difference between the wise and foolish builders ([7:24-27](#))?

**5** If Jesus and his teachings are like a rock, then what things are like sand?

## **Realize the principle**

**6** Why is a good foundation so crucial for weathering storms?

Jesus told his disciples that choosing whether or not to follow his instructions was much like choosing where to build a house. A life of submission to Christ and his teaching is like a house built on a solid foundation, able to withstand the storms of life. A life built on anything apart from God's Word is like a house built on sand, completely unable to withstand trials. In giving us his Word, Jesus offers us a solid foundation on which to build our life. What are you building your life on?

**7** What is so attractive about building a life on a foundation of sand?

**8** What are some of the hazards of ignoring God's instructions?

**9** What does it take to build a life on solid rock?

## **Respond to the message**

**10** Why do people ignore God's instructions?

**11** How can we avoid the mistake of the foolish builder?

**12** How does it feel to know that you are responsible to obey everything Jesus taught?

**13** If you could ask Jesus to clarify one expectation he has for your life, what would that be?

## **Resolve to take action**

**14** Skim through the Sermon on the Mount, beginning at [Matthew 5:1](#). For what areas of your life do these instructions provide a solid foundation?

**15** What can you do this week to build your life on Christ?

## **More for studying other themes in this section**

**A** What is the difference between judging and thinking critically ([7:1-6](#))? How can we avoid judging without being naive or blind to the facts? About whom is it difficult for you to be objective? What can you do to be fair in your assessment of this person?

**B** What are the "pearls" we should not share with people who won't listen to God's message ([7:6](#))? How can we practice discernment in what we say to others about God?

**C** Why is it good to do for others what you would like them to do for you ([7:12](#))? What is golden about the Golden Rule? Toward whom do you need to practice the Golden Rule more consistently?

**D** The crowds were amazed at Jesus' teachings ([7:28, 29](#)). What impresses you about Jesus' teachings? How do his teachings affect your attitudes and actions?

## Lesson 6: Full Price

### [MATTHEW 8:1-10:42](#)

#### Reflect on your life

- 1 What items do people commonly buy with coupons or try to get at a discount?
- 2 When are people willing to pay full price for something?

#### Read the passage

Read [Matthew 8:1-10:42](#), the chart "Counting the Cost of Following Christ," and the following notes:

- [8:19, 20](#)  [8:21, 22](#)  [10:17, 18](#)  [10:19, 20](#)  [10:22](#)  [10:23](#)  
 [10:25](#)  [10:29-31](#)  [10:34](#)  [10:34-39](#)  [10:37](#)  [10:38](#)  [10:39](#)

- 3 What costs might a person have to pay to follow Jesus ([8:18-22](#); [10:17-42](#))?
- 4 Why might these costs involve opposition or conflict ([10:17-39](#))?

#### Realize the principle

- 5 How was the crowd's understanding of Christ still quite naive ([8:18-22](#))?

Many people wanted to follow Jesus, but many of them didn't want to pay the price. That's why Jesus challenged those who wanted to follow him to count the cost, because following him would involve living with discomfort, self-sacrifice, and even rejection. Jesus meets each of us with the call "Follow me." His request is simple and direct. But following Jesus is not like joining a wholesale club. He requires more commitment from us than that. He wants us to have him at the very center of our life, submitting all our other values, relationships, and belongings to his authority. We must count these costs before saying we want to follow him.

- 6 What did it cost the disciples to follow Christ?
- 7 What made it worth the price?

#### Respond to the message

- 8 What might it cost a person to follow Jesus today?
- 9 What costs keep people from following Christ?
- 10 What costs have you had to pay to follow Christ?
- 11 What costs have you been unwilling to pay in following Christ?
- 12 How might your plans for the future change if you became willing to pay any price to follow Christ?

#### Resolve to take action

**13** The next time you have to pay a price for doing what God desires of you, what do you want to remember?

### **More for studying other themes in this section**

**A** Why did Jesus tell the paralyzed man that he was forgiven before he healed the man's physical condition ([9:2-8](#))? What does Jesus want to heal most in every person? How can Christians reflect that concern in the way they carry out God's work in the world?

**B** Where did Jesus go that caused the religious leaders to question his actions ([9:10, 11](#))? Why did Jesus go there ([9:12, 13](#))? Where and to whom can you go in following Jesus' example?

**C** Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast ([9:14-17](#))? What are some good reasons for fasting? How could you use fasting as a spiritual discipline?

**D** What impossible situation did Jesus use his power to change ([9:18-26](#))?

Why did he step in to do something? With what impossible situation can you ask Jesus to help you?

**E** What is one need for which God specifically asks us to pray ([9:36-38](#))? How can you fulfill this request in your own times of prayer?

**F** What special traveling instructions did Jesus give his disciples when he sent them out to perform miracles in his name ([10:1-15](#))? What is timeless about these instructions? What areas of your life do his instructions affect?

**G** What did Jesus mean when he said, "If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give it up for me, you will find it" ([10:39](#))? When we decide to follow Christ, what do we lose? What do we find? How can you remember that the benefits of your faith outweigh the sacrifices Christ asks you to make?

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## **Lesson 7: Soiled Again**

### **[MATTHEW 11:1-13:58](#)**

#### **Reflect on your life**

**1** What is the most successful gardening experience you've ever had?

**2** What enabled your garden to do so well?

#### **Read the passage**

Read [Matthew 11:1-13:58](#) and the following notes:

□ [13:2, 3](#) □ [13:8](#) □ [13:9](#) □ [13:10](#) □ [13:22](#) □ [13:23](#)

**3** In the parable of the four soils, what happened to the seed the farmer planted ([13:4-8](#))?

**4** Why did only some of the seed produce a crop?

**5** What four common responses do people have to God's Word ([13:19-23](#))?

**6** Why does God's Word make a lasting difference in the lives of some people but not in the lives of others?

## Realize the principle

The people who heard Jesus speak responded to his message in many different ways. Some scoffed. Some followed him as long as it was easy. Some, like Judas, followed for a little while but then were lured away by the concerns of this world. And some followed till the end. These four basic actions cover the range of response God's Word has always received. There are many forces working against a person's full commitment to God's Word: The Devil, shallow conviction, worry, and money can all lure us away from following God's truth. Our challenge is to understand God's Word and put it into practice in our life.

7 We know that the gospel is true. So why doesn't everyone respond to it positively?

8 What steps can a person take to be like the good soil in receiving God's message?

9 How could a person who is like one of the first three kinds of soil become like the good soil?

## Respond to the message

10 What can we do to stop the Devil from snatching away God's message before it takes root in a person's heart?

11 What kinds of trouble or persecution test the strength of a Christian's conviction?

12 What worries in this life can choke out faith in Christ?

13 What practical steps can you take to ensure that God's message takes root in your life?

## Resolve to take action

14 What troubles or worries have threatened your receptiveness to God recently?

15 What biblical truth or promise do you need to remember during times of uncertainty?

16 As you think of people who are close to you, visualize their lives as different kinds of soil. For whom will you pray? (Ask God to do whatever is necessary to plow up their field into good soil.)

## More for studying other themes in this section

A What was John the Baptist's relationship to Jesus ([11:1-19](#))? What prompted him to send his disciples to ask Jesus a question? What is your relationship to Jesus? What would you like to ask him?

B How did John prepare the way for others to hear about Jesus ([11:7-15](#))? How can you prepare the way for your friends, coworkers, and neighbors to hear about Jesus?

C How did insensitivity to God's message hurt the people of Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum ([11:20-24](#))? How can you be sure to maintain your sensitivity to God's Word?

D In what way are those who are childlike wiser than some who are highly educated ([11:25, 26](#))? How can you become wise like a child?

E From where does Jesus' authority come ([11:27](#))? How does his authority affect your life?

F From what burden or burdens does Jesus free us ([11:28-30](#))? What makes Jesus' burden light by comparison? What burden do you carry that Jesus could lighten for you?

G What arguments did Jesus use to refute the accusation that his disciples were violating the Sabbath ([12:1-8](#))? How can we make sure we don't put rules ahead of people?

H With whom did Jesus interact as he traveled ([12:1-50](#))? How did Jesus respond to each one? Whom have you met over the last six months? How can you present Christ in a unique way to each one?

- I** How did Jesus anger the Pharisees ([12:9-14](#))? What did they want to do to him? Why might people get angry at someone doing good? What does this reaction help you keep in mind?
- J** What can people tell about us by the language we use ([12:33-37](#))? What does your choice of words say about you and the changes you need to make in your life?
- K** Who is Jesus' real family ([12:46-50](#))? Whom does this include among the people you know? In what way does Christ draw you together?
- L** How did the hardness of people's hearts affect the way Jesus taught ([13:13-15](#))? What can we do to avoid becoming hardened to God's Word?
- M** What hindered the people of Jesus' hometown from accepting his identity ([13:53-58](#))? What keeps people from accepting Christ today? What can we do to remove these barriers?

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## Lesson 8: Awesome Power

### [MATTHEW 14:1-15:39](#)

#### Reflect on your life

- 1 What kinds of power do you see displayed in society?
- 2 What kind of power do you need for daily living?

#### Read the passage

Read [Matthew 14:1-15:39](#), the maps "Jesus Walks on the Sea" and "Ministry in Phoenicia," and the following notes:

- [14:14](#)  [14:19-21](#)  [14:21](#)  [14:28](#)  [14:30, 31](#)  [14:35, 36](#)
- [14:36](#)  [15:23](#)  [15:24](#)  [15:29-31](#)  [15:32ff](#)  [15:33](#)

- 3 Fill in this chart about the five miracles recorded in [Matthew 14-15](#):

What was the miracle? Over what did Jesus demonstrate power?

[14:13-21](#)

\_\_\_\_\_

[14:22-32](#)

\_\_\_\_\_

[15:21-28](#)

\_\_\_\_\_

[15:29-31](#)

[15:32-39](#)

4 What often moved Jesus to perform miracles ([14:14](#); [15:28](#), [32](#))?

### Realize the principle

5 What did the people whom Jesus helped learn about him?

6 What do these miracles show that Jesus can do for us?

The disciples saw Jesus perform many miracles. In the events of this passage alone, they witnessed five. Among other things, they learned of Jesus' power through these miracles. He showed that he was ready and able to provide for them ([14:13-21](#); [15:32-39](#)), help them through difficult circumstances ([14:22-32](#)), free them from demonic forces ([15:21-28](#)), and heal them ([15:29-31](#)). Because Jesus lives and is God, his power is available to us today, too. God is able and willing to care for us with his mighty power!

7 Why might Jesus not use his power to heal or rescue us?

### Respond to the message

8 What assurance do we have that God will...

provide for us? \_\_\_\_\_

help us through difficult circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_

protect us? \_\_\_\_\_

heal us? \_\_\_\_\_

9 Over what does Jesus have power today?

10 Why do people often lack confidence in God's ability?

11 How can we have faith in God's ability to help us without having unrealistic expectations?

12 If you had been with the disciples in the boat the night Jesus walked on water, might you have joined Peter and gone over the side, or would you most likely have waited in the boat with the others? Explain.

13 For what situations do you need to ask Christ for help?

### Resolve to take action

14 How can you pray differently this week, demonstrating faith in God and his power?

15 What immediate worry or concern can you entrust to God's care?

### More for studying other themes in this section

A Why did Jesus retreat to a remote area ([14:13](#))? When is it helpful for you to retreat for private prayer and reflection?

- B** What do you think the crowds talked about after Jesus miraculously fed them ([14:19-21](#); [15:36-38](#))? How do people respond today when they are the recipients of God's goodness? What can you do to show that you are grateful?
- C** How did the people of Jesus' day avoid the responsibility of caring for their parents ([15:3-6](#))? What are your responsibilities toward your parents and family? What often gets in the way of fulfilling your responsibilities to these people? How can you serve them better?
- D** What is important about a person's inner condition ([15:16-20](#))? How can you nurture this part of your life?
- E** Why did Jesus first refuse to help the Canaanite woman ([15:24-26](#))? Why did he then help her ([15:27, 28](#))? What does this tell you about how you should pray?

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## Lesson 9: Just Do It

### [MATTHEW 16:1-18:35](#)

#### Reflect on your life

- 1 Who are the two or three best teachers you ever had?
- 2 What made each person a great teacher?

#### Read the passage

Read [Matthew 16:1-18:35](#) and the following notes:

- [16:13-17](#)  [16:18](#)  [16:20](#)  [16:21](#)  [16:22](#)  [16:26](#)  [17:5](#)
- [17:9](#)  [17:22, 23](#)

- 3 Who is Jesus ([16:13-20](#))?
- 4 What difficulties did the disciples have with Jesus' true identity ([16:5-12](#), [21, 22](#); [17:4-8](#))?
- 5 How was Jesus' transfiguration an important part of the disciples' training ([17:1-13](#))?

#### Realize the principle

The disciples were first attracted to Jesus by his teaching. Even today many people admire Jesus as a teacher but reject the idea that he is God. But there are two big problems with believing that Jesus is merely a great teacher. The first is that if we truly believe Jesus is a great teacher, we would follow his teachings. In reality, most people who call Jesus great do very little to follow what he said. The second problem is that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. Could he qualify as a great teacher if he were not who he claimed to be? So to say he was a great man yet not the Son of God doesn't make sense. Who do you say Jesus is? As Jesus made clear to his disciples, admiring him but not submitting to him is the same as not recognizing his true identity.

- 6 What difference does a person's belief about Jesus' identity make in his/her life?

#### Respond to the message

- 7 Who do people often say Jesus is today?

**8** Who do you say Jesus is?

**9** How has your understanding of Jesus' identity changed over time?

**10** At what times do you struggle with Jesus' authority over your life?

**11** In what areas and situations do you need to submit more to Christ's authority?

### **Resolve to take action**

**12** What area of your life will you submit more to the authority of Christ this week?

**13** What does Christ want you to do in this area that you are not doing?

**14** What will be your first step in submitting to Christ?

### **More for studying other themes in this section**

**A** Why wouldn't Jesus give some kind of sign to the people who were hounding him for evidence supporting his divine claims ([16:4](#))? What kind of signs do people often demand from God today? What evidence do they already have? What can you say to people who want God to prove his existence with a sign?

**B** How is yeast like wrong ideas and teaching ([16:6](#), [11](#), [12](#))? What false teaching do we need to beware of today?

**C** What does it mean to deny ourselves and follow Christ ([16:24-28](#))? What must we deny to follow Christ? What "cross" must we take up? What changes has following Christ brought to your life? What have you lost and gained?

**D** What did the disciples try to do in their own strength ([17:14-21](#))? What do we often try to do in our own strength today? How can we exercise faith in these areas of our life?

**E** What kind of tax did Peter pay for himself and Jesus ([17:24-27](#))? In this instance, why did Jesus have them pay it? What did Jesus teach by his example?

**F** Why is it important not to tempt others to sin ([18:7-9](#))? What steps can you take to avoid tempting others?

**G** What does it mean to welcome a little child on Christ's behalf ([18:5](#))? With what children do you regularly come in contact? How could you welcome them in Christ's name?

**H** How do we know children are important to God ([18:10-14](#))? In what ways do adults sometimes "despise" children? How can we be sure to treat children as God values them?

**I** How are we to respond when someone sins against us ([18:15-17](#))? Who has wronged you? What could you do or say to this person that would help you respond as God wants you to?

**J** In the parable of the unforgiving debtor ([18:21-35](#)), why should the wicked servant have forgiven his borrower? Of what debt has God forgiven you? How does this compare to the debts owed you? How will you let Christ work in your life so that you can forgive those who have offended you?

Life Application Bible Studies.

## **Lesson 10: Inside and Out**

**[MATTHEW 19:1-23:39](#)**

## Reflect on your life

- 1 What kind of image does a typical politician try to project in running for office?
- 2 How have you found this image to be different from what the person is really like?

## Read the passage

Read [Matthew 19:1-23:39](#), the chart "The Seven Woes," and the following notes:

- [21:30](#) □ [21:33ff](#) □ [23:2, 3](#) □ [23:5](#) □ [23:5-7](#) □ [23:13, 14](#) □ [23:15](#)
- [23:23, 24](#) □ [23:24](#) □ [23:25-28](#) □ [23:34-36](#)

- 3 What was hypocritical about the religious leaders ([21:23-27](#), [33-46](#); [22:15-22](#); [23:1-36](#))?
- 4 What did Jesus warn people about concerning the religious leaders ([23:1-12](#))?
- 5 Why did Jesus speak so harshly to the religious leaders ([23:13-36](#))?
- 6 What hope did Jesus offer to those who were guilty of religious hypocrisy ([19:20, 21](#), [25, 26](#); [20:25-28](#); [21:28-32](#); [22:29](#), [36-40](#))?

## Realize the principle

7 How did the Pharisees appear outwardly?

8 What were the Pharisees like inwardly?

The Pharisees and experts in the law were hypocrites. While they knew a lot, they did not do what they taught. Jesus did not criticize them for what they taught but for how they lived. While believing in mercy, they did not practice it. While believing in devotion to God, they were actually devoted to fame and public praise. While believing in the law, they actually worked harder at keeping their traditions, often at the expense of what God really wanted. Perhaps these areas were blind spots for them; perhaps they were deliberate inconsistencies. In any case, we must beware of the human tendency to say one thing and do another. It takes conscious thought and effort to make sure we live according to the ideals we claim to uphold.

9 Why do people act hypocritically?

10 What is the cure for hypocrisy?

## Respond to the message

11 Which of the hypocrisies Jesus pointed out do you find to be an ongoing struggle in your own life (see the chart "The Seven Woes")?

12 What inconsistencies have you found between your faith and your lifestyle?

13 How might Jesus challenge you to change?

## Resolve to take action

14 In what area of your life do you need more consistency between what you project on the outside and what you are on the inside?

15 How can you become more genuine?

## More for studying other themes in this section

- A** What issues concerning marriage and divorce did Jesus clarify ([19:3-12](#))? How do Jesus' words clash with the view most people have of marriage today? What can you do to preserve the integrity of marriage?
- B** In what way is it good to be like a child ([19:13-15](#))? What areas of your life does this affect? What makes it difficult to be childlike toward God? How can you be more childlike in your faith?
- C** What basic human traits did the disciples display in rebuking the parents who brought their children to Jesus ([19:13-15](#))? What conflicting priorities did this bring out? How did Jesus challenge his disciples to rethink their priorities? How can we bring our attitude toward children more in line with Jesus' view of them?
- D** In what ways can money draw us away from God ([19:23-26](#))? What can you do to keep money from becoming more important to you than God?
- E** What important spiritual principle about grace did Jesus illustrate in his parable of the vineyard workers ([20:1-16](#))? How has God shown his grace to you? How might you show your gratitude to him?
- F** What interpersonal conflict arose when James and John's mother asked Jesus to give her sons special treatment ([20:20-28](#))? Why do people expect special treatment? What is a better outlook to have?
- G** How did Jesus show his compassion toward the blind men on the way out of Jericho ([20:29-34](#))? What means do you have for showing compassion?
- H** Who cheered Jesus at the Triumphal Entry ([21:9-11](#))? What did many of those people say about him later ([27:15-26](#))? Why did they change their minds? In what ways is our loyalty to Christ fickle? How can we strengthen our devotion to him?
- I** What did Jesus show and teach about prayer ([21:18-22](#))? How could you improve your prayer habits? When will you begin to make this change?
- J** In the parable of the wedding dinner ([22:1-14](#)), what response did the king seek from his guests? What holds people back from accepting God's invitation? Why does this parable offer us hope?

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## Lesson 11: It's the Least I Could Do

### [MATTHEW 24:1-25:46](#)

#### Reflect on your life

- 1** Imagine losing your job and not being able to find another one—no matter how hard you try—for more than two years. How might this affect you and your family?
- 2** How would you feel?
- Read [Matthew 24:1-25:46](#) and the following notes:
- [24:3ff](#) □ [25:1ff](#) □ [25:29, 30](#) □ [25:31-46](#) □ [25:32](#) □ [25:34-40](#)
- [25:40](#)
- 3** What do those who know God do for needy, weak, and helpless people ([25:35, 36](#))?
- 4** How will God reward his people ([25:34, 46](#))?
- 5** In [Matthew 24-25](#), Jesus warned his followers to be ready for his return. In what different ways did he want his disciples to be watchful ([24:4, 42, 43; 25:13](#))?

## Realize the principle

6 What will matter most when we stand before God at the Last Judgment?

Jesus' disciples knew they were following Israel's king. Though they didn't fully understand yet that Jesus would have to die and be raised to life, they expected him eventually to take his throne. How could they best serve their King? Through a parable, Jesus answered this question: by serving others. Of course, the weight of God's judgment will not rest on our acts of generosity to others, but the absence of generosity certainly shows a lack of understanding Jesus. The only way to be sure we are giving our King proper respect is to treat all people as if they were our King. Opportunities to serve hungry people, thirsty people, strangers, poor people, sick people, and prisoners are opportunities to serve Jesus, our King.

## Respond to the message

7 Who are the needy people in the world?

8 Who are the people with needs in your community?

9 Who are the needy people in your extended family?

10 What opportunities do you have to serve people with special needs?

## Resolve to take action

11 Which needy people can you help this week?

12 When and how will you help them?

## More for studying other themes in this section

A What will make people think Christ has returned ([24:4-8](#))? Why will people believe impostors' claims to be the returning Messiah? What is the best way to avoid being deceived by such impostors?

B What is one important milestone that must be passed before Christ returns ([24:14](#))? What is your part in reaching this milestone?

C What errors did the following people make: the wicked servant ([24:48, 49](#)); the foolish bridesmaids ([25:3](#)); the lazy servant ([25:24-27](#))? What qualities mark the life of a pleasing servant?

D Why did the man in Jesus' parable of the loaned money give different amounts of gold to each of his servants ([25:14-30](#))? What has God entrusted to you? How can you invest it?

E What are we responsible to do with what God has given us ([25:20-23](#))? If Christ came for the accounting today, how anxious would you be about meeting him? What changes would make you more ready for his return?

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## Lesson 12: A Great Value

**[MATTHEW 26:1-27:14](#)**

Reflect on your life

- 1 What objects of value do you see around you?
- 2 What object has the least value?
- 3 How do people decide what is valuable to them and what isn't?

### Read the passage

Read [Matthew 26:1-27:14](#), Lazarus's sister Mary's Profile, and the following notes:

- [26:6-13](#) □ [26:7](#) □ [26:8](#) □ [26:11](#) □ [26:14, 15](#) □ [26:15](#) □ [26:35](#)
- [26:48](#) □ [26:56](#) □ [26:69ff](#) □ [26:72-74](#) □ [27:5](#)

- 4 What was important to Lazarus's sister Mary ([26:6-13](#))?
- 5 What was important to Judas ([26:14-16](#), [20-25](#), [47-50](#))?
- 6 What was important to Peter ([26:31-54](#), [69-75](#))?

### Realize the principle

7 How do our values affect the way we live?

Mary, Judas, and Peter were all disciples of Jesus. Yet from their actions, we can tell that each had different values. Mary valued Jesus above all else, so she thought nothing of using expensive perfume to honor him. Judas loved money, so he thought nothing of betraying the Son of God to a band of murderers. And Peter, otherwise loyal, cared very much about his reputation, which caused him to deny his association with Jesus when pressed to identify with him. Their experience is just like ours. From time to time we will be forced to choose between God and things or God and our reputation. We will hold on to the one we value most and sacrifice the other. Mary's example is the one we should follow.

- 8 Why is it difficult to let go of our possessions and reputation to serve God?
- 9 Why does God deserve to be valued above all else?

### Respond to the message

- 10 What objects of value do people commonly hold on to?
- 11 In what way do you place a higher value on things and reputation than on God...

at home? \_\_\_\_\_

at work? \_\_\_\_\_

at church? \_\_\_\_\_

in your private life? \_\_\_\_\_

- 12 What stands between you and true devotion to Christ?

### Resolve to take action

- 13 What can you do this week to demonstrate your devotion to God?
- 14 What will help you remember to cling to God above all else each day?

### More for studying other themes in this section

- A What motivated Judas to betray Jesus ([26:14-16](#))? What weakness tends to drag you down? What can you do to compensate for or overcome this weakness?
- B Where does the practice of celebrating Communion come from ([26:26-29](#))? What should a Christian do to prepare for Communion? How can you celebrate Communion so that it affects your daily life?
- C What failure did Peter think he would avoid ([26:31-35](#))? What does this tell us about our own weaknesses? How can we lean on God's grace in times of weakness?
- D How does the experience of prayer between Jesus and the disciples in the garden compare to your own practice of prayer ([26:36-46](#))?
- E Why did Jesus not defend himself at his various trials ([26:62, 63](#); [27:12-14](#))? In what way did his deeds speak for him? In what situations should you let your deeds speak for you?

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## Lesson 13: Alive!

### MATTHEW 27:15-28:20

#### Reflect on your life

- 1 What is one of your favorite Easter traditions?
- 2 What is one interesting or unusual Easter custom that you celebrate with your family?

#### Read the passage

Read [Matthew 27:15-28:20](#) and the following notes:

- [27:51](#)  [27:52, 53](#)  [27:64](#)  [27:66](#)  [28:2](#)  [28:5-7](#)  [28:6](#)  
 [28:11-15](#)  [28:18](#)  [28:18-20](#)  [28:20](#)

- 3 Where were Jesus' disciples during his resurrection ([28:8-11](#))?
- 4 How did Jesus' followers respond when they realized that he had risen from the dead ([28:16, 17](#))?
- 5 Why did the religious leaders make up a story to explain away the Resurrection ([28:11-15](#))?
- 6 How did the Resurrection change the disciples' lives ([28:18-20](#))?

#### Realize the principle

- 7 Note below the three parts of Jesus' final words to his disciples in [Matthew 28:18-20](#). What is the importance of each section?

Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Command: \_\_\_\_\_

Promise: \_\_\_\_\_

When Jesus was arrested, his disciples fled. They didn't show their faces in public again until after Jesus had risen and appeared to Mary, Mary Magdalene, and others. Once these cowardly men fully realized who Jesus was and

what he had done, they were changed forever. Jesus' resurrection did not merely intrigue them or become a footnote in history—it was the turning point for the disciples and for us. With the Resurrection, Jesus sealed our forgiveness, brought us power for living, and gave us a new commission. Now it's our turn to give back to him all we can.

**8** Why is the resurrection of Christ important?

### **Respond to the message**

**9** How does the fact that Jesus is alive affect your life?

**10** What would be an appropriate way to thank Jesus for taking away your sins?

**11** Jesus is alive today. What implications does this have for...

the way you pray? \_\_\_\_\_

your confidence in God? \_\_\_\_\_

your worries? \_\_\_\_\_

your purpose in life? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Resolve to take action**

**12** This week make it your goal to talk to the living Jesus each day. For what will you thank him?

**13** For what will you ask his forgiveness?

**14** What requests will you bring to him?

**15** For what will you praise him?

### **More for studying other themes in this section**

**A** Who stirred up the crowd against Jesus ([27:11-26](#))? Why is religion such an emotional topic? What can we do to minimize people's defensiveness about their religious views? With whom can you take these steps in talking about Jesus?

**B** What were Jesus' last words on the cross ([27:45-50](#))? Why were those words significant? What do those words reveal about what Christ accomplished for you on the cross? How can you express your thanks?

**C** Throughout these last events of Christ's life, which person(s) would you like to have been beside (Judas, Peter, James, John, other disciples, Mary, Mary Magdalene, chief priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, elders, Pilate, Simon from Cyrene, Roman soldiers, thieves on the cross)? Why?

**D** What Christian hymn about the Crucifixion is most meaningful to you? Why?

**E** What Christian hymn about the Resurrection is most meaningful to you? Why?

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