



# STUDY GUIDE



October 30 -  
December 18

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## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5







# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## A STUDY

*on the Gospel of Matthew 5*

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**October 30 - December 18**

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Written by TJ Johnson

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# STUDY GUIDE



October 30

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## THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Matthew 5:1-12





# The Pursuit of Happiness

Matthew 5:1-12

1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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# The Pursuit of Happiness

This week we begin an eight-week study through the Sermon on the Mount. It is my hope that our time in the text not only encourages and challenges each of us, but that it equips us to rightly divide the Word of truth. In other words, by the time we finish the series you will be able to read, understand, interpret, and apply other similar passages of Scripture. Here are a few things to keep in mind as we work our way through the text.

1. Context: This sermon is found in the Gospel of Matthew.

The Gospel as a whole is written to convince us that Jesus is King (Kingdom of Heaven is mentioned 32 times in the book). Whatever else we learn from the sermon, we must not forget that it is teaching us something about Jesus. If we come away with a good moral code but no Jesus, we have missed the point of the sermon. If we come away with the key to a happy life but no Jesus, we have again missed the point of the sermon. This sermon is a motif reminding us of God (Israel's King) meeting with Moses on the Mount giving the law to God's people. That whole encounter was a reminder that, I will be your God and you will be my people! Jesus, the King, has ascended the mountain, sat on the throne, opened His mouth and ruled (taught) His people.

The Gospel of Matthew is divided into five sections. Each section has a narrative of what Jesus DID and a teaching on what Jesus SAID. Each section is divided by a similar phrase: And when Jesus had finished these sayings (instructions, parables).

Note the outline of the book:

Matthew 1-2 Intro: The King has come.

Matthew 3:1-7:28 Kingdom Disciples

Matthew 8:1-11:1 Kingdom Mission

Matthew 11:2-13:53 Kingdom Response

Matthew 14:1-19:1 Kingdom Community (Church)

Matthew 19:3-26:1 Kingdom Inauguration (Return/Judgment/Rewards)

Matthew 26:2-28:20 Conclusion: The King has died, the King has risen from the dead, and the King will come again.



# The Pursuit of Happiness

The Sermon on the Mount is found in the first main section, the section on discipleship. So, it answers the question, what does a disciple of Jesus look like. Jesus' sermon reminds us that there is no such thing as, "Cheap Grace." When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. God's people are to live under God's rule...no exceptions!

2. Content: We must be very careful how we interpret the text.

Some have tried to interpret the text in a liberal way, as some unrealistic ideal that Jesus does not intend for us to strive toward. No one can be perfect; therefore, Jesus didn't intend for us to try to live out the demands of the sermon. The point is to show us that a holy life is impossible and for us to fall on the grace and mercy of God. In some ways this is true...but it would be going too far to say that Jesus did not expect us to, "Make every effort to be holy." A liberal interpretation does not take the demands of Jesus seriously. This is to misinterpret the text.

Others have tried to interpret the text in a legalistic way. They take everything Jesus said in the text literal. As you read the text, I hope you understand the problem with this. In fact, if we took EVERYTHING literal none of us would be able to even read this sermon series introduction, for all of us would have already torn out and thrown away our eyes that have caused us to sin. The over-literal reading of this sermon has led to monasticism, asceticism, mendicantism, and the like. This too is to misinterpret the text.

Still others have tried to interpret the text as all law and no grace. In this approach people believe that Jesus is laying out the requirement for salvation. Salvation is not by grace through faith, but by perfectly obeying all the commands from the text. We are given mercy by God because we show mercy. We are forgiven by God because we have forgiven others. But we must not forget that these people hearing the sermon are already called disciples. Like Israel in Exodus, the law was given AFTER their deliverance from slavery. We do not obey the law in order to get God to love us; we obey the law because God has already loved us. His love is motivation for our obedience, not the other way around.

# The Pursuit of Happiness

3. Continuity. This is ONE sermon and therefore must be seen as such.

These three chapters have some of the most well-known and memorized passages of Scripture in the entire Bible. But far too often they have been hodgepodged together in our minds. There is no consideration of how the Lord's prayer connects to the Beatitudes or how the admonition against anxiety connects to the call to care for the needy. Even though we will take each section of this sermon separately each week (who wants to sit through an eight- hour sermon) we must never "lose sight of the forest for the trees." It would be ideal if after each week's gathering, we go home and reread Jesus' sermon and ask ourselves, "How does this fit into the whole?"

John Stott once wrote that the Sermon on the Mount is "probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed."

As we gather weekly to remember His words, may we understand and obey as we see and hear Jesus in every word!

In Him,

Pastor TJ





*Blessed are ....*

## Discussion Questions

1. Read the inclusion in Matthew 5:3 & 5:10. What is the Kingdom of Heaven and what are these Beatitudes specifically teaching us about that Kingdom?
2. Read Matthew 5:1-2. How would you describe the differences between “the crowds” and “his disciples” both in the text and today?
3. What is the significance of Jesus going “up on the mountain” to teach?  
(I can think of at least three things to discuss: better acoustics so more people could hear him, intentionally showing the people that Jesus is the one LIKE Moses whom they should listen to – see Deut. 18:15, and to separate those who have come to Jesus for entertainment as opposed to those who have come to worship).
4. What is the cost (demand) of discipleship and how can we make sure we have actually counted (considered) that cost? (See Luke 9:57-62, 14:27-33; Matt. 8:19-20, 10:34-38, 16:24)
5. Read Matthew 5:3. Define the word “blessed” (both a secular and Biblical meaning) and discuss the difference between what the world thinks will bring “blessing/happiness” and what Jesus is saying will bring blessing/happiness.



*Blessed are ....*

## Discussion Questions

6. Read Matthew 5:3-4 noting the verb tense of the second part of the verse. In what ways is the Kingdom blessing both present and future and why is this important to understand?
7. Read Matthew 5:3-10 listing each of the eight blessings. Do you think Jesus was intentional about the ordering of these blessings? Why or why not? (At least three things to discuss here: the blessings as a progression in which one leads to the next, the blessings as a unit as opposed to individual traits a disciple may possess some but not others, and the blessings as a movement from God to Neighbor, from heart to hands.)
8. Create a T-Graph contrasting the values of the Kingdom of Heaven with the values of the Kingdom of this world.
9. As you look over the T-Graph in which area(s) are you convicted to change through the power of the Spirit and what are some practical things you will do in order to grow a Kingdom mindset in that area(s)?





*Blessed are ....*

## Going Deeper on the eight Beatitudes

*This could be used as a supplement to your daily Bible reading, taking a Beatitude a day to meditate upon (doubling up on one day to finish in one week).*

### ***Spiritual Bankruptcy***

10. Read Matthew 5:3, Isaiah 66:2, Psalm 51:17, Rev. 3:17-18. In what ways and areas of our own lives are we most often tempted to be “rich in Spirit” and forget that we not enough and need God’s moment by moment grace and help?

### ***Repentance***

11. Read Matthew 5:4, Psalm 119:136, 2 Cor. 7:10, Jer. 9:1, Nehemiah 8:9-10, Matt. 23:37. How do we come to a place where mourning over sin comes naturally and quickly? (Asked negatively, what are the things that hinder us from mourning over sin)?

12. What are some sins in the world today that you mourn over and how can that mourning lead to action?



*Blessed are ....*

## Going Deeper on the eight Beatitudes

### ***Submission***

13. Read Matthew 5:5, Numbers 12:3, Matt. 11:28-30, 21:5. What are the things in your life that you (past or present) have trouble surrendering to God and how does meekness empower us to trust God?

14. In what ways do the meek presently inherit/enjoy the earth in ways the proud cannot (see Psalm 37:11, Prov. 3:34, James 4:10)? In what ways will the meek inherit the earth in the future?

### ***Sanctification***

15. Read Matthew 5:6, Ps. 27:4, 42:2, 63:1, 143:6, Isa. 55:1, John 6:35, 7:37, Rev. 21:6, 22:17. What is this righteousness that we are to hunger and thirst after (see Matt. 5:10-11 noting what Jesus replaces righteousness with in verse 11 and Matt. 6:33) and is it possible to grow a hunger for righteousness? If so, how?

16. What are some things we/the world might hunger after that actually prevents us from hungering for God?



*Blessed are ....*

## Going Deeper on the eight Beatitudes

### ***Compassion***

17. Read Matthew 5:7. What does mercy look like and is there anyone in your life you can show mercy to this week?

(Relationships such as: family, workplace, sg member, neighbor, etc.

Categories such as: forgive one who has hurt you, offering help to one who is struggling to accomplish the demands of school or work, spending time with the lonely, giving food, shelter, clothing to the needy, sharing the gospel to those who persecute you, etc.)

18. Discuss the mercy of God and ways you have personally received mercy from God?

### ***Integrity toward God and others***

Note: clean can either refer to forgiveness of sin or living a life of integrity and transparency toward God and others.

19. Read Matthew 5:8, Ps. 24:3-6, 1 Tim. 1:5, 1 Peter 1:22. In what ways are we tempted to be duplicitous toward others this week?

20. In what ways are we tempted to be duplicitous toward God this week?

21. How does purity of heart help us see God now?



*Blessed are ....*

## Going Deeper on the eight Beatitudes

### ***Reconciliation (Peacemaker)***

22. Read Matthew 5:9. What are some areas in your life (not necessarily involving you) where conflict exists and how can you go about being a peacemaker?

23. In what ways is God a peacemaker (give examples from the Old and New Testament) and how does this relate to the second half of verse 9?

### ***Peaceful Persecution***

24. Read Matthew 5:10-12. What kinds of persecution may Christians in China or around the world face today? Are you experiencing any types of persecution? (share and pray for one another)

25. How does this last Beatitude relate to the others since the others seem to be referring to something we do and this last one seems to be referring to something done to us?



*Blessed are ....*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





# STUDY GUIDE



November 06

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## JESUS, THE POWER OF OBEDIENCE

Matthew 5:17-20





# Jesus, The Power of Obedience

Matthew 5:17-20

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

~~~

# Jesus, The Power of Obedience

Before Jesus arrived, there was no one who could live a sinless life. The animal sacrifice was the temporary ritual until Jesus came to be the sacrifice for our sins. He came to earth and lived a sinless life to be our sacrifice, fulfilling the Law (Matthew 5:17). He came to be obedient to the Word of God and demonstrated the real meaning behind what it means to love and live out the Word of God even to death (Philippians 2:8).

Jesus promises a fulfilled life with power, deliverance, and freedom when we obey the Word of God. Those who hear, obey, and teach the Word of God to others are called great in the Kingdom of God - your home country!

In Him,

Rico Corporal



*To fulfil them*

## Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be obedient to God?
2. What does it mean that Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matthew 5:17)?
3. What are some consequences for not obeying the Word of God?
4. What are the benefits of obeying the Word of God? Give a testimony or examples of obeying the Word of God.
5. Read Philippians 2:8. How can a person get to the point where he/she will give up their life to obey the Word of God?
6. Read Matthew 13:1-9. Discuss how the Word of God is planted and how it grows.
7. How can a person prepare his/her heart to obey the Word of God?
8. Read Matthew 5:11-12. How would you talk to a person who is experiencing challenges because they are obeying God?



*To fulfil them*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# STUDY GUIDE



November 13

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## EVANGELISM

Matthew 5:13-16



# Evangelism

Matthew 5:13-16

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

~~~



# Evangelism

This week our study from the Sermon on the Mount is on Evangelism. And before we dive into this passage, it's important to see the context in which Jesus is making these statements. This passage comes right after Jesus' teaching of the Beatitudes, which can be seen as a progressive description of how we are to live as believers. In other words, it's about our identity.

So now, as Jesus continues this conversation, He is still talking about identity. When He talks about evangelism in this passage, He is not outlining a bunch of tasks that need to be done, but describing our identity in Christ, who we have been called to be, carriers of the Gospel.

Jesus uses two metaphors when describing our relationship with the world around us; He says we are salt and light. In today's study we will explore what Jesus means by these statements, and how we can make sure we are walking in our identity in Christ.

In Him,  
Brett Warren



*Salt and light*

## Discussion Questions

1. How does Matthew 5:5-12 (particularly v. 12) connect to Matthew 5:13-16?

*Note: Discuss two main areas:*

*A. Life in the Kingdom is public and not private (the Beatitudes must be lived before the world).*

*B. There are no excuses to refuse to witness, not even the most extreme situation of persecution (rejoice and be glad...rather than keep your mouth shut and your head low).*

2. Considering the main use of salt in ancient times, what does it mean practically to be “the salt of the earth”?

3. Read v. 12-13. Give examples of how the prophets (and others – judges, kings, etc.) functioned as salt of the earth.

*Note: The judges are probably the easiest to start with.*

4. What are some areas in our world that are decaying morally that you feel called to impact and how are you/will you go about making that change?

5. What are some ways believers lose their saltiness and how do we avoid this?

6. What do you think Jesus means by saying, “It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.”?



*Salt and light*

## Discussion Questions

7. Read Matthew 5:14-16, 4:12-17, John 1:4-9. What are some dangers of seeing ourselves as light without first acknowledging that Jesus is light?

*Note: A. Witnessing and obedience in our own strength. B. Giving glory to ourselves rather than Jesus. C. Pride and arrogance. Etc.*

8. Read Matthew 5:15. What is the “house” where your light currently shines and who is the “all” that sees your light? Take time as a group to pray for those people.

9. Read Matthew 5:16. Give examples of the “good works” that people observe in your life? Is there anything about your life you are convicted to change?

10. The contrast of light and darkness is to show how radically different Jesus’ followers should be from the world. In what ways has the church failed to look, think, and act differently from the culture around them?

11. Compare Matthew 5:16 to 6:1. How do we know when we are living (doing good deeds) for God’s glory rather than our own glory?



*Salt and light*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# STUDY GUIDE



November 20

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**ANGER**

Matthew 5:21-26



# Anger

Matthew 5:21-26

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

~~~



# Anger

Over the past few weeks, as we have studied Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, we have looked at the Character of the Kingdom (5:1-12), the Commission of the Kingdom (5:13-16) and the King of the Kingdom (5:17-20).

This week we begin a new section on the Ethics of the Kingdom (5:21-48). There are a few important things to note as we begin this section.

1. Notice that this section is bracketed by a demand for holy living:

Matthew 5:20 unless your righteousness exceeds...

Matthew 5:48 be perfect...

There is no cheap grace in God's Kingdom. Those who have truly been transformed by the cross of Christ will show evidence of a transformed life. Every country has a rule of laws its citizens are required to obey. God's Kingdom is no different. If we are to live as Kingdom citizens, we must take seriously Kingdom law. We are called to obey ALL THINGS.

2. Notice that each subsection in Matthew 5:21-48 begins with the phrase:

You have heard that it was said

That's a strange way to introduce a quotation from the Old Testament. When God is quoted it's usually prefaced by God has said, the Prophets have spoken, spoken by the prophets, this was to fulfill, or it is written.

The phrase "you have heard it said," is a marker indicating Jesus ISN'T quoting the law, but rather Jesus is addressing the rabbinical interpretation of the law. Specifically, Jesus is referencing the Talmud, a document consisting of 63 sections which contain the teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis concerning the Old Testament. It's basically a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament. The problem of the rabbinical teachings of the first century was twofold - legalism and liberalism.



# Anger

They were legalists in that they added extra commands to God's law and forced the people to abide by them. For example, God's law says, "remember the Sabbath," but HOW is one to remember the Sabbath? The Talmud says (NOT the Bible), throwing a toothpick into a fire on the Sabbath is considered a violation of the Sabbath, playing or even tuning an instrument on the Sabbath is a violation of the Sabbath, or travelling more than 960 meters on the Sabbath is a violation of the Sabbath. Jesus will address their legalism of the Law of God in this section of His sermon.

The Pharisees were also liberalists in that at times they so lowered the intent of the Law of God that righteousness meant nothing at all. For example, the Pharisees would say, the sixth commandment (v. 21-26) is ONLY referring to physically killing another person. Or the seventh commandment (v. 27-30) is only prohibiting one from the physical act of sex outside of marriage. If we're honest, if the commandments are only referring to physically taking another person's life in revenge or physically having sex with one who is not your spouse, then being holy isn't so difficult. Getting right with God is as easy as being sure to avoid certain outward acts. But God meant more than the avoidance of the outward act. The Pharisees had lowered the standards of God's law by reducing it to the act itself and ignoring the heart from which the act proceeds. Jesus will address their legalism in this section of His sermon.

# Anger

3. Notice that the phrase, “You have heard it said,” is always followed with the phrase: ..... But I say to you,

It’s important to realize that Jesus isn’t introducing a “new” law to the people. Rather, Jesus is REINTRODUCING the Law. All of the teachings of Jesus on anger, lust, revenge, honesty, and loving your enemies can be found in the Old Testament. Look no further than Leviticus and Deuteronomy. So, let’s be clear, Jesus is not saying the Old Testament is out of date or that the Old Testament laws need to be ignored or improved upon (See Matthew 5:17-19). Jesus’ teaching helps us go back to the true intent and purpose behind the laws of God.

4. Notice that Jesus’ illustrations cover parts of the Law but not ALL of the Law. Commandments six and seven are covered, but not Commandments four and five. Jesus references Leviticus 24:17-23 (Matthew 5:38), but not Leviticus 25:1-7. This section is not to be seen as the whole corpus of Kingdom law; we must read the Old and New Testament for that. Rather, this section is a case study of how to properly interpret God’s law. Jesus gives us a few examples of various laws and how to properly understand them as Kingdom Citizens. Once we see HOW Jesus interprets these laws, we have the interpretative skills to rightly handle the other laws we encounter in God’s Word.

# Anger

5. Notice that this section ends as a reminder of the intent of ALL of God's law.

Matthew 5:44-45

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

So often we get caught up in doing the law that we forget the intent of the law. The law, and the Christian life, can be summarized in one word. LOVE.

God is love (v. 45), therefore all of our thoughts, words, feelings, and deeds must be an expression of our love for God and for one another. If we do all of these good outward deeds but we do it without love for God and neighbor...we are but a clanging cymbal or a noisy gong.

This week we look at the sixth commandment: Do not murder. Most of us probably feel successful in the keeping of this law. Jesus reminds us that we have fallen far short of obedience to this law. But in so doing, He offers us hope to overcome sin.

In Him,  
Pastor TJ



*But I say to you*

## Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:21-22. Why does Jesus compare murder to anger? In what ways are they similar?
2. What are the common physical expressions of anger? Which do you struggle with most?
3. Read Leviticus 19:17. Why is it not enough to simply control our outward expressions of anger?
4. Read Matthew 5:22, Proverbs 18:21, and James 3:5-12. What are some ways words have been used to hurt you and heal you?
5. In what ways do you struggle to guard your tongue? This could include a repeated phrase, a specific person you use harsh language toward, or a particular form of insult (cursing, sarcasm, gaslighting, ethnic slurs, etc.).
6. Read Matthew 5:22 and James 3:11-12. Discuss why anger cannot be attributed to external circumstances and why we often try to blame our anger on external circumstances.
7. Read Matthew 5:22 and Psalm 14:1. What is contempt and how do we know when we have contempt for another person?



*But I say to you*

## Discussion Questions

8. How do we balance the warning against judging others with the commands to judge others?
9. In what ways does anger affect not just individuals but the church as a whole?
10. Read Matthew 5:23 and Matthew 18:15. Whose responsibility is it to initiate reconciliation and why?
11. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and 1 John 4:20. Why does Jesus tell His audience to FIRST be reconciled to a fellow human and THEN come and offer worship to God? What would that look like in our own lives today?
12. Read Matthew 5:25-26. What are the motivations for a quick reconciliation and what would cause us to put off quick reconciliation?
13. Read Matthew 5:24-25 noting, reconciled and come to terms. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? Take some time to fully explain both.
14. End by sharing a meaningful story to you of forgiveness or reconciliation as evidence of the power of the cross. This could include examples both inside and outside the Bible. For example, Shelby Houston, Brandt Jean, Elisabeth Elliot, Desmond Tutu, etc.





*But I say to you*

## Going Deeper

### Questions

#### On the topic of reconciliation

1. What if the other person doesn't apologize or isn't repentant?
2. What if I have forgiven this person multiple times and they keep committing the same offense?
3. What if they refuse to reconcile?
4. What if they are dead or I don't know how to get in contact with them?
5. When should reconciliation involve confrontation?
6. What if I don't know someone is angry with me?
7. Doesn't forgiveness enable abusers?



*But I say to you*

## Going Deeper

### Questions

**Steps to guard your heart, tongue, and judgments:**

1. Assume the best.
2. Clarify assumptions.
3. Reject rumor and slander.
4. Look to the cross as a reminder of your sin and forgiven state.
5. Remember your identity in Christ.
6. Refuse to replay anything in your mind that will stir up your bitterness.
7. Pray regularly for those who have offended you.



*But I say to you*

## Going Deeper

### Questions

#### Questions to ask to determine if reconciliation is needed:

1. Do you feel happy when you hear the other person is suffering or experiencing difficulty?
2. Does the other person do or say things that make you angry that you overlook when someone else does or say it?
3. Do you feel awkward or uncomfortable being in the same room with the other person?
4. Do you go out of your way to avoid the other person?
5. Do you look for opportunity to spread negative talk, even if true, about the other person?
6. Do you avoid talking to or texting the other person?
7. Do you have some type of emotional response when you hear the other person's name or voice or get a phone call or receive a text message from the other person?



*But I say to you*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# STUDY GUIDE



November 27

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**LUST**

Matthew 5:27-30



# Lust

Matthew 5: 27-30

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

~~~

# Lust

This week we continue our series through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as we look at what Jesus teaches us about the sexual ethics of His Kingdom.

The demands of the Kingdom were as radical and applicable then as they are now. Jesus reminds us that Holy Sexuality isn't just a physical matter but goes much deeper into what we think and feel. Adultery doesn't just take place in hotels, they also take place in our hearts.

Join us online this Sunday as we learn Biblical strategies to overcome sexual sin.

In Him,  
Pastor TJ





*For it is better*

## Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:27. In what ways does our culture celebrate the physical act of adultery? How does this impact our worldview concerning sexuality?
2. In what ways does the Bible show God's disapproval of the physical act of adultery? Why do you think God disapproves of it?
3. Read Matthew 5:28. Explain what "look with lustful intent" does and does not mean. Give appropriate examples of when one breaks this commandment.
4. Read Matthew 5:29-30 (see also Matt 6:22-23, 2 Peter 2:14, 1 John 2:16, Job 31:1). Why does Jesus refer to both the eye and the hand as a cause of adultery?

*Note: The eye would refer to the mental act of adultery and the hand would refer to the physical act of adultery. We are using God's good gifts for unholy purposes. At one level Jesus is reminding us that temptations come through what we see and what we touch.*

5. Make a list of the most common means of temptation to commit adultery (AKA what are the "eyes" and "hands" that cause you to commit physical or mental adultery)?

*Note: Examples include internet, computer, phone, advertisements, work environment, relationships/friend groups, etc. Going deeper you can explore things such as loneliness, disappointment, anger (toward spouse, toward God), etc.*



*For it is better*

## Discussion Questions

6. Note how Jesus says if “YOUR” eye causes “YOU” to sin. Discuss the danger of legalism that creates rule (outside the Bible) for holiness that is enforced on another.
7. Read Matthew 5:29-30. What does Jesus mean and what does He NOT mean by “tear it out” and “throw it away”? (note the usage of “right” eye and hand).
8. What are some practical ways you can “tear out” and “throw away” your temptations to commit physical and mental adultery?
9. Read Matthew 5:29-30 (see also Matt 3:10, 7:19, 13:42, 13:50, 18:8-9). Why does Jesus give the warning about hell?  
*Note: There is a word play here in the Greek. Jesus says throw away (βάλλω) your eye or you will be thrown away (βάλλω) into hell.*
10. What are the six strategies mentioned in the sermon and which has been most encouraging for you?



*For it is better*

## Discussion Questions

11. Give examples of people who have ran from sexual sin and what that might look like in your life.
12. What role does Satan play in our temptation of sexual sin and how do we reject the Devil?
13. Give practical examples of what it means to change directions (mentally, physically, emotionally, etc).
14. What are some reasons and ways people grow tired of fighting sexual sin and how/where can we find strength?
15. Discuss why (and how) our strategy against sexual sin MUST include delighting in Jesus?



*For it is better*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# STUDY GUIDE



December 04

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**DIVORCE**

Matthew 5:31-32



# Divorce

Matthew 5: 31-32

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

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# Divorce

This week we look at perhaps the most controversial section in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the topic of divorce and remarriage.

Due to the overwhelming number of divorces today, both inside and outside the church, it is very tempting to silently skip over this passage and pretend it isn't there. But Jesus chose to discuss it because MARRIAGE is valuable to God. Marriage is His idea. Marriage (the family) is God's plan for human flourishing. As marriage goes, so goes the culture. Therefore, we cannot simply cancel Jesus' word for mere convenience. To do so is to destroy the very thing God has given us to evoke change in our world.

What God has joined together,

Pastor TJ



*Marriage is His idea*

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think has contributed to the global declining marriage and rising divorce rates both inside and outside the church?
2. What are the most common causes of divorce today and how can Christians proactively avoid those pitfalls?
3. What are the different interpretations of Matthew 5:31-32 (the sermon listed four)? How do you interpret this text and why?
4. Read Matthew 5:31. What passage is Jesus referencing and what were the common first century interpretations of this passage?  
*NOTE: There were two main schools of thought around divorce centered on two rabbinical teachings, Hillel and Shammai. Shammai interpreted the text of Deut. XXIV in such a manner as to reach the conclusion that the husband could not divorce his wife except for cause, and that the cause must be sexual immorality (Git. ix. 10; Yer. Soṭah i. 1, 16b). The school of Hillel, however, held that the husband need not assign any reason whatever; that any act on her part which displeased him entitled him to give her a bill of divorce (Git. ib.).)*
5. Read Matthew 5:32 and Mark 10:11-12. Why does Jesus equate divorce and remarriage (and marriage to a divorced person) with adultery and what does that teach us about marriage?



*Marriage is His idea*

## Discussion Questions

6. In what ways do the other sections in the Sermon on the Mount protect against divorce? (The sermon explored Matt. 5:21-48, expand it to the whole of Matthew 5-7).
7. Read Matthew 5:32, 19:4-6; Mark 10:2-12, Malachi 2:13-16. In what way(s) is God involved in a marriage and what relevance does this have on divorce?
8. Read Matthew 5:32. How does divorce negatively affect the spouse?
9. Read Matthew 5:32, 18:6-7. In what ways does divorce negatively affect the initiator of divorce?
10. What impact does divorce have on children? (Think Biblically, what role does the family play in a child's life?)
11. What impact does divorce have on the church?
12. What impact does divorce have on culture at large? (Think Biblically, what role does the family play in creating and sustaining human flourishing?)
13. How can the church do a better job of supporting marriages and caring for those whose marriages have ended in divorce?
14. Share and celebrate with your small group God honoring marriages you have seen lived out.



*Marriage is His idea*

## Going Deeper

### Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:32, 19:4-6; Mark 10:2-12, Malachi 2:13-16. How would you define marriage?
2. Read Deut. 24 and Mark 10:5-6. Why did Moses give a concession for divorce and has that concession been revoked?
3. Matthew 19. Read the footnotes and discuss the textual variant found in this passage. Should proper exegesis use this passage to inform Jesus' other teachings on divorce or should the other teachings on divorce inform our understanding of this passage?
4. What if my spouse seeks divorce against my desire, how should I respond?
5. What Biblical admonition and encouragement would you say to a couple that is divorced and remarried while their spouse is still alive?
6. What is the difference between separation and divorce? When should Christians seek separation and what should this look like?
7. Does the Bible give permission for divorce in the case of abandonment, abuse, neglect, or any breaking of the vow (honor, cherish, love, etc.)? Defend your answer Biblically.



*Marriage is His idea*

## Going Deeper

### Questions

8. Discuss Jesus' faithfulness to His bride even when she commits adultery against Him. In what ways does the marriage analogy of Christ and the church influence how we view earthly marriage?
9. What would you say to a friend who has just told you they are considering a divorce?
10. If divorce has impacted your life directly, in what way are Jesus' words painful to hear? How are His words comforting?
11. Marriage isn't ultimate, so whether you're single or married, what steps can you take to guard the portrait of marriage as a reflection of God's divine love?



*Marriage is His idea*

## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





# STUDY GUIDE



December 11

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**HONESTY**

Matthew 5:33-37



# Honesty

Matthew 5: 33-37

33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

~~~

# Honesty

This week we continue our series in The Sermon on the Mount as we turn our attention to Radical Honesty. Here Jesus reminds us that Kingdom Citizens are called to live a life of integrity through what they say. If we say yes, we keep to our yes. If we say no, we keep to our no. Everything else is an act of evil and comes from the Evil One who is the Father of Lies, Satan.

May we be a people who honor God and transform the world with our words.

In Him,  
Pastor TJ



*Yes or No*

## Discussion Questions

1. Who do you know to be a person of great integrity and give an example of when they displayed radical honest at a high cost.

2. Read Matthew 5:33. What Old Testament verses is Jesus referencing and how were they misapplied in the first century?

*NOTE: See Leviticus 19:12, Num. 30:3, Deut 23:21-23, Zech 8:16-17, Matt 23:16-22 (how religious leaders would look for loopholes in their words by WHAT they swore by).*

3. What are some loopholes people use today to avoid honesty or break a promise?

4. What are examples from the OT where oaths (both good and bad) were taken?

5. Read Matthew 5:34. What are the different Christian positions on understanding Jesus' command on oath taking? Which position do you take and why (Give Biblical support)?

*NOTE: Some would say there is acceptable oath-taking (court, marriage, contracts, etc.). Others would say ALL oath-taking is unacceptable. How does the rest of the New Testament clarify Jesus' statement? Are there examples in the NT where Jesus or the apostles took oaths (See Matthew 26:63-64, 2 Cor. 1:23, Gal. 1:20)?*

6. Is lying or being untruthful ever justifiable (consider Joshua 2:1-7)?



*Yes or No*

## Discussion Questions

7. Read Matthew 5:34-35. Why does Jesus connect each object or location to God himself and how should this impact our daily speech?
8. Read Matthew 5:36 and James 4:13-16. Give examples of boastful promises we might make that are outside of our control.
9. Read Matthew 5:37, James 4:16, and John 8:44. In what ways is Satan a liar and in what ways might Satan influence our speech?
10. What are some common reasons why people lie or break a promise?
11. What are the greatest temptations in China for untruthfulness?



*Yes or No*

## Prayer & Praise

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# STUDY GUIDE



December 11

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## FORGIVNESS

Matthew 5:33-37



# Forgiveness

Matthew 5: 38-48

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

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# Forgiveness

This week we end our series in the Sermon on the Mount by looking at the most important of all virtues, love. How far are you willing to go for love? Are you willing to bear insults? Are you willing to give up your rights? Are you willing to have your day interrupted? Are you willing to give up your earthly possessions? For family, yes. For a good friend, maybe. But what about a stranger? What about an enemy? Since the King of the Kingdom makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, His children have learned to mirror their Father's radical generosity.

Loving with you,

Pastor TJ

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*You may be sons of your Father*

## Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:38, Exodus 21, Leviticus 24, and Deuteronomy 19. Discuss the original context of, “an eye for an eye” and the Pharisee’s misuse of this law.
2. Read Matthew 5:39. What is the significance of a slap on the “right” cheek and what does it practically look like to “turn the other cheek”?
3. Give examples of common insults a Christian might face today and proper ways to respond.
4. Read Matthew 26:67, Luke 18:32, Hebrews 12:2, and Gal. 3:13. Discuss ways in which Jesus took on shame without retaliation.
5. Read Matthew 5:40, Exodus 22:26-27, and Deuteronomy 24:12-13. What was the difference between a tunic and cloak and what is Jesus teaching by commanding us to be willing to part with even our cloak?
6. What rights did Jesus give up in order to redeem us?
7. What are some “rights” that would be most difficult for you to give up and why?



*You may be sons of your Father*

## Discussion Questions

8. Read Matthew 5:41 and Luke 23:26. Discuss the Roman law of Impressment and how a first century Jew might have felt about being forced to obey this law.

*NOTE: The Law of Impressment meant that a Roman soldier could compel a Jew to perform labor or to carry his load (like his armor) for one mile. When that mile was up the Jew had fulfilled his legal obligation and could then go about his business.*

9. In what ways are you inconvenienced or your time wasted by other and how does Jesus' command influence how you respond to that inconvenience?

10. Give examples of how Jesus was inconvenienced and gave up his time for others, even His enemies.

11. Read Matthew 5:42. How does this continue with the principle of, "an eye for an eye"?

12. What are some ways you can fulfill this command today?

13. Read 2 Corinthians 8:9 and discuss how much Jesus gave up in order to make us rich.

14. Read Matthew 5:43-44. What type of enemies might a Christian have today?





*You may be sons of your Father*

## Discussion Questions

15. Share with the group some past or present difficult people in your life and spend some time praying for them.
16. Read Matthew 5:48 and Leviticus 19:2. Why does God call us to such a high standard and is it even possible?

## Going Deeper

1. v. 39a. Are there any instances when we should resist evil people? Does this mean that Christians can't be a lawyer or police officer, etc? (Think Biblically, are there examples of Jesus or the Apostles resisting evil people)
2. v. 39b. Is Jesus asking us not to physically defend ourselves from an attack?
3. v. 42. Should we give to everyone who asks of us or can we be selective in our giving (how does other scripture inform our giving)? For example, should we give to a person if we know they will turn around and buy drugs with that money? Should we let someone borrow our car if we know they will use it to rob a bank?



*You may be sons of your Father*

## Prayer & Praise

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