



SERMON ON THE *MOUNT*

small group guide

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INTRODUCTION

Two thousand years ago, Jesus showed up on to the scene in Roman-occupied Israel and began preaching a radical message: “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 4:17). This message would have been one his people had longed to hear. The thing they had been waiting their entire lives to hear. According to Matthew’s Gospel, we’re told that Jesus didn’t just proclaim this reality, he *demonstrated* it through signs, wonders and healings.

Matthew 4:23-25

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

The picture painted for us, is that people were desperate for what Jesus was offering. When he showed up on the scene, the poor, the oppressed, the suffering, the outcast, the sex worker, the religious zealot, the nationalist and the apathetic—they all heard and saw something in Jesus that their hearts had always longed for.

Jesus was changing everything.

And then, into those circumstances, with those people following him, Jesus went up onto a hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee and delivered what has become the most famous collection of his teachings: the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7).

For many, even those unfamiliar with the Bible, the words deeply resonate: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit ...”; “Love your enemies ...”; “Do not worry about tomorrow ...”; “The wise man built his house on the rock ...”*

These sayings are simple enough to remember, but endlessly challenging to live. Together, they paint a portrait of what life looks like when God’s reign—what Jesus calls the “kingdom of heaven”—breaks into the world.

Why It Matters

Every generation of Christians has returned to the Sermon on the Mount because it speaks to our deepest longings and questions: *What is the good life? How do we treat others? What does God actually want from us?*

Within the Sermon on the Mount, we find Jesus’ answer to the human question of flourishing—*how do we live well?* In Jesus’ teachings, we find a counter-cultural, revolutionary view of what the good life is supposed to consist of. We find an ethical system, a standard of values around religious devotion, we find truth about our relationship to money, ambition and relationships—all of which are totally contradictory to the common wisdom of the world we live in.

The challenge with the Sermon on the Mount is not in learning how to understand it (although the teachings can prove difficult to understand, at moments) but how to *live* it. The practices Jesus calls his followers to, the way of living he frames as “the narrow path”—are costly and demanding. However, ultimately they lead us to a life that looks like true flourishing.

In other words, these chapters are not a random assortment of sayings but a carefully crafted manifesto from Jesus on what it means to be truly human under God’s reign, in a kingdom like no other.

Historical Context

Understanding the Sermon on the Mount begins with understanding the context into which Jesus was speaking. Jesus delivers the sermon in first-century Galilee, a land oppressed by the Roman Empire and fractured by competing Jewish groups. The poor and powerless—farmers, widows, day-laborers, prostitutes—were burdened by heavy taxation and exploitation.

Different groups offered different solutions:

- **The Pharisees** stressed strict Torah observance to bring renewal. Their attitude was similar to, “If we can perfectly follow all of the rules, then God will be pleased and will bless us!”
- **The Sadducees** however, cooperated with Roman power to maintain influence. They saw a path toward freedom by simply acquiescing to Roman rule.
- **The Zealots** pressed for violent revolution. They were assassins and disrupters—driven to remove Rome by using Roman weapons and tools: violence, fear, aggression, etc.
- **The Essenes** withdrew into the desert, waiting for God’s intervention. The separatists who thought the only way to be holy and live for God was to opt out of the world and remove themselves from the turmoil of their circumstances.

Into this landscape steps Jesus, announcing that God’s kingdom is breaking in—not through moralism, violence, compromise, or retreat, but through a community shaped by mercy, purity of heart, and radical love.

Theological Context

At the heart of the Sermon on the Mount you’ll see a common thread around the idea of **righteousness**—according to Jesus, righteous living is the way we abide in the kingdom of God.

When many of us hear the word “righteousness,” we think primarily of moral piety—avoiding the “big sins.” Righteousness, in this view, gets reduced to a checklist of behaviors: don’t sleep with someone you’re not married to, don’t look at porn, don’t get drunk, don’t lose your temper, and so on.

While these things matter, Jesus’ vision of righteousness in the Sermon on the Mount is far more holistic. The Greek word for righteousness (*dikaiosune*) means living in “right relationship”—with God, others, and even with ourselves. Jesus is not content with surface-level rule-keeping; he presses into our inner motives, our everyday interactions, and the kind of people we are becoming.

True righteousness is not just the absence of bad behavior, but the presence of wholeness—humility, mercy, integrity, generosity, and love—that reflects God’s own character.

This righteousness is not merely external rule-keeping but internal wholeness (*teleios*). This is important: Jesus is not raising the bar to crush us, but inviting us into the wholeness of life, the way humans were designed to flourish. The sermon confronts our natural instincts for pride, retaliation, greed, and anxiety, replacing them with humility, mercy, generosity, and trust in God.

It is not a list of impossible ideals as some have argued, but a Spirit-empowered vision of life under God's reign.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SERMON

Like any classic sermon, the Sermon on the Mount has a deliberate design: an introduction (5:3–16), a body (5:17–7:12), and a conclusion (7:13–27).

Introduction (5:3–16)

The introduction to the Sermon on the Mount has shocked people for millenia. What have come to be known as The Beatitudes announce surprising blessings on the poor in spirit, the grieving, the meek, and the merciful.

This is a crucial point of the Sermon on the Mount. In the Beatitudes, Jesus is re-defining our understanding of blessing and the good life. The Greek word "*makarios*" is often translated "blessed." But it may be better understood as *flourishing*. The Beatitudes are not commandments Jesus is handing out or even virtues Jesus is calling us to embody. They are a declaration and an announcement of who God says is included in his kingdom.

It's hard to overestimate how shocking this would have sounded: the poor, the grieving, the meek—those considered cursed—are declared "flourishing" because God's reign has drawn near to them.

Jesus names the "nobodies" as first in line for God's kingdom. Truly it is a kingdom like no other.

Body (5:17–7:12)

The body of the sermon is broken into three major sections (What good sermon doesn't have three main movements?):

- **Righteousness and the Torah (5:17–48):** Jesus makes clear he has not come to abolish the Torah but to fulfil its original intent. He demonstrates this through six case studies—anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and enemy love. Each digs beneath surface compliance to reveal God’s deeper wisdom for relationships.
- **Righteousness and Religious Practice (6:1–21):** Then in the second section, Jesus takes on religious practice. He focuses on things like giving, prayer, and fasting—how they are to be done sincerely and not for show. At the center of this movement sits the **Lord’s Prayer**, orienting us toward God’s name, kingdom, and will, as well as daily provision, forgiveness, and deliverance. In fact, an important note is that the prayer sits at the center of the entire Sermon on the Mount.
- **Righteousness and Relationships (6:19–7:12):** Jesus concludes the body of the sermon with warnings about wealth and worry, teachings on judgment, discernment, and the Golden Rule. Here Jesus calls for trust in the Father’s care and wisdom in navigating relationships.

Conclusion (7:13–27)

As Jesus brings the Sermon on the Mount to its conclusion, he confronts his listeners with a decision. The images are vivid and memorable: two gates—one wide and easy, the other narrow and demanding; two trees—one healthy and fruitful, the other diseased and barren; two houses—one built on sand that collapses in the storm, the other on rock that endures.

Each picture presses home the same point: there are ultimately two ways to live. One path promises comfort and ease but ends in ruin. The other feels costly, constricting, and counterintuitive—but it leads to life.

Which way will you choose to practice?

What’s clear is that when Jesus finished his teaching, he did not intend the Sermon on the Mount to be admired from afar. It’s a manifesto for discipleship.

Jesus doesn’t simply want us to believe in him; he wants us to ***become like him and live for others.***

Invitation for Small Groups

As we step into this study, we are joining the crowds on the hillside—ordinary people, weighed down by the pressures of life, weighed down by the chaos of the world, longing for something more.

Over the coming weeks, as we listen to Jesus' words together we'll explore:

- What it means to flourish in God's kingdom.
- How to live counter-culturally in our world.
- How to embody the narrow path that leads to life.

This study is an invitation into a **kingdom like no other**.

For a great overview of the Sermon on the Mount, check out this video by BibleProject: *The Sermon on the Mount, On Earth as It Is in Heaven*

BIBLE PROJECT: OVERVIEW

WEEK 1

A Kingdom Like No Other

Text: Matthew 5:1–12

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out the BibleProject materials on the Sermon on the Mount. Each week, we'll include a link to a 6 minute video that explains the passage.

BibleProject has also created a weekly guide that corresponds with the majority of the weeks we'll be studying. Their guide provides a bit more in depth look at the passage for those who are interested. This week's materials: *The Sermon on the Mount*, *The Beatitudes*.

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO

Opening Question

- If your group hasn't been together before, take some time for everyone to introduce themselves. If you need an icebreaker question, try one of these:
 - What is something in your house that says a lot about who you are (Ex: a guitar, a medal/award, a coffee mug collection...)?
 - If you could host a dinner for any person (past or present), who would it be and what would you serve?—This opens the door for stories and values without being too heavy.
 - Or, for the more ambitious: Two, Truths and a Lie. Invite each person to share three facts about themselves—two true and one that's made up. The group guesses which one is the lie. Great for laughs and learning quirky things about each other.
- When you hear the phrase 'the good life,' what comes to mind for you? If someone asked you today, 'Who do you think is living the good life?,' how would you answer?

Biblical Study

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 5:1-12. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- When you think of the audience Jesus was speaking to, as he climbed the hillside and began preaching the Beatitudes, how should the people in the crowd inform our understanding of Jesus' words?
- Read verses 3–6. How do these verses reframe weakness, grief, or longing as the starting place for God's kingdom?
- Verses 7–9 describe mercy, purity, and peacemaking. Why do you think Jesus highlights these traits as central to the kingdom?
- How do the Beatitudes challenge how we usually think about "blessing"?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- When in your life have you felt like your circumstances lined up with one of the Beatitudes? How might you have unexpectedly experienced God's blessing in that season?
- Is there a Beatitude you most resonate with right now—one that feels true of your current season of life? How are you experiencing God's kingdom as a result?
- What would it look like for our group/church to embody these blessings together in a tangible way this week?

Prayer

Close by taking prayer requests, especially for anyone who is feeling “poor in spirit,” mourning, or struggling to live into the kingdom realities Jesus describes. Pray for them to experience the blessing of the promise Jesus gives in the Beatitudes.

WEEK 2

Light Up the Dark

Text: Matthew 5:13-16

Further Resources

Please refer to the previous week's video and guide for an explanation of this passage.

Opening Question

- If your friends were to describe your personality as a food, what would it be—salty, sweet, spicy, bland? Why?

Biblical Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 5:13-16. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- Jesus says salt can lose its saltiness. What do you think he means? How does that warning apply to God's people today?
- In the Old Testament, salt was linked with God's covenant promises. How does this background shape the meaning of Jesus' metaphor? (Read Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19 if you need a context clue).
- Why is *light* such a powerful image for God's presence? Are there other places in Scripture you can remember coming across this theme?
- Isaiah 60 describes Jerusalem as shining God's light to the nations. How is Jesus reapplying that vision here to his disciples?
- What is the significance of Jesus describing his followers as a "city on a hill"? Why stress the communal (a city) rather than just individual light-bearers?
- Jesus says our light shines through "good deeds" (v. 16). Based on what you understand from the Sermon on the Mount, what kinds of good works is he talking about?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- Is there any area you are tempted to *hide your light right now*? If yes, reflect on what underlying motivation might contribute to this desire to hide your light.
- How can you bring out the *flavor* of God's kingdom in the ordinary spaces of your week—at home, at work, or in your neighborhood?

Prayer

If anyone feels tempted to *hide their light* pray for courage for them this week. Ask God to provide opportunities for us to remember we are salt, light and a city on a hill.

WEEK 3

The Heart of the Law

Text: Matthew 5:17–20

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount, Jesus and The Torah*.

[BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE](#)

[BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO](#)

Opening Question

- Think back to your time as a child or teenager: did you tend to be more of a rule-follower or a rule-breaker? Share a story that shows why.

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 5:17-20. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- What does Jesus mean when he says he came to *fulfill* the Law and the Prophets? How is that different from *abolish*?
- Verse 18 says not “the smallest letter or stroke” will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. What does that tell us about Jesus’ view of Scripture?
- How does verse 19 challenge both those who minimize God’s commands and those who focus only on rule-keeping?
- Verse 20 says our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees. In light of the Pharisees’ reputation, what would have been shocking about this statement?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it’s not just information to know, it’s a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It’s not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don’t skip this section!

- What’s the difference between “checking religious boxes” and the kind of heart-level righteousness Jesus calls for? Which one do you find yourself drifting toward?
- How can our group encourage each other to live into the righteous life that Jesus describes without it turning into performance or legalism?

Prayer

Spend time praying that God would form in you the kind of heart Jesus describes—whole, transformed, and aligned with his love. Ask him to free you from performance-based religion. Pray that our community would be a people who embody the Law’s true heartbeat: loving God and loving neighbor.

WEEK 4

Beyond the Surface

Text: Matthew 5:21-26

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount, Murder, Adultery, and Divorce*.

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO

Opening Question

- When you're angry, do you tend to *blow-up* or *bottle-up*? Share an example (funny is fine!).
- Can you think of a time someone's words hurt you as much as—or more than—an action?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 5:21-26. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- Why do you think Jesus connects anger and insults to the commandment “do not murder”?
- The Aramaic word “*raca*” means “empty-headed”—a way of dismissing someone's value. How do our words today (in person or online) do the same thing?
- Why do you think Jesus gives such serious consequences for things we might consider small (anger, name-calling)?
- What does it say about God's priorities that reconciliation takes precedence even over worship at the altar? How do Jesus' examples about the altar and the courtroom help us understand the urgency of reconciliation?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- Where are you most likely to let anger or contempt simmer in your own life—with family, co-workers, friends, or online?
- Has this study reminded you of any relationships that feel strained? What's one step (even a small one) you could take toward repair this week?

Prayer

Spend time praying for relationships where anger, hurt, or contempt have created distance. Pray for the courage to seek reconciliation, the humility to ask forgiveness, and the grace to see others as image-bearers of God. Ask the Spirit to transform our hearts so that our love goes beyond the surface of what we think is the right behavior.

WEEK 5

Higher Standards

Text: Matthew 5:27-37

Opening Question

- What's a loophole you've seen people (definitely *other* people!) try to exploit—serious or funny?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 5:27-37. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- Why do you think Jesus connects lustful thoughts with adultery? What's he getting at beneath the surface?

- How does Jesus' teaching on divorce challenge the casual way relationships were treated in his day? How does it speak into our current culture?
- Why did people in Jesus' time feel the need to make oaths to prove their honesty? How does that context help explain his command to, "let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no."?
- How do these three case studies (lust, divorce, oaths) tie back to Jesus' main point in this section for a "righteousness that surpasses the Pharisees" (Matthew 5:20)?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- Are there any areas in your walk with Jesus where you are tempted to look for loopholes? (Think of loopholes as trying to see what you can get away with instead of aiming for what makes us whole).
- What would it look like to treat people not as objects or obstacles but as image-bearers of God in everyday interactions (workplace, online, relationships)?

Prayer

Ask God to form us into whole people—people of integrity, honesty, and faithfulness.

Pray for help to honor others as image-bearers, to guard our relationships with love and commitment, and to let our words be trustworthy.

Are there any areas you feel the Spirit nudging you to pay attention to in the areas of lust, marriage or honesty/integrity?

WEEK 6

Radical Love

Text: Matthew 5:38-48

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount, Oaths, Retaliation, and Enemy Love*.

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO

Opening Question

- Be honest: are you more of a *get-even* kind of person, *sweep-it-under-the-rug* kind of person, or a *let-it-go* kind of person?
- Have you ever been on the receiving end of an unexpected act of kindness that caught you completely off guard? What happened?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 5:38-48. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- What was the original purpose of the “eye for an eye” law in the Old Testament? Why do you think people twisted it into justification for revenge?
- Jesus gives three cultural examples of nonviolent resistance (cheek, coat, mile). How do these examples flip the script on power and humiliation? What might be applicable examples in today's world?
- What does Jesus mean by “Do not resist an evil person”? How is this different from doing nothing or being passive?
- In verses 43–45, why does Jesus tie loving enemies to the character of God—“He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good?”
- How does the word “*teleios*” meaning “perfect/complete/whole” help us understand what Jesus is actually calling us to in verse 48?
- How does Jesus himself model this radical love?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- What might turning the other cheek look like in your everyday context—at work, home, school, or online?
- Who is one enemy (or difficult person) you could begin to pray for this week? What would it look like to love them with dignity?
- How can our group become a community whose love is so radical it can't be explained apart from God?

Prayer

Spend time asking God to shape your heart with his radical love. Pray for the Spirit to make you whole (*teleios*), so your heart and actions match, and everything you do flows from love.

Name specific people who are hard to love and ask God to help you see them as he sees them. If you have difficulty praying for them, ask a member of your group to pray for them on your behalf.

Thank Jesus for not only teaching us to love our enemies but embodying it on the cross, and ask him to empower you to live out that same love in the week ahead.

WEEK 7

True Devotion

Text: Matthew 6:1-18

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount*, *Warnings About Religious Practices* & *The Lord's Prayer*.

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

Opening Question

- Be honest—do you prefer group projects (where everyone sees your work) or solo projects (where nobody does)? Why?
- Have you ever seen someone do a good thing *just* to get credit? How did it feel?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 6:1-18. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- In Matthew 6:1, what is Jesus warning us about here?
- How does Jesus' teaching on giving (vv. 2-4) challenge our culture of recognition and philanthropy?
- What stands out to you in the Lord's Prayer (vv. 9-13)? Are there any noticeable differences between how Jesus teaches us to pray and how we often pray?
- Why do you think Jesus connects forgiveness to prayer (vv. 14-15)?
- Was there anything surprising about Jesus' teaching on fasting (vv. 16-18)?
- How do you think these three practices—giving, praying, fasting—might shape us when they're done with the right motives?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- Which of these three practices is easiest for you and which is the hardest? Why?
- How can you cultivate habits of giving, praying, and fasting that are aimed toward God rather than toward recognition?
- Is there one of these areas you haven't been practicing that the Spirit might be nudging you to practice more faithfully?
- How might practicing true devotion change the way people around you see and experience God's kingdom?

Prayer

Invite the group to pray the Lord's Prayer slowly together. Afterward, leave space for personal prayer in silence, modeling the secret devotion Jesus describes. Pray that hearts would focus on intimacy with the Father rather than seeking the applause of others.

WEEK 8

Kingdom Priorities

Text: Matthew 6:19-34

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount, Wealth and Worry*.

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO

Opening Question

- If you found \$10,000 on the ground, what's the first thing you'd probably do with it?
- What's something small that helps you feel at peace when life feels overwhelming?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 6:19-34. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- Why do you think Jesus connects treasure and heart in Matthew 6:19–21?
- In verses 22–23 what does the *healthy eye* vs. *unhealthy eye* mean?
- How does verse 24 force us to evaluate who we are actually serving?
- Jesus points to birds and flowers in verses 25–30. What do these examples teach us about trust?
- What does it mean to “seek first the kingdom” in verse 33?
- Verse 34 says, “do not worry about tomorrow.” How does that tie into the bigger message of this section?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- Where are you most tempted to find security apart from God—money, status, control, something else?
- This is a big question that may require some reflection: What would it look like for your finances to tell a kingdom story?
- How can seeking God's kingdom first reshape the way you deal with worry?
- What's one practical step you can take this week to loosen your grip on possessions or anxiety?

Prayer

Ask if anyone has specific worries they're carrying. Pray for God's kingdom to be first in each person's life, and for freedom from anxiety about money, possessions, and the future. Thank God for his care—like the birds and the flowers—and ask for the courage to live with open hands.

WEEK 9

Judging & Discernment

Text: Matthew 7:1-12

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount, Wisdom in Relationships*.

[BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE](#)

[BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO](#)

Opening Question

- What's a time you judged someone too quickly and later realized you were wrong?
- Who's someone you know who is really good at giving feedback or correction without being judgmental?
- Do you tend to be more critical of others or of yourself? Why do you think that is?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 7:1-12. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- What do you think Jesus means by "Do not judge"? Is he saying we should never make judgments, or something different?
- How does the log and speck image (vv. 3-5) challenge our tendency to critique others while ignoring our own issues?
- Why is humility such an important part of helping others with their "speck"?
- In verse 6, Jesus talks about dogs, pigs, and pearls. What do you think this means in light of the call not to judge? How is it actually a call to discernment?
- Why do you think Jesus connects prayer with the section on judgment and discernment in verses 7-11?
- What does Jesus teach us about God's character in verses 9-11 (the parent giving good gifts)? How does that encourage us to trust him?
- According to Jesus, the Golden Rule sums up "the Law and the Prophets." How does it tie this whole section together?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- How can you practice self-awareness (log before speck) in your relationships this week?
 - Is there a particular area of your life where you are tempted to slip into harsh or condemning judgment of others?
- What would it look like for you to live out the Golden Rule in a specific, concrete way—at home, at work, or even online? Is there a person the Spirit is leading you to love in this way?
- When it comes to difficult relationships, how can asking God for wisdom change how you respond?
- Is there somewhere you can replace criticism with prayer?

Prayer

Spend time confessing where judgment, criticism, or pride have crept into your relationships.

Confession can sound like a big, scary word. But it's simply being honest with fellow followers of Jesus about where you are struggling. It's not a word of condemnation but freedom.

Ask God for humility to see your faults and shortcomings clearly, and for wisdom to know how to love others well. Pray that your group would be shaped by the Golden Rule—treating others with the same grace, patience, and generosity you've received from the Father.

WEEK 10

Foundations for Living

Text: Matthew 7:13-29

Further Resources

If you'd like further resources for the week, beyond the Sermon, we'd encourage you to check out this week's materials: *Sermon on the Mount*, *The Choice*.

BIBLE PROJECT: GUIDE

BIBLE PROJECT: VIDEO

Opening Question

- When it comes to directions, are you more likely to follow the instructions step-by-step or just wing it?
- What's a difficult season or storm (big or small) that you've faced in life? Did it reveal anything about what foundation your life was built on?

Bible Study Questions

As you begin your time together, read Matthew 7:13-27. Then discuss the following questions intended to help you understand the passage more.

- What do the wide and narrow gates teach us about following Jesus?
- In verses 15–20, Jesus warns about false prophets. What does he mean by looking at their fruit? What might be signs of a false teacher today?
- How might this passage challenge us to evaluate our own fruit as disciples?
- Verses 21–23 are sobering—why do you think Jesus says religious activity alone is not enough?
- What is the difference between the wise and foolish builders? What do they both have in common? How does this parable connect to the rest of the Sermon on the Mount?

Application Questions

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that it's not just information to know, it's a guide for becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others. It's not enough to just study the passage—the real question is, how do we actually live it out? So don't skip this section!

- Is there anywhere in your life you are tempted to just admire Jesus' teaching instead of actually practicing it?
- What would it look like to choose the narrow road in your daily life — at work, at home, with your time or money?
- How can we as a group encourage each other to actually live out the Sermon on the Mount rather than just talk about it?
- What is one specific thing from the Sermon on the Mount that will stick with you as we wrap this series?

Prayer

Close the series with a prayer of commitment.

Invite each person to name one area where they want to build on Jesus' foundation. Then pray together: thanking God for the gift of Jesus' teaching, asking for strength to live it out, and for courage to choose the narrow way. Pray for firm foundations in the group—homes, relationships, and lives that will stand strong when storms come.

CONCLUSION

Over the past ten weeks, we've walked slowly through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. We've seen why it is easily his most famous teaching and also the most demanding teaching.

When we began our journey, we made clear that this sermon isn't just a collection of nice sayings or spiritual ideals—it's Jesus' vision of what life in God's kingdom actually looks like. It's a blueprint for human flourishing.

At the very start, Jesus announced blessings on the least likely: the poor, the grieving, the meek, the merciful. He told us we are salt, light, and a city on a hill—not because we try hard to impress, but because this is who we are in him. From there, he showed us that righteousness goes beyond rule-keeping to the heart: anger, lust, integrity, love for enemies, true devotion. These aren't simply about following the rules, they're about what it looks like to live as members of God's kingdom.

He reminded us that money and worry don't have to control us, that judgment must give way to humility, and that the Golden Rule sums up the whole Law and Prophets.

And finally, he left us with a choice: will we just admire his words, or will we actually build our lives on them?

Through it all, Jesus isn't asking us to become religious performers or moral rule-keepers. He's calling us to become whole people—people who love God fully and love others generously. That's what it means to become like Jesus and live for others.

And when we take his words seriously, our lives become a foundation that can stand through any storm, pointing others to the reality of God's kingdom.