

#awkward

Group Study, Week One

Using the Weapon of Prayer

CATCHING UP

Welcome any new members. Go around the group and answer the question, *how has your week been going?* And *what did you take away from the last lesson, and how has it made a difference in your life this week?*

DIVING IN

Instead of an instructional video this week, we're going to dive deeper into the Sermon on the Mount to illustrate some truths about this great sermon. As a group, choose several of the sections listed below, read them as a group, and then answer the questions given below about each one.

Sermon Topics

- What Jesus said about anger (Matthew 5:21-22)
- What Jesus said about lust and adultery (Matthew 5:27-28)
- What Jesus said about divorce (Matthew 5:31-32)
- What Jesus said about revenge (Matthew 5:38-39)
- What Jesus said about our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44)
- What Jesus said about money (Matthew 6:24)
- What Jesus said about worry (Matthew 6:33-34)

Questions to Ask About Each Section

1. The religious leaders of Jesus' day liked to come up with a list of rules that weren't too much of a problem and after having kept those rules, they would declare themselves righteous. How did Jesus' words challenge the **religious** thinkers of His day?
2. The secularists of Jesus' day balked at rules and preferred to just go along with whatever their flesh desired to keep things easy. How did Jesus' words challenge the **secular** thinkers of His day?
3. How does Jesus' teaching on this subject "flip" what might be thought of as conventional wisdom?
4. Do you think it is possible to truly live according to all of Jesus words in the Sermon on the Mount? What do you think the point was of teaching it?

An Answer Worth Considering

Read this to the group...

Perhaps the point of the Sermon on the Mount wasn't to give us a new list of rules to live by. In fact, it's hard to believe that Jesus would move beyond legalism to deeper legalism. So what was the point of the Sermon? There are actually several:

1. To give all believers a picture of what **kingdom** living will look like for eternity.
2. To give believers a big challenge with some high spiritual goals to strive for.
3. To help us to see that we have fallen short and will continue to do so, and ultimately need to trust in Him rather than trusting our ability to keep any list of rules.

Talking It Over

1. In what ways was Jesus' sermon probably shocking to His hearers? How might it have frustrated them at the time? And why might this frustration be a good thing?
2. What would the world look like if everyone lived according to the Sermon on the Mount?
3. In the weekend message, Pastor Brandon shared three principles for understanding Jesus' challenge to live perfectly... 1.) God is already perfect when He writes this, 2.) None of us are perfect and we've all already failed to live this out, and 3.) God's grace is ready to redeem us and forgive our imperfections and to help us to begin to live up to God's expectations in the freedom of that forgiveness. How does this bring both a comfort to those who have sinned as well as a challenge to those who are okay with living a life of sin?

SERVING TOGETHER

Talk about how your group might be able to serve together, within the church or within the community once or twice during this study.

STAYING ON MISSION

It's very important for every group to remember our big mission of reaching people who are far from God and bringing them closer to knowing Jesus. **Who do you know that you could invite to the group?**

PRAISE AND PRAYER

What prayer requests are there within the group? What is there to praise God and be thankful for? Are there any stories of how God has been at work in someone's life? One person can lead in prayer or multiple people can lead, but no one should feel pressured to do so.