

STUDYING THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lesson 21 - Giving to the Needy - Matthew 6:1-4

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

MT 6:1 "Be careful not to do your `acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

MT 6:2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. [3] But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, [4] so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 21 - Giving to the Needy - Matthew 6:1-4

241. What kind of acts was Jesus discussing? (6:1)
242. What specific motives did Jesus warn against? (6:1)
243. What happens to the person who operates with impure motives? (6:1)
244. Who can judge whether a person's actions are pure? (6:1)
245. How did some individuals in Jesus' day publicize their generosity? (6:2)
246. What name did Jesus give to insincere individuals? Why? (6:2)
247. Where did people advertise their "acts of righteousness"? (6:2)
248. What deep-seated desire prompted some people to give? (6:2)
249. What future reward can showy givers expect? (6:2)
250. What style of giving did Jesus command us to adopt? (6:3-4)
251. Who notices when we give according to Jesus' guidelines? (6:4)
252. What happens to those who give as Jesus told us to give? (6:4)

Lesson 22 - Prayer - Matthew 6:5-15

MT 6:5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. [6] But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [7] And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. [8] Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

MT 6:9 "This, then, is how you should pray:

" `Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

MT 6:10 your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

MT 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.

MT 6:12 Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

MT 6:13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one. '

MT 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. [15] But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 22 - Prayer - Matthew 6:5-15

253. According to Jesus, what wrong motivation prompts some individuals to pray? (6:5)

254. What name did Jesus call people who pray for show? Why? (6:5)

255. Where do hypocrites prefer to do their praying? (6:5)

256. What type of reward will religious showmanship bring? (6:5)
257. How did Jesus command His followers to pray? (6:6)
258. Where did Jesus suggest we talk to God? (6:6)
259. What type of reward will humility in prayer bring? (6:6)
260. What did Jesus have to say about repetitive or long, windy prayers? (6:7)
261. What insights or facts about God are revealed in this passage? (6:6, 8, 9)
262. To whom did Jesus tell us to pray? (6:9)
263. What should be our attitude toward God? (6:9)
264. What should be our attitude toward God's kingdom and will? (6:10)
265. What should be our attitude toward life's necessities? (6:11)
266. What should be our attitude toward those who have wronged us? (6:12)
267. What should be our attitude toward temptation? (6:13)
268. Why is it crucial for us to forgive those who wrong us? (6:14-15)

Lesson 23 - Fasting - Matthew 6:16-18

MT 6:16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. [17] But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, [18] so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 23 - Fasting - Matthew 6:16-18

269. What mood did certain individuals in Jesus' day assume when they fasted? (6:16)
270. What facial expressions did some people wear? Why? (6:16)
271. Why did some people take on gloomy expressions when they fasted? (6:16)
272. What harsh name did Jesus give to people who made a public show of their fasting? Why? (6:16)

273. According to Jesus, what rewards await people who show off their fasting? (6:16)

274. What repeated phrase in this passage suggests that fasting is not an option? (6:16, 17)

275. How should a person conceal the fact of his or her fasting? (6:17)

276. Who should know about an individual's fasts? Why? (6:18)

277. Who alone can see what people do in secret? How? (6:18)

278. Why are believers to be secretive about fasting? (6:18)

Lesson 24 - Treasures in Heaven - Matthew 6:19-24

MT 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

MT 6:22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. [23] But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

MT 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 24 - Treasures in Heaven - Matthew 6:19-24

279. Where did Jesus urge His followers not to "store up treasures"? Why? (6:19)

280. Why did Jesus discourage stockpiling things? (6:19)

281. What can happen to a person's material possessions? (6:19)

282. Where did Jesus encourage us to invest our wealth? Why? (6:20)

283. Why is heaven a better place to "bank" than earth? (6:20)

284. What does the location of a person's treasure say about that person? (6:21)

285. What is described as the "lamp of the body"? How is this so? (6:22)

286. What is the result of "good eyes"? (6:22)
287. When will people's lives be full of darkness? (6:23)
288. What did Jesus say about serving two masters? (6:24)
289. Why did Jesus say we cannot serve two masters? (6:24)
290. What two masters did Jesus mention in this context? Why? (6:24)

Lesson 25 - Do Not Worry - Matthew 6:25-34

MT 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? [26] Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? [27] Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life*?"

MT 6:28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. [29] Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. [30] If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [31] So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' [32] For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. [33] But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. [34] Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 25 - Do Not Worry - Matthew 6:25-34

291. What three worries did Jesus discourage among His followers? Why? (6:25)
292. Why is food a trivial matter? (6:26)
293. According to Jesus, how do clothes stack up as a subject of great concern? (6:26)
294. What creatures did Jesus use to illustrate God's reliability as a provider? Why? (6:26)
295. Why are God's creatures consistently "fed and clothed"? (6:26)
296. Why should we take great comfort from the way the animal and plant kingdoms operate? (6:26)

297. What benefits does worry bring? (6:27)
298. What fact from nature did Jesus use to illustrate the folly of worrying over clothes? (6:28)
299. How did Solomon's wardrobe measure up to the beauty of nature? (6:29)
300. What comfort can followers of Christ find in the beauty of nature? (6:30)
301. Who is consumed by concern over food, water, and clothing? (6:32)
302. What priorities should we have in life? (6:33)
303. What does God do for His children when they keep the right perspective, refuse to worry, and trust Him? (6:33)
304. Why is it silly to fret over the future? (6:34)