



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—James 4:13-17

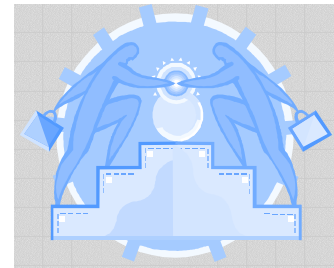
Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Share with the group about some of the best resolutions you have ever made, New Year's or otherwise. What did you like about them?
2. Talk about some people you have known who have demonstrated consistency, authenticity, unselfishness and tirelessness. How have they impacted your life?
3. Everyone share a specific goal they have, and how it's modeled around these elements: what you will do, when, where, how long, and why. How do make sure that God is part of the process?
4. How does the fact that life is unpredictable and brief affect your life each day? How should it affect it?
5. Think about what percentage of your life is devoted to wasting, spending and investing. What are some specific ways you can increase the investment portion?
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

	9:00	10:45
Rm104	30s-40s—Sims	Rm 104 Open—Bower-Chappell
Rm 112		Rm 112 Women—Byrum
Rm 201	30s-50s—Waller-Crary	Rm 201 How People Grow
Rm 202		Rm 202 “ “ “
Rm 203	Young Singles —Franklin/Reynolds	Rm 203 30s—Tripp-Tripp
Rm 204		Rm 204 Singles—Bentzel
Rm 205	40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler	Rm 205 Open—Regis-Anderson
Rm 206	Experiencing God—Graham	Rm 206 30s—Heritier-Sharp
Rm 207	Women—Knox-Anderson	Rm 207 20s—Alexy/Jones
Rm 208	40s-50s—McBrayer-Wicks	Rm 208 College—Ayres-Getchell
		Gym Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker

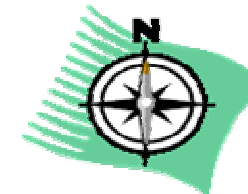
January 2, 2005

Close Encounters of the Jesus Kind
- Getting to Know Jesus Up Close and Personal

Celebration Fellowship

Radical, Dude

A preview of Matthew 5



Volume 3, Issue 17
January 2, 2005

Inside this issue:

Introduction to Next Week's Study	1
Summary of Last Week's Study Questions	1-2
Study Guide	2-3
Life Group Questions	4

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

A few years ago, when someone expressed an idea that was a little edgy or outrageous, “radical, dude” might be the response. In other words, the idea deviated from current thinking, or “pushed the envelope” somewhat. The same could be said for Jesus’ teachings known as the “Sermon on the Mount”. In first century Israel His teachings shattered much traditional thought, and left the crowds amazed—not only because of the truth of what He had said, but also by the authority that permeated His teachings. As He began

this famous sermon in Matthew 5, He identified those who were “blessed”. It was not the externally wealthy, as was then thought, but rather those who were internally rich. They recognized their internal poverty, grieved the sin of this world, were gentle, humble, merciful, and pure. They sought peace, endured persecution for the Lord, and were willing to be different to attract the world to Him. These were the ones truly blessed by God. Jesus went on to clarify God’s righteousness, which began with complete faithfulness to



Getting to Know Jesus Will Change Your Life!

God's Word, and then expressed itself in loving practices. These included making amends, and being faithful to one's vows, both in marriage and life in general. Rather than taking revenge, God's people should show love to their enemies instead. Needless to say, concepts like these were “radical, dude”.

Taking Center Stage

In a play there's nothing as important as what happens on center stage. The main actors unfold the plot there, and until they occupy that position everything else is preparatory. This is what happens in Matthew 3-4: as John, and then Jesus, took center stage, and God's drama of redemption began its fulfillment. John's ultimate ministry was to “make ready the way of the Lord”, so that “all flesh” could see the glory of the Lord. This prophesied forerunner of the Messiah made his official arrival in the wilderness of Judea, and proclaimed a message of repentance to his fellow Jews. This message would enable them to see the Lord's glory as it promoted the removal of spiritual barriers and encouraged an openness to receiving the Lord when He came. This change of inner attitude is what true repentance is all about. However, John's ministry was unique, not only in the fact that it called Jews to repent, but also in its

presentation. The wilderness, and not Jerusalem, was his venue; he wore garments of camel's hair and a leather belt, rather than the fine garments of the elite; and, he ate locusts and wild honey instead of choice food. He was radical, not only in his demeanor, but also in his call to undergo baptism to demonstrate repentance. Baptism was a symbol normally reserved for Gentiles who became Jews; but John actually called Jews to express their change of heart by this baptism of repentance. However, the fact that so many were attracted to John's ministry, even with his unusual approach, showed that God's hand was upon him. It seemed like all were coming out to him, even the religious leaders. When they came, though, John challenged their sincerity, comparing them to a “brood of vipers” slithering from a fire, and asking who had warned them to flee from God's coming wrath. He wanted them to stop relying on their

(Matthew 3-4)

physical connection to Abraham, and start living like Jews from the heart, which is the nature of true repentance. The purpose of John's message and baptism was to affect an inner heart change, which would prepare people for his successor. This One was so great that John did not consider himself worthy to take off His sandals, and, as the next event showed, this person was Jesus. He would baptize with the Holy Spirit, immersing believers in God Himself, and, He would purify their hearts with God's fire. If men didn't respond to His ministry in this way, they would receive the fire of God's judgment. So, even though Jesus came to save, if people rejected Him, they would then relate to Him as their judge. After John had made these declarations, Jesus officially arrived, requesting baptism from John. He initially refused, saying that he needed to be baptized by Jesus instead. But Jesus said it was appropriate so that He could fulfill all righteous-

(Continued on page 2)

Matthew 3-4 (continued from pg 1)

ness. The righteousness to which He referred was God's way of doing things, which included John's ministry. So, Jesus, by allowing John to baptize Him, endorsed this ministry of repentance. He also identified Himself with mankind by doing this, even though He certainly had nothing of which to repent. Jesus' baptism shows that setting an example that will benefit others is a sacrifice worth making. It also shows that identifying with those to whom we are ministering is an important action. Confirmation of Jesus' actions came as the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended on Jesus when He came out of the water, and as the Father's voice boomed from heaven saying that Jesus was His beloved Son in whom He was pleased. So, as Jesus officially began His ministry, the entire Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reaffirmed the mission of Jesus. All of these things show how important it is to be obedient in baptism, even though it is only a symbol. Jesus' obedience to baptism pleased the Father, because it outwardly expressed an inward reality—that Jesus' heart was fully committed to His Father and His mission. Jesus then had to undergo one more thing before His ministry began in earnest. He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to

be tempted by the Devil. These temptations began after He became hungry, showing that Satan always attacks when and where he thinks we are weakest. Therefore, he first tempted Jesus to satisfy His hunger by turning stones into bread. The temptation was to take matters into His own hands to satisfy His needs. Jesus' answer was that God's words alone give us provision, so even genuine needs are never the real issue. The Devil then enticed Jesus to "prove" that He was the Son of God by jumping off the temple. This would needlessly force God to take care of Him, and put Him to the test, which Scripture prohibited. When our foolish choices "force" God to bail us out, we fall into Satan's schemes. Finally, the Devil tempted Jesus to bypass the

cross by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world instantly if Jesus would bow before him. But Jesus rebutted the Devil with the Scripture that says we are to worship and serve the Lord alone. Ultimately, this refusal to worship the true God, the only One worthy of worship, defines the essence of temptation. When Jesus had successfully resisted the Devil, he left Jesus, and the angels came and ministered to Him. He was thus ready to launch His ministry, and when news came that His forerunner, John, had been imprisoned, He continued John's message, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". While God's spokesmen change, His message never does; the first step to receiving the good life God offers is to acknowledge our need. This is essentially what repentance accomplishes in us. When Jesus began His ministry in Galilee He fulfilled the prophecy that that region would see "a great light" when the Messiah began His ministry. He then called four disciples, showing the need to build a team if successful ministry is to occur. Then, He began to preach, teach, heal and exorcise, bringing freedom in all areas of human life. As a result great crowds began to follow Him. He had taken center stage.

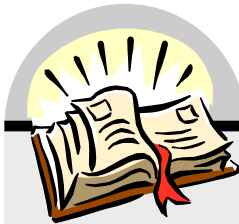


"When our foolish choices 'force' God to bail us out, we fall into Satan's schemes."

Study Questions for Matthew 5

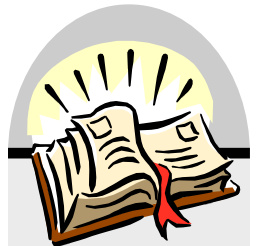
Jesus' ministry of the Word began in earnest as He delivered the greatest and most radical sermon in history.

1. Read Matthew 5:1-8. List each of the inner attitudes that lead to blessing and the reward for each (v3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). What does each mean to you, and why do they lead to this blessed condition?
2. From Matthew 5:9-12 what 2 actions lead to blessing in our lives (v9, 10-11), what does each mean, and what is the reward for each (v9, 12)? Why is each so important for those who would be followers of Christ?
3. In Matthew 5:13-16, to what 2 things are followers of Christ compared (v13, 14)? To fulfill these 2 roles, what must we do to be effective (v13, 14-15)? What is the overall goal of our lives (v16)?



"The first step to receiving the good life God offers is to acknowledge our need."

4. Looking at Matthew 5:17-20 what was Jesus' goal (v17), and what does this say about what our goal should be (v19)? What promise is given (v18), and why is all the Word of God so important (v20)?
5. Using Matthew 5:21-24 what attitude does Jesus confront (v21), what are 3 ways that people of that day expressed that (v22), and how might that be expressed today? What should we do instead (v23-24)?
6. According to Matthew 5:25-26 what second thing should we do when someone has something against us (v25), and if we don't, of what can we be sure (v25-26)? How would this apply in your life?
7. From Matthew 5:27-30 with what sin does Jesus deal (v27), and what is His full definition of it (v28)? If this goes unchecked in our lives, what will be the ultimate result (v29, 30), so what should we do?
8. Read Matthew 5:31-32. What does Jesus say are justifiable grounds for divorce (v32), and what attitude do you think He is confronting? Based on this, how does God view our marriage vows?
9. In Matthew 5:33-37 to what ancient command does Jesus refer (v33), how had those people gotten around it (v34-36), and why was this wrong? How should we act (v37), and how could we apply this?
10. Using Matthew 5:38-42 what command is addressed (v38), and what was its real meaning (see Ex 21:23-24)? How had those people twisted it (v39), and what should we do instead (v39-42)?
11. From Matthew 5:43-48 what shows that we are God's children (v44-45), and why (v46-47)? How do we distort this sometimes (v43)? What is our overall standard (v48), and what does this mean?
12. From Matthew 5 summarize some positive principles that Jesus gives us about how to think and act in each of these sections (5:1-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-20, 21-26, 27-32, 33-37, 38-42, 43-48).



Memory Verse

**"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
Matthew 5:16**