



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

1140 Morrison Dr
Fort Worth, TX 76120-3426

Phone: 817-451-5513
Email: allan@celebrationnet.com

L.I.F.E. Group Questions-The Celebration Vision

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 the vision God has given you for your growth this coming year. How does Celebration Fellowship fit into that?
2. Talk about the people we are trying to reach—disinterested doubters, disenfranchised believers. What are they like, in your opinion, and how many do you know? How could this increase?
3. Compare the difference between accepting someone for who they are, and endorsing the way they are. How did Jesus do this, and how do we keep both in balance?
4. What is good about traditions and what is bad? How can we keep from falling into traditionalism in our church?
5. Discuss the value of contemporary worship and practical teaching for fulfilling the vision God has given to us.
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

We're on the Web!
Www. Celebrationnet.com

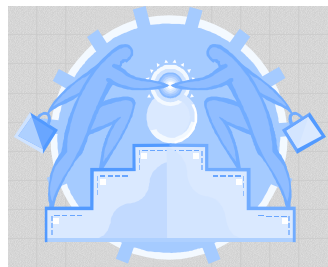
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



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

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

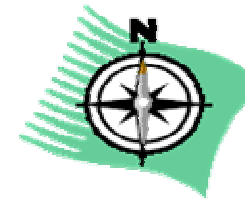
January 9, 2005

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

Celebration Fellowship

The Bottom Line

A preview of Matthew 6



Volume 3, Issue 18
January 9, 2005

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In the business world, there's only one thing that really matters—the bottom line of the financial statement. What the shareholders really want to know is whether or not their business made money. In reality, though, the most important bottom line is not financial, and Jesus addresses this in His second installment of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6. He first points out the difference between “window dressing” religion and bottom line service to God. The religious leaders of Jesus' day made a habit of practicing

their religion to be seen of men, whether that be through giving, praying, or fasting. Their reward of such activity was the honor they received from others for their religiosity. But the Father promises a better reward for those who do these things for the right reasons. When giving is done to help others, praying is done to line up with God's purposes in this world, and fasting is done to allow us a deeper connection with the Father, we can be sure of His heavenly reward. Jesus then addressed the issue of money and worry. While



**Getting to Know Jesus Will
Change Your Life!**

those apart from God dwell on providing for their physical needs, Jesus told His followers that if they would allow God's kingdom and His right way of living to be their focus, He would provide everything they needed in this life. In this way they could lay up treasures in heaven—and this is the ultimate bottom line.

A New Sheriff in Town

In the wild west, when the new sheriff arrived, all the rules changed. As he began to “lay down the law”, and the bad guys were removed, the town became a great place to live. As Jesus began His teaching known as the “Sermon on the Mount”, He began to lay down the “new” law, which was really a return to the true meaning of the old, and to show the crowds how great it was to live in God's kingdom. This occurs as people change internally, so Jesus noted the attitudes that would lead to God's blessings for those who adopted them. He first taught that only those who admitted their inner need could expect to receive the kingdom of heaven with its blessings. We must empty ourselves if we are to experience the new way of life God has to offer. He then said that those who mourned were in a position to be comforted; again, our acceptance that something dear to us is gone allows us to receive the blessing

of God's comfort. Jesus then declared blessing on those who voluntarily submit their power to God, for when they do they have access to all He has, which includes all the earth. Next, He taught that those who craved righteousness would be blessed by being filled with it, for God desires to impart this righteousness to those who truly desire it. Another important attitude for blessing is mercy, for when we are merciful we show that we understand how much people in pain need others; so, God gives Himself and His mercy to the merciful. Finally, Jesus pronounced blessing on those who were pure in their motives, because their integrity allows the God of truth to reveal Himself to them. However, blessings also belong to those who make peace and get persecuted for the name of Christ. Peacemakers are blessed because they, like their Father, reconcile people to one another and to Him. They find the root of the problem and help

(Matthew 5)

resolve it, which is what God did when He resolved the sin problem through His Son. Those who are persecuted are blessed because of their stand for Christ, and they can joyfully look forward to a special heavenly reward as a result of enduring this persecution. Jesus then compared His followers to salt and light. Salt, which, by fighting bacteria, was a prime preservative in that day, is a good picture of Christ followers; when we truly act like salt we fight the corruption of sin, and preserve the world from decay. Similarly, when light is not hidden, but allowed to shine freely, it guides people out of the darkness. However, both salt and light can create discomfort; salt stings when it fights bacteria, and light exposes things comfortably hidden away in darkness. Nevertheless, we should have as our goal to be truly salty, and to let our light shine in such a way that God is glorified as a result of our good works. This was Jesus' goal; He intended to fully keep all of God's Law and prophetic

(Continued on page 2)

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

Matthew 5 (continued from pg 1)

words in the smallest detail, and in their depth, saying that all would be fulfilled before they passed away. Additionally, anyone else who obeyed and taught them would be considered great in His kingdom. This was vitally important, because these commands had to be genuinely, rather than superficially, obeyed if one were to enter the kingdom of heaven. Then, having said this, Jesus began to explain the depth of some of these ancient commands. Whereas murder, at that time, was confined to the outward act, Jesus extended it to the devaluation of another, whether by violent anger, condescending talk, or passing judgment on them. In place of this attitude Jesus advocated honoring those with whom we are in conflict by making amends with them. Because others matter to God, we should aggressively act to resolve conflict even before we engage in our worship of Him. On a practical note it makes sense to resolve these differences before outside authorities get involved, because there is no guarantee of a favorable outcome for us. Jesus then further amplified the prohibition against adultery. Since the physical act always begins in the mind, Jesus declared that looking at the opposite sex with a desire to have them

physically was the same as adultery. Since these kind of people faced the possibility of eternal punishment in hell, it was important to take whatever precautionary measures were necessary, even if it meant tearing out an eyeball, or cutting off a hand. Similarly, divorce for any cause other than unfaithfulness would lead the divorcee into adultery, so this was a serious matter. Marriage vows were intended to be lifelong commitments, and the flippant treatment of these, which was the practice of that day (as well as ours), was unacceptable to God. Actually, all vows are important to God, as Jesus went on to teach, because they should reflect one's integrity. However, in that day vows were made to deceive people into falsely thinking that the truth was being spoken.

Moreover, since we have no power over the thing by which we swear, it is unnecessary to make vows to strengthen our credibility; rather, we should simply say what we mean or intend to do. Jesus then addressed the law of vengeance prevalently employed in that day. The original law was given to set parameters for the punishment of a crime, but had become a justification for retaliation. Rather than retaliating against those in authority over us, our attitude, according to Jesus, should be to go the extra mile. This can only happen when we know that our highest authority, God, will take care of us. Along these lines, instead of hating our enemy, which they believed was the flip side of loving one's neighbor, we should show love to them as well. This is what God has done, as seen by His allowing of sun and rain to bless even those who are opposed to Him. So, if we are to act like His children, we, too, must love our enemies, and be inclusive of them for His sake. In summary, the overall standard for which we must strive is to be completely perfect as our Father is. He does everything right, and so should we. Of course this is possible only through Christ, but this is the "law" that the new sheriff in town, Christ, has laid down.

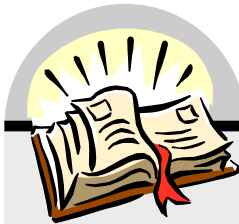


"Our attitude, according to Jesus, should be to go the extra mile."

Study Questions for Matthew 6

Jesus clarifies the correct attitudes concerning our service to God and material possessions.

1. Read Matthew 6:1-4. What must we avoid in our service to God (v1), and how can this effect us negatively (v1), and positively (v2)? What is one area of service (v2), and how should it be done (v3)?
2. From Matthew 6:5-8 what type of prayer must we not do (v5), and what 2 ways can this be done (v5, 7)? How should we pray (v6), and with what attitude (v6, 8)?
3. In Matthew 6:9-10 who (v9) and what (v10) is to be the primary focus of our prayer? How can we be involved on a daily basis in causing this to happen?



"All vows are important to God ...because they should reflect one's integrity."

4. Looking at Matthew 6:11-13 for what 3 things should we ask God each day (v11, 12, 13)? Explain what each of these mean to you and how they would apply to your life.

5. Using Matthew 6:12-15 what is the condition for our experiencing God's forgiveness (v12, 14), and why do you think this is true—in other words, why are both connected?

6. According to Matthew 6:16-18 what is the third practice of service to God (v16), how should it be done (v16-17), and why (v18)? What principle summarizes the way we are to serve God (v4, 6, 18)?

7. From Matthew 6:19-21 what are we to do (v20) and not do (19) in relation to our possessions? What is the reason for this (v21), and what do you think this means?

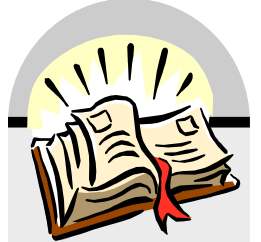
8. Read Matthew 6:22-24. What "spiritual" eye must we keep clear (v23-24), and how must we do that (v24)? What is the result of keeping our spiritual eyes focused on the right thing (v22)?

9. In Matthew 6:25-26 what attitude must we avoid relating to the necessities of life (v25), and why (v25)? What natural example provides another reason to avoid this attitude (v26)?

10. Using Matthew 6:27-30 what are some other reasons to refuse to worry (v27, 28-29, 30)? What is the underlying truth that will keep us from worry (v30)?

11. From Matthew 6:31-34 how do pagans act (v31-32), and how should Christ's followers act (v33, 34)? On a practical level, how would you carry out v33 on a daily basis, and what promise can we claim (v33)?

12. From Matthew 6 write a sentence explaining the "bottom line" of our service to God (v1-18) and of our relationship to possessions and God's kingdom (v19-34)? What should we do and not do?



Memory Verse

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to