



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Matthew 5:1-3

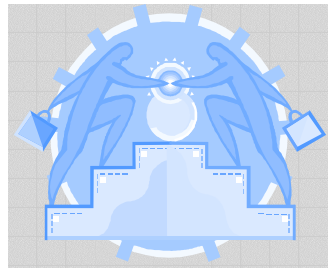
Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Share with the group what made you happiest as a kid, and how that has changed for you today.
2. Talk about your experiences in seeking things, pleasure and success—what has been good about those things, and what has been bad?
3. Define what “spiritual bankruptcy” means to you. Where have you experienced this, and where does it still need to happen?
4. Explain why our goodness doesn’t go deep enough (Matt 5:22), far enough (5:41-44), or high enough (5:48). What is the only way each of these can happen?
5. Discuss why admitting spiritual poverty reduces our stress, enhances our relationships and releases God’s power. Which is most appealing to you, and why?
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

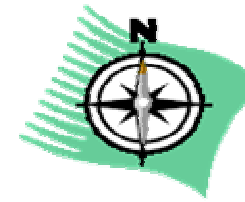
January 16, 2005

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

Celebration Fellowship

The Acid Test

A preview of Matthew 7



Volume 3, Issue 19
January 16, 2005

Inside this issue:

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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

In the Gold Rush of the 1890’s a test was developed to insure that the ore mined wasn’t “fool’s” gold. A certain type of acid could be applied to the product, and if it survived “the acid test”, it was “good as gold”. Matthew 7 provides some “acid tests” for professing believers. Passing these tests provides evidence of the genuineness of one’s faith. The first of these is the manner in which we evaluate, or judge, others. When we do it with honesty, preceded by self-evaluation, we treat people as God treats us. Evaluation of

others’ actions, in itself, is not wrong; in fact we must not give what is holy to those who cannot appreciate the value of God’s uniqueness. However, when we pass judgment on others for violating our standard, we will be condemned when we commit the same violation. Instead of judging others, we should persistently ask our heavenly Father to meet our needs; when we do we don’t have to play the worldly game of “one-upmanship”. There is only one narrow way that leads to life, and that is the Father’s way. False



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

teachers point to other ways, but the fruit of their lives indicates the unfaithfulness to God that resides in their hearts. Actually, it doesn’t matter what we say; what matters is our obedience to the teachings of Christ. When we follow Him in all we do, our lives show that our faith has passed the acid test.

Treasure Hunting

There’s something exciting about finding hidden treasure, whether it’s discovered on a dive to the ocean floor, or with a metal detector on the beach. In life the treasure we seek provides the basic motivation for our lives. Jesus addressed this in Matthew 6, as He contrasted lives motivated by God’s approval and heavenly treasure versus lives driven by man’s approval and earthly treasure. He began by talking about three areas of service, commonly thought of as practices of “righteousness” to God. They were to avoid practicing this service for the purpose of being noticed by others, for while, on the positive side, they would receive others’ approval, this would negate their reward from God. In the area of giving, mentioned first, Jesus pointed out that, rather than being done with great fanfare to call attention to the one giving, it should be done in secret. It should be done with such a lack of self-consciousness that

one’s left hand wouldn’t even know that the right hand was doing it. In the area of prayer we must also pray to neither impress others, with our show of devotion, nor God, by the length of our prayers. Rather, we should pray secretly, simply, and sincerely, realizing that God already knows what we need, and that we are only acknowledging our dependence on Him to meet our needs. This doesn’t mean that there is no place for longer prayers, but it does mean that our reason for praying should not be to impress, but simply to express our heart’s desire to God. Jesus taught that His people should focus their prayers on God as Father, upon the enhancement of His Name and on the advancement of His kingdom. The sincerity of such prayers is shown when those who pray become personally involved in sharing God’s glory with others, and seeking to bring their lives, as well as the lives of those

(Matthew 6)

around them, under His rule and reign. With God’s name and kingdom as the focus, Jesus then taught that His people should ask three things of God. First, we should ask God to meet our daily needs, illustrating that we are dependent on God each day to provide for our needs. This doesn’t mean He won’t meet all of our wants, but His promise is to meet our needs. We should also ask for God’s forgiveness as we need it, and ask Him to help us avoid temptation and evil as we go through life. It is important, therefore, to ask God to daily provide for our physical and spiritual needs as we seek to live for and point others to Him. By doing this we acknowledge that even our most basic ability to get through life comes from Him. As Jesus concluded this model prayer, He explained the connection between giving forgiveness to others and receiving it from God, which relates to an understanding of forgiveness itself. Since it is a gift that cannot be earned, it is only when we are

(Continued on page 2)

Matthew 6 (continued from pg 1)

able to freely grant this to others that we have demonstrated the attitude necessary to receive this gift from God. Such people recognize that their forgiveness comes by grace, and so must be graciously given to others by them. With this explanation Jesus then delved into the practice of fasting. Many of His day did this with a "martyr's complex", calling attention to the great sacrifice they were making for God so that others would be impressed. But the purpose of fasting is to deepen one's devotion to God, and so it is oriented only towards Him. Therefore, we should be joyful before others when we are fasting because of the greater focus on God that this promotes. In summary, all of our service to God must be done sincerely, simply to please Him; and when we do He promises to reward us openly. Jesus then began to lay out the right attitude we should have towards our earthly possessions. We are not to treasure these possessions, by focusing on them and deriving a sense of security from them. This is foolish, because possessions can quickly vanish through theft, or they can lose their value a variety of ways. Rather, we should store up treasure in heaven, where it will always be fully secure. When our eyes are focused on

eternal values related to God's purposes, we will be able to clearly see the best way to live; however, when we are focused on earthly treasure we will live in confused darkness. The fact is we cannot serve God and serve possessions; it is impossible. But, when we choose to serve God, we always have enough of the "things" we need for this life. Therefore, we must avoid worrying over temporal needs, such as food or clothing. Our Father provides for birds, who do nothing in advance to obtain their food, and, to use another natural example, He beautifies the grass of the field with lilies, even though their life span is so short. Furthermore, these lilies do nothing to cause their own beauty, just as we can do nothing to add a day to our life or an inch to our height.



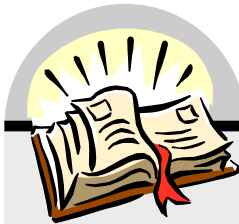
"When we choose to serve God, we will always have enough of the 'things' we need for this life."

This all shows the care God has for His creation, and since mankind is His highest creation, we have nothing over which to be anxious. In addition, God especially cares for His own family, so when we worry we demonstrate our lack of trust in Him. Those apart from God's family (called "Gentiles" in this passage) are expected to act like this, since they have no heavenly "Father" upon whom they depend. However, as His children, we can expect His provision; our objective, then, must be to pursue the advancement of His kingdom in our own lives and others', and to strive to carry out His righteousness on this earth. Since each day provides ample challenges, there is no reason to worry over what might occur in the future. Instead, we should actively engage in the pursuit of God's purposes in this world, and rest in the assurance that He will satisfy our needs completely. The bottom line of our service to God is that we should live to please Him alone; the bottom line of our relationship to our possessions and God's kingdom is that we should, by seeking His kingdom and righteousness, lay up heavenly, rather than earthly treasures. When we do this we discover the real treasure of life that gives us peace and lasts forever.

Study Questions for Matthew 7

Before we begin to condemn others we must honestly assess the authenticity of our own faith.

1. Read Matthew 7:1-2. What prohibition is given (v1), and why do you think we tend to do this? What 2 reasons are given to not do this (v2)? Why are these true?
2. From Matthew 7:3-5 what is the real problem with "judging" others (v3)? What should we do before dealing with others' issues (v5) and why (v5)?
3. In Matthew 7:6 what does Jesus say to not do (v6) and what do you think this means? How does this balance His teaching in 7:1-5, and how should we apply this truth to our daily lives?



"We should store up treasure in heaven, where it will always be secure."

4. Looking at Matthew 7:7-11 what does Jesus say to do (v7), and why (v8), and what is the connection between these 3 things? What attitude does this presuppose, and what promise is given (v9-11)?

5. Using Matthew 7:12 how does Jesus sum up the God's teachings, and, based on 7:1-11, how should we treat people (v1-2, 5, 6, 7-11)? Why would following v12 help us to obey 7:1?

6. According to Matthew 7:13-14 what is the goal that everyone seeks (v14), and how do we get there (v13)? Where do most go (v13) and why? What point do you think Jesus is making?

7. From Matthew 7:15-17 of what does Jesus say to beware (v15)? What do they look like (v15), what are they after (v15), how do you know them for sure, and why (v16-17)? How should we apply this?

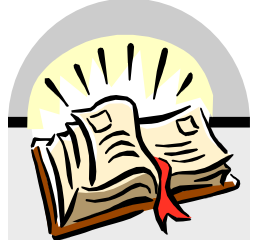
8. Read Matthew 7:18-20. What truth does v18 point out, and what does this mean? What will happen to those who always produce bad fruit (v19), and why? Since everyone sins how should we take this?

9. In Matthew 7:21-23 who does Jesus say will enter heaven (v21), and who will not enter heaven (v23)? What actions, by themselves, mean nothing to God (v21, 22)? What does this teach us?

10. Using Matthew 7:24-27 compare the 2 groups—v24-25 with v26-27—by looking at what happened to both of them, how they acted, and the results. What is Jesus encouraging us to do (24)?

11. From Matthew 7:28-29 how did those who heard Jesus' teachings respond to Him (v28)? How was Jesus different from the scribes (v29), and why do you think this surprised them?

12. From Matthew 7 what should we do (v5, 7, 12, 13, 15, 21, 24) and not do (v1, 3, 6, 13, 23, 26) according to Jesus? When we do what results can we expect (v5, 6, 11, 13, 14, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27)?



Memory Verse

"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."