Sermon on the Mount

Bible Study Questions

Matthew 5-7
**STUDY 1: MATTHEW 5:1-16**

Q1. (Matthew 5:3-11) Each Beatitude consists of two parts. What are these parts? Why do you think Jesus made each Beatitude a paradox? What is the relationship of the Beatitudes to the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)?

Q2. (Matthew 5:3-4) Why is it necessary to be aware of your spiritual poverty before you can become a Christian? What kind of mourning is necessary for a person to become a Christian? What kind of mourning is a common experience of Christians? (See Isaiah 61:2-3; Ezekiel 9:4.)

Q3. (Matthew 5:5) How does this sort of gentleness contrast with the world's ideal? How is humility important to Christlikeness?

Q4. (Matthew 5:6) How can an intense desire for righteousness put you at odds with the world? What sort of righteousness is Jesus talking about, do you think? What promise are we given in this Beatitude?

Q5. (Matthew 5:8) Why can people with a pure heart see, know, and discern God? Why can't "chronic" sinners see God? How do we obtain the pure or clean heart that Jesus describes?

Q6. (Matthew 5:10-12) Why should we rejoice when we are persecuted? What keeps this from being some kind of sick masochism, or finding pleasure in pain? Why is the blessing "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" appropriate for the persecuted?

Q7. (Matthew 5:13) In what sense are Christians the "salt of the earth" using the preservation analogy? In what sense are Christians the "salt of the earth" using the seasoning analogy?

Q8. (Matthew 5:13) What might be the symptoms of a Christian who has lost his "saltiness"? Is it possible for a believer to detect such symptoms in himself or herself? What do secular people notice about a "de-saltified" Christian? What do other Christians notice about you? Is it possible to "resaltify" your life?

Q9. (Matthew 5:14-15) In the parable of "the light of the world," Jesus notes the stupidity of lights being hidden under bowls. Concerning what danger in the life of a Christian disciple does Jesus warn us in this parable?

Q10. (Matthew 5:13-15) How do verses 13-16 relate to verses 10-12? How does hiding our light affect the glory of God? Why must glory and suffering go hand in hand? Was Jesus' suffering necessary? Is ours? What does this have to do with Romans 12:2?


**STUDY 2: MATTHEW 5:17-48**

Q1. (Matthew 5:17-20) Can you see any tendencies in the church today to effectively "abolish" the Old Testament from our Christian faith?
What does a "Christian" legalism look like in a church?
What does it look like in a church where there are no moral standards and no obedience expected of Christians?

Q2. (Matthew 5:21-22) Why does Jesus treat calling someone a fool in the same classification as murder?
Does this mean that murder is no worse than an angry insult in God's eyes?
How would we act differently if we actually believed that angry attitudes towards others are viewed by God as murder?

Q3. (Matthew 5:23-24) What's wrong with worshipping while someone has something against us?
What is the appropriate action for us to take?
How far should we go to bring about reconciliation with someone whom we have offended?
Are there any situations that we shouldn't try to resolve? Or that we can't resolve?

Q4. (Matthew 5:25-26) What is the point of Jesus' parable of settling out of court?
Who are we supposed to settle with, according to this parable?
What does "settling" entail?
What are the reasons that we should settle?

Q5. (Matthew 5:27-30; Exodus 20:17) What is the point of similarity between adultery and lust?
What is the difference?
How does lust break the Tenth Commandment?

Q6. God purposely created us with a good and natural sexual desire.
How do we distinguish between that God-given sexual desire and forbidden lust?

Q7. (Matthew 5:28) What is wrong with pornography?
Who are the victims of this "victimless" activity?

Q8. (Matthew 5:28) How would you counsel someone who shared with you that he had trouble with pornography?
How can you protect yourself against temptation on the Internet? At the beach or poolside? With your TV?

Q9. (Matthew 5:27-30) The spirit of our age is very accepting and approving of lust. According to Jesus' words, how seriously are we to take lust?
How does love help us combat lust?

Q10. As a Church we should always be supportive of those who are hurting or scarred.
What can you do to extend Christ's healing love to someone who is struggling in his or her marriage?
What can you do to bring healing to someone who is or was divorced?
Q11. (Matthew 5:33-37) What does it mean: Let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no? If we obeyed this command, what would be the result in our speaking? In our credibility?

Q12. (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:15-21) What was the purpose of the "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" regulation? Is this law designed to be administered by a court or judge, or by an individual? Is it designed to govern judicial action or personal action?

Q13. (Matthew 5:39-42) What do Jesus' examples or tiny cameos in verses 39-42 have in common? Someone has said that if we were to carry out verses 39-42 literally, we would aid and abet evil. Do you agree? How should we take these examples: As case law? As hyperbole? As a series of aphorisms or adages? In another way?

Q14. (Matthew 5:38-42) If we were to assume that Jesus is teaching on retaliation and revenge rather than pacifism in verses 38-42, how would you sum up his teaching in a single sentence?

Q15. (Matthew 5:39-44) If the principle that underlies verses 39-42 is found in verse 44 and 22:39, are there times we must defend ourselves physically against evil men in order to fulfil the principle? What might be some examples?

Q16. (Matthew 5:48) In the context, what do you think verse 48 means for the Christian? Is perfection taught here? Does maturity express the idea best? How about the doctrine of "sinless perfection"? How does verse 48 relate to verse 45?
STUDY 3: MATTHEW 6:1-18

Q1. (Matthew 6:1-18) How do the commands in this section relate to "performing for the audience of One"?
What is the antidote for the chief sin that is addressed here?
In what ways do churches and non-profit organizations use this sin to motivate people to give?

Q2. (Matthew 5:42 and 6:1-4) How does Jesus' teaching here and in 5:42 on giving to the needy influence you and your attitudes towards the poor?
What will you do differently as a result?
What keeps us from giving more to the poor?
Is that a good enough reason?

Q3. (Matthew 6:5-7) Why does Jesus tell us to pray in secret?
Though public prayer in church gatherings is commanded in scripture (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1), in which circumstances might public prayer in a church service be contrary to the spirit of Jesus' instructions in these verses?
How do flowery prayers hinder the development of disciples?

Q4. (Matthew 6:8) If God knows what you need before you ask him, why should you ask him at all?
What sense does prayer really make?
Are we mainly to talk for our own edification and encouragement? Why or why not?

Q5. (Matthew 6:9) What about our lives and words "hallows" the name of our Father?
What desecrates and brings shame to it?
How should we "hallow" the Father when we begin to pray?

Q6. (Matthew 6:10) In what sense are we asking that the Father's kingdom should come?
Why are we asking for the Father's will to be done here on earth?
How should this prayer affect our living?

Q7. (Matthew 6:11) Why do we seek to be independent of asking anyone for help?
Why do we seek to be independent of God?
Why should we ask God to "give" us daily bread so long as we can earn a living for ourselves?

Q8. (Matthew 6:12, 14-15) Why should we continually ask forgiveness?
How can unforgiveness on our part block God's blessing?
How can unforgiveness block God's forgiveness?
**STUDY 4: MATTHEW 6:19-34**

What is the key verse in this passage?  
What is the context of this parable?  
How does this relate to the Sermon on the Mount?

Q2. (Matthew 6:19) Jesus says, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...." Is he speaking figuratively? Hyperbolically? Generally? Specifically?  
Is this a new teaching, or an old one?

Q3. (Matthew 6:19-21) According to the Bible, how does one "store up treasures in heaven"?  
What advantage does this have over accumulating earthly possessions?  
Why are we uncomfortable with the concept of rewards in heaven?

Q4. (Matthew 6:24) Jesus seems to make it sound like you can't seek wealth and God simultaneously. Does he really mean this? Is this hyperbole? Figurative? Literal?  
Can wealthy people serve God in actual fact?

Q5. (Matthew 6:21, 24) The love of money can be a pretty subtle thing. Both the rich and the poor can love money. Can you describe a time in your life when you were deceived about this, and when the light in you was really darkness?  
According to Jesus, could desire for money damn a person (Luke 12:15-21)?

Q6. (Matthew 6:26-30) What point does Jesus make with his twin Parables of the Birds of the Air and of the Flowers of the Field?  
Is the point trivial or is it valid?

Q7. (Matthew 6:25-34) How many times in this passage does the phrase "do not worry," "do not be anxious," or "take no thought" occur?  
In what way does excessive worry on sin?  
Are worry and trust exact opposites?

Q8. (Matthew 6:31-32) Why does Jesus mention the "pagans" or "Gentiles" in verse 32?  
What point is he making?  
How should a Christian differ from a “Gentile”, according to Jesus' teaching in this passage?  
How does understanding the phrase, "your heavenly Father knows that you need them," effect your life?

Q9. (Matthew 6:33) What is the command in this verse?  
How must our seeking God differ from our seeking of food and clothing, according to this verse?  
What is the promise found in this verse?

Q10. (Matthew 6:34) Is there humour intended in verse 34?  
What is the point of Jesus' joke here?  
What is the command in this verse?
STUDY 5: MATTHEW 7

Q1. (Matthew 7:1) Have you ever caught yourself severely criticizing others Christians behind their backs -- or to their faces?
What is the attitude that underlies censoriousness?
Why must Christians show love in the face of a brother's or sister's failing?

Q2. (Matthew 7:1-2) Read a similar passage in Luke 6:37-38. According to Matthew's account, what is our fate if we measure out big heaps of judgment with a critical spirit?
According to Luke's account, how can measuring be both positive and negative?
What should we measure out instead of judgmentalism?

Q3. (Matthew 7:3-5) What about this parable is humorous?
Why do you think Jesus compares a speck of sawdust with a plank or beam?
What does the speck represent?
What does the plank represent?
According to this parable, when is it okay to remove a speck? When is it not okay?

Q4. (Matthew 7:6) In Jesus' day, what did dogs and pigs have in common?
What would holy food and pearls have in common?
Read Matthew 10:14; Acts 13:44-51; 18:5-6; and 28:17-28. In what kinds of circumstances did believers turn away from a continued sharing of the gospel?
To what kinds of people did they continue their witness?

Q5. (Matthew 7:7-8) What do the words "ask," "seek," and "knock" have in common?
What distinguishes them from each other?
Does one word convey more intensity than another?

Q6. (Matthew 7:7-8) Which lesson is taught in both the Parables of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-10) and the Widow and the Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-6)?
How do these relate to the commands in Matthew 7:7-8?

Q7. (Matthew 7:9-11). What do these verses teach us about God's relationship to us?
What do they teach about God's characteristic response toward us?
How does this differ from a cynical view of God?
Why is a positive understanding of God important to be able to pray with faith?

Q8. (Matthew 7:12) In what way do these verses summarise the message of the law and the prophets?
This seems like a different "summary" of the law and the prophets than Jesus indicated in Matthew 22:37-39. How are they the same? How are they different?

Q9. (Matthew 7:13-14) If Jesus' teaching about the narrow gate and the narrow road to life is to be believed, what change would this make in how you conduct your life?
What difference would it make to how you witness to your neighbours?
Q10. (Matthew 7:15-20) Jesus says that one's inner self will eventually become apparent (see Matthew 12:34). What kinds of "fruit" might be clues to a false prophet?

Q11. (Matthew 7:21-23) How is it possible to deceive yourself, so that you presume that you are "doing" when you are only "hearing"? (see James 1:22-25).
How might it be possible to prophesy, drive out demons, and perform miracles in Jesus' name and not enter the Kingdom of heaven?

Is there a kind of true Christian who believes, but does not obey?
How do you justify Jesus' requirement of obedience with Paul's teaching that salvation is a gift, not because of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-10)?