



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

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The Apostles, Jesus' Lessons to Them

Lesson #2

Lesson #30 (overall)

Jesus Christ took the Jewish people and religious leaders by surprise when He dismantled many of their traditions. In Mark 7:9 He said to some religious leaders, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."

As the Son of God, Jesus taught many things to help us live victoriously. Let's look at ten life lessons that we can learn from Jesus.

#1 Love God with all that you are

Matthew 22:36-38 says, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment."

If we love God with ALL that we are, then everything else falls into place. When we love other things or people more than we love God, it sets us up for trouble. Don't love anyone or anything more than you love God.

#2 Love others

Jesus went on to tell the disciple the second greatest commandment as well: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). The truth is, we sure do love ourselves! We do many things for ourselves each day; likewise, we love others by putting them before ourselves. This is an awkward thing for our selfish flesh, but it's an important command.

Jesus takes loving others even further in Luke 6:27: "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." That's right; according to the Son of God, we're supposed to even love our enemies!

#3 Nothing is more important than the Kingdom of God

What is the Kingdom of God? First, it's not a physical kingdom—yet. Someday, King Jesus will set up His Kingdom on the earth in all its fullness, but for now, it's a spiritual kingdom that is breaking into the physical realm.

Religious leaders asked when God's Kingdom would be established (thinking God would wipe out the Romans who were ruling over them). In Luke 17:20-21 Jesus "answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.'"

In Matthew 12:28 Jesus said, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." And in Luke 9:1-2, "Then [Jesus] called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." (Also see Luke 10:9.)

Clearly, the Kingdom of God is freedom from oppression, healing and wholeness, hope, peace and joy!

Jesus declared in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Instead of running after what we think we need or want, we should be pursuing God’s Kingdom, knowing that He will take care of everything.

#4 Don’t love money

Money in itself is not evil, but the love of money will always lead to trouble. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Mammon is another word for money.) Jesus understood the power money could have over the human heart.

Remember, if we love anything or anyone more than God, we make that person or thing “god” on the throne of our heart, and that’s idolatry. On the other hand, if we will guard ourselves from the love of money, we certainly can do many good things with it. The key is this: control your money; don’t allow it to control you.

#5 Don’t worry about earthly needs—trust God to provide

It’s easy to get concerned about the things we need, but instead of worrying, God asks us to trust Him to provide because He cares for us.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6:24, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” God is a good Father, and He will never let us down!

#6 Spiritual greatness is achieved through serving others and being humble

The religious leaders of Jesus’ day thought that being holy or spiritual meant praying loudly for everyone to hear, giving money for everyone to see, and avoiding sinners.

However, in Matthew 23:11-12 Jesus taught, “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Humbly serving people in the name of Christ is the greatest indication of one’s spirituality.

#7 Losing your soul to gain the world isn’t worth it

In Matthew 16:26 Jesus asked, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” Clearly, we have a choice to make: if we choose the world, we lose our soul; but if we choose Jesus, we gain life!

But choosing Jesus requires that we live differently than the world: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Living narrowly means that we think differently, we talk differently, we respond differently, and we live differently than the world (non-believers). We must not blend in but honor Christ by standing out.

#8 If you want forgiveness, first you must give it

Receiving forgiveness for a wrong you’ve committed sure feels great. But in the Kingdom of God, to receive forgiveness, you must be willing to forgive others. In Matthew 6:14-15 Jesus teaches, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Forgiveness doesn’t mean that what someone did to you was okay but that you’re releasing them from repaying you for the wrong (which they most likely cannot “repay” anyway). Releasing them frees you to have peace and to enjoy your life.

#9 Religion alone doesn't make you holy

In Jesus' day, religious people were consumed with following rules and laws that were impossible to keep. They were obsessed with outward appearances and looking good to other people. But in Matthew 15:11, Jesus taught, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

This was a radical idea at that time because Jesus was challenging the idea that it wasn't certain "evil" foods that contaminated them but the things that came from inside them that made them unholy (like lust, pride, hatred, and jealousy which led them to do evil things). Religion and beliefs are no good if they don't transform the heart.

#10 Following Christ means denying ourselves

Jesus knew that living selfishly is not the way to have life. Jesus Himself demonstrated this when He denied Himself and gave His life on the cross to redeem and save mankind. Matthew 16:24-25 says:

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'"

Denying ourselves means that we choose what God says, not what we or others say; we choose God's ways, not our way; we choose what's right, not what's easy or convenient. When we deny ourselves, we may lose relationships or opportunities, but in the end, we'll have real life in Christ.

Application/Activity

Pray through each of these ten lessons that Jesus taught the apostles and His followers. Ask God to reveal how we can improve on each of these lessons and apply them more and more to our lives. Ask God to give you the heart of an apostle.

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