



*Who is your* **KING?**

# **LIFEgroup Study Guide**

July 15 - September 2



# LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*  
*[[www.lbf.church/resources](http://www.lbf.church/resources)]*

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big, contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*  
*[danfranklin@lbfchurch.com](mailto:danfranklin@lbfchurch.com)*

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## **Lesson 12: Treasure Hunters**

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## **Lesson 13: Why Not Worry?**

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# Who is your KING?

## Kingdom Fasting

Lesson 11 • July 15 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

When we practice fasting, we seek the reward of God and not the attention of people.

### Getting Started

1. How would you explain the spiritual practice of fasting to a non-Christian?

2. If you have ever practiced fasting yourself, what was the experience like for you?

### Digging In

Read Matthew 6:16-18

<sup>16</sup> *When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.* <sup>17</sup> *But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,* <sup>18</sup> *so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

### Explanation of the Passage

We have now reached the third and final Jewish practice of righteousness covered by Jesus in this section of the Sermon on the Mount: fasting. Fasting is to “deliberately go without food, usually as a way of honoring God or as part of a period of meditation and prayer.” (Barclay M. Newman, Jr. and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*) Fasting was a widely accepted practice of Jewish righteousness in the first century—Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, John the Baptist’s disciples fasted, and even Jesus himself fasted for forty days and nights before being tempted by the devil in the wilderness.

Jesus does not command people to fast in these verses, but He assumes they will fast and therefore provides some corrective instructions on the proper way to practice fasting. He instructs people to not make it obvious they are fasting so as to be noticed by others. Apparently some of the Jews at the time were neglecting their personal appearance on the days that they fasted by not washing their faces or brushing their hair so people would notice they looked worse than usual and draw the conclusion they were fasting. Jesus instructed them to perform their normal daily regimens of personal hygiene while fasting (putting oil on their heads and washing their faces) so they would look the same on fasting days as non-fasting days and therefore no one would be able to tell if they were

fasting or not.

Jesus' main point in these three verses is the same main point he made about giving financially to those in need and praying: if we want to be rewarded by God for practicing these disciplines, then we need to not do them in such a way as to draw attention to ourselves and thus receive praise from other people. If we are seeking other people's recognition and praise, then that is the only reward we are going to get.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. What thoughts or fears have kept you from fasting in the past?

5. Jesus warns against neglecting your personal appearance so as to draw attention to the fact that you are fasting. In what ways do you think people might be tempted to draw attention to themselves today while fasting?

6. What are some other things that people could fast from besides food that could have the same spiritual benefit of helping them to focus more of their thoughts and attention on God?

7. What benefits do you think Christians can gain by making fasting a part of their regular personal worship of God?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. We saw in the lesson on Kingdom Prayer that even though Jesus instructed people to pray in secret, that does not mean there are not times when it is appropriate to pray publicly with a group of other believers. Can you think of some situations in which it might be appropriate and good to fast with other believers?

## Taking it to Heart

9. How do you think fasting could help you personally grow to be more like Christ?

10. Are you willing as a LIFE group to choose one day this next week when you will all fast together and spend your extra time praying for each other and our church?



# Who is your KING?

## Treasure Hunters

Lesson 12 • July 22 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

Jesus calls us to prioritize acquiring heavenly treasures over acquiring earthly treasures.

*<sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

### Getting Started

1. What are your main priorities in life?
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you do when you have to choose between competing priorities?

### Explanation of the Passage

In this passage, Jesus calls us to make a choice between God and money as our highest priority. Jesus begins by explaining there is no way to 100% protect our earthly wealth. In today's world, a fire could destroy money, moths can eat a wool coat, and a crash in the stock market could wipe out your entire 401K. Heavenly treasure, on the other hand, is not susceptible to any of these destroying influences. It cannot be destroyed or taken away from us, thus making it a more secure investment than earthly treasure. In verse 21, Jesus explains that how we spend our time and money often reveals what we value most. People put their time and money into the things that are the most important to them. So, if someone is spending all her time and effort in building up her bank balance, then she probably values the security or power that comes from having a lot of money. Likewise, if someone gives generously of his time and money to the church, then he most likely values God above worldly things. People today sometimes have difficulty understanding verses 22-23. What we need to know in order to understand

### Digging In

Read Matthew 6:19-24

*<sup>19</sup> Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.*

*<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*<sup>22</sup> The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

these verses is that people in the first century believed the eyes were actually a source of light. They thought people were able to see when light left the eye, bounced off an object, and then came back through the eye to be processed by the person's brain. In these verses, Jesus is using a person's eyes as a metaphor for someone's desires or goals in life. Healthy eyes symbolize people who have the right priority of serving God above all else. Unhealthy eyes symbolize people who have the wrong priority of serving money. What Jesus is saying is that people who have the wrong focus in life will not be able to live in a way that pleases and honors God.

In verse 24, Jesus explains the reason we must choose between serving God or money is that it is not possible to be wholly devoted to two different masters. When we are faced with conflicting priorities, we will have to make a choice as to which is our highest priority. This idea is perfectly illustrated in the 2000 movie "Vertical Limit." In the opening scene, Peter Garrett is rock climbing with his father and his sister. The three of them are attached to one another by climbing rope. They get knocked off the rock face, and the anchoring equipment they have placed in the rock is not strong enough to hold all three of them. Peter is in the middle, with his sister above him and his father dangling beneath him. At his father's urging, Peter chooses to cut his father loose and send him to his death in order to lessen the weight on the anchoring equipment and thus save his sister's life. Although he loved both his father and his sister, he was placed in a situation in which he had to choose which one he would save; it was not possible for him to keep both of them as his highest priority. Likewise, Jesus knows we can only have one highest priority in life and therefore calls us to choose God as our highest priority and to put Him first in all instances.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. Do you view money as something to be stored up for later or as something to be used now?

5. What heavenly treasures are you most looking forward to having in the age to come?

6. What are some ways we can use our money now in order to store up heavenly treasures for later?

7. Money is not the only thing in our lives that can compete with God for our loyalty and devotion. What else might someone value more than God that could get in the way of him or her fully honoring or serving God?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. Does the fact that Jesus calls us here to focus on storing up heavenly treasures mean that we should not have a savings account or retirement fund? Explain your answer.

# Taking it to Heart

9. If someone were to examine your calendar and financial receipts, what would they conclude was your highest priority in life?

10. What is one change you can make to how you spend your time or money in order to represent your commitment to putting God and His purposes first?



# Who is your KING?

## Why Not Worry?

Lesson 13 • July 29 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

Jesus calls us to judge ourselves before judging others.

### Getting Started

1. When, if ever, is it appropriate to judge others?

2. Give an example of a way that you could judge someone and have this judgment result in positive things for them.

### Digging In

Read Matthew 7:1-6

<sup>1</sup> “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

<sup>3</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

<sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

<sup>6</sup> “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

### Explanation of the Passage

Perhaps one of the key values of 21st Century American culture is the value of non-judgmentalism. To be accused to being “judgy” is among the strongest insults that a person can receive. Because of this, Jesus’ opening words of this passage, “Do not judge,” seem like welcome words to our culture. But as Jesus addresses the subject of judging others, it becomes evident that His teaching on the subject is both more challenging and also more compassionate than the cultural standard that is commonly held today.

Jesus begins the passage by telling His disciples not to judge, or that they too would be judged. He follows that statement up by warning that they will be judged by the same standard with which they judge others. This means that Jesus is not making an absolute statement that we can never judge, but giving a warning that we should be careful when

judging others by a standard that we don't intend to apply to ourselves.

Jesus then illustrates His point by giving a comical example. The example involves a man who has a giant board stuck in his eye, and yet notices a small speck of sawdust in his friend's eye. According to Jesus, it would be silly to focus on the piece of sawdust. Instead, the person should remove the board and then he will be capable of helping his friend with the sawdust. Interestingly enough, Jesus does not say that the person should ignore the sawdust. People today might argue that pointing out the sawdust could be "judgy." Instead, Jesus says that the only way to help your friend is to judge yourself first. And when we judge ourselves first, we often find that our failures are much larger than the failures we see in others.

Jesus finishes the passage by using two illustrations to say the same thing. When He speaks of giving sacred things to dogs or pearls to pigs, He is saying that we should not give precious things to those who will not value them. In this context, His point seems to be that there will be people with sawdust (or boards) in their eyes, and yet they will not listen to your helpful advice. In that case, don't feel the obligation to put yourself in danger by insisting upon helping them. Focus your attention on those who truly want the help.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. In what ways have you observed that you judge others more harshly than you judge yourself?

5. Jesus says that we will be judged with the standard that we use for others. Do you think He means that we will be judged in this way by God or by others? Explain your answer.

6. Give an example of how you sometimes see flaws and failures in others, while being blind to your own.

7. Jesus tells us not to give our pearls to pigs, which seems to mean that we don't need to insist upon giving helpful advice to those who will scorn and abuse us for it. How would you go about discovering whether or not the person you are seeking to help will be receptive to your counsel?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. What is the difference between making a constructive judgment and making a destructive judgment?

# Taking it to Heart

9. What person, or group of people, are you tempted to be most brutal to in your judgment of them?

10. In what practical way can you seek for God to search you and bring to light problems that you tend to be blind to?



# Who is your KING?

## When We Judge

Lesson 14 • August 5 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

Jesus calls us to judge ourselves before judging others.

*pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*

### Getting Started

1. When, if ever, is it appropriate to judge others?
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### Digging In

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## Taking it to Heart

9. What person, or group of people, are you tempted to be most brutal to in your judgment of them?

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# Who is your KING?

## Questions and Answers

Lesson 15 • August 12 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

Jesus promises that God will answer those who diligently pursue him.

### Getting Started

1. If you could ask God one question, what would you ask?

2. Why do you think that many of us do not hear God's voice more clearly in our lives?

### Digging In

Read Matthew 7:7-12

<sup>7</sup> *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

<sup>8</sup> *For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

<sup>9</sup> *"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup> If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! <sup>12</sup> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*

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### Explanation of the Passage

Life is a mystery and God is a mystery. We often find ourselves full of questions and longing for answers. But God often seems silent to us. In this passage, however, Jesus talks about the confidence that we can have in hearing from God if we truly seek Him out.

Jesus begins the passage with three parallel commands. He tells us to ask, to seek, and to knock. If we ask, it will be given to us; if we seek, we will find; and if we knock, the door will be opened to us. These are powerful statements about the fact that, according to Jesus, God's intention is not to hold out on us. If we are genuinely seeking Him, He will not keep Himself hidden. It is by no means a guarantee that God will grant every request, but it is a promise that no one who genuinely seeks God doesn't have the door opened.

Jesus illustrates this important idea by reminding those listening that they would not give their son a rock if he was asking for bread. And they would not give their son a snake if he was asking for a fish. If their son was making these reasonable requests, they would happily comply. Jesus then gently reminds them that God is a better father than they are. If evil people give good gifts to their children, then how much more can we count on God to give good

gifts to those who genuinely seek Him.

Jesus then ends this section with what is commonly called The Golden Rule. In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. Jesus even goes so far as to say that the entire Old Testament is summed up in this command. It is not clear how this statement connects to what comes right before it or after it. It seems to be a sort of summary statement, perhaps harkening back to the beginning of this chapter in the section about judging others.

Whatever the connection, Jesus is saying that treating others in a loving and considerate way is right at the center of what it looks like to treat Jesus as our king.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. What are some ways that you can ask, seek, and knock when it comes to your relationship with God?

5. Some commentators point out that the three commands in verse 7 are all in the present, which means that they have a sense of ongoing actions. In other words, “Be asking, be seeking, be knocking.” What do you think is the connection between perseverance and hearing from God?

6. The major takeaway from verses 9-11 is that God is a good Father and He does not hold out on us. If this is true, how does this impact your attitude toward the questions you have for Him?

7. In verse 12 Jesus gives The Golden Rule. Scholars point out that this same concept showed up in several other moral systems, but that it was always in the negative (e.g., “Don’t do anything to someone else that you wouldn’t want done to you.”). How does Jesus’ positive statement about how to treat others differ from its negative parallel?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. Luke 11:13 is parallel to Matthew 7:11, but with one key difference. In Matthew Jesus says God gives “good gifts” to those who ask Him, while in Luke Jesus says that God gives “the Holy Spirit” to those who ask Him. What light, if any, does the Luke passage shed on how you understand the good gifts that Jesus has in mind in Matthew 7:11?

## Taking it to Heart

9. Think of what you desire at a deep level; not just the surface desires, but your deeply-felt ones. Do you think any of these desires have not been fulfilled because you haven’t diligently asked God for them?

10. What are some practical ways that you can seek God more purposefully?



# Who is your KING?

## Two Ways

Lesson 16 • August 19 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

We must choose between two paths in life.

### Getting Started

1. What, in your mind, sets Christianity apart from all other religions and philosophies of life?

2. What are some difficulties that you have faced as a result of treating Jesus as your King?

### Digging In

Read Matthew 7:13-14

<sup>13</sup> “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

### Explanation of the Passage

The last three passages of the Sermon on the Mount involve contrasts. In Matthew 7:15-23 Jesus talks about two teachers (false the true). In Matthew 7:24-27 Jesus talks about two builders (wise and foolish). But first, in Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus talks about two gates and two roads. He contrasts these paths in several ways, and He says that the stakes are high. After all, one of these ways leads to life and the other leads to destruction.

Jesus begins with the command to enter through the gate that is narrow. Then He immediately contrasts this with the wide gate. Jesus is warning that we must prefer the narrow gate because a wide gate exists. And the wide gate opens up to a broad road. There is plenty of room on this road, and Jesus says that many enter through the wide gate onto the broad road. But in the end, this road leads to destruction.

Then Jesus returns to the subject of the narrow gate. This time He says that the gate is small (in contrast to wide) and that it opens up to a road that is narrow (in contrast to broad). This road doesn't have much room on it and few find it. But in the end, this gate is worth entering and this road is worth walking because it leads to life.

While this passage is small, it is deeply important. Jesus is saying that there are only two ways of life. While there may be many religions and many life-philosophies, there is only a path leading to destruction and a path leading to life. And the path leading to life is not easy. It's difficult to find, difficult to enter, and difficult to walk. We will be tempted to join others on the wide and easy way. But Jesus, who is Himself both the gate (John 10:7) and the way (John 14:6) calls us to take the road less traveled and follow Him.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. Jesus says that the broad road leads to destruction. What are some ways that life apart from Jesus leads to destruction?

5. If the road that leads to destruction is broad, then this means it is probably comfortable to walk on it. What are some ways that life apart from Jesus is more comfortable than life when you're following Jesus?

6. Jesus says that few people find the small gate and the narrow road. Why do you think this is the case?

7. If following Jesus means walking the narrow road, how does this impact your expectations for your future?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. Many people struggle with the fairness of there being only one way to God, since there are many different religious expressions. How would you respond to someone who expressed this complaint?

## Taking it to Heart

9. Give an example of a specific decision you are facing that serves as an example of a choice between the broad road and the narrow road.

10. Walking the narrow road is difficult and there will be times of discouragement. How can you cultivate your love and trust for Jesus, so that you won't become disheartened as you follow Him?



# Who is your KING?

## Two Teachers

Lesson 17 • August 26 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

We must choose between two teachers to learn from (or to be).

### Getting Started

1. Think of your favorite teachers, authors, podcasters, or other influencers in your life. How did you determine that these people were worth listening to?

2. What are some different reasons why someone might be motivated to be a teacher?

### Digging In

Read Matthew 7:15-23

<sup>15</sup> “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup> By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. <sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom  
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*of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’*

### Explanation of the Passage

Teachers are people who influence both our thoughts and our behaviors. Therefore, those who we embrace as our teachers have a massive influence upon our lives. This leads Jesus to give a strong warning for His disciples to watch out for false teachers. He calls them ferocious wolves who come to people in sheep’s clothing. In other words, they present themselves as good and gentle teachers of the truth, but in reality they are seeking to promote themselves at the expense of those who listen to them.

How then will Jesus’ disciples recognize these dangerous false teachers? Jesus says that they will recognize them by their fruit. In other words, the actions—and the results of their teaching—will give these false teachers away. After all, grapes don’t come from thornbushes and figs don’t come from thistles. A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. Jesus’ disciples, therefore, should be looking not only at the words that these teachers say, but at their

own lives and habits, as well as the results of their teaching in the lives of their hearers.

Then Jesus transitions with another warning. He speaks about those who call Him “Lord,” but don’t do the will of His Father. These are people who claim that they drove out demons and prophesied and performed miracles in the name of Jesus. In other words, these seem to be leaders, perhaps even the same teachers that Jesus referred to in verses 15-20. In other words, these are people who have participated in religious activities that revolve around Jesus.

Jesus, however, dismisses these people at the final judgment. He says that He never knew them and he calls them “evildoers.” Just as Jesus warned about teachers who have bad fruit, He now warns teachers that, if they ignore the will God, no amount of religious activity will grant them entrance into the kingdom.

This passage provides a serious warning both to teachers and to those who are exposed to teaching. Teachers mustn’t rely on their giftedness or their religious credentials, but on active obedience to God. And listeners ought to pay attention not only to the words that teachers say, but to the actions of those who teach.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. Jesus warns us about false prophets because He believes that they pose a real danger. Where might you encounter false prophets/teachers today?

5. How could you be on the lookout to discover a teacher’s “fruit”?

6. In verse 21 Jesus says that the person who will enter the kingdom of heaven is not simply the person who focuses on involvement in religious activities, but the person who does the will of His Father. How can you be sure that you are practicing the will of God and not simply playing religious games?

7. In verse 23 Jesus says to the false teachers that He never knew them. What do you think this says about the nature of what Jesus desires from His disciples?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. Jesus places a lot of emphasis on works in this passage. He speaks of the fruit of the teachers and rebukes those who don’t do the will of the Father. How do you think this emphasis on works connects to the New Testament teaching that people are saved by grace and not by works?

# Taking it to Heart

9. Think of the teachers/influences that you have allowed into your life. Are there any steps that you need to take in order to make sure that you are not allowing yourself to be deceived?

10. Jesus warns against substituting religious activity for doing God's will. What is one specific area in which you have been hesitating to do God's will? What do you plan to do about this?



# Who is your KING?

## Two Builders

Lesson 18 • September 2 • by Dan Franklin

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### Main Point

We must choose between two responses to Jesus and His teaching.

### Getting Started

1. What makes the teachings of Jesus different from any other teachings?

2. How often, when you finish hearing a sermon or reading the Bible, do you determine to teach specific action in response?

### Digging In

Read Matthew 7:24-29

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house,

and it fell with a great crash.”

<sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

### Explanation of the Passage

In the final section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives a parable about how to respond to His message. Far from shrugging His shoulders and saying, “I hope people can take something away from these words,” Jesus places the utmost importance upon the response of people. And He communicates that there are only two ways to respond.

Some people, according to Jesus, will respond to His words like a wise man. The wise way to respond is to hear Jesus’ words and to put them into practice. To do this is like building a house on the rock, on solid ground. Then, when the rains come and the streams rise and the wind blows, the house survives because of its solid foundation. The wise person who puts Jesus’ words into practice will find himself or herself in a similar position. The practice of Jesus’ words will provide strength and stability in challenging times.

On the other hand, some people will respond to Jesus' words with foolishness. The foolish person is the one who hears Jesus' words and does not put them into practice. This person is like building a house on the sand. The same storms come, the same streams rise, and the same wind blows, but this house does not survive because its foundation was weak. Similarly, those who don't put Jesus' words into practice will be swept away by the hard times that face them in life.

After Jesus' final words, Matthew tells us of the crowd's response. They were amazed at what He taught because He taught as if He had authority, and not like their teachers of the law. He stood out as a unique, authoritative teacher. Perhaps part of this was because He pointed His hearers not simply to a far-off idea, but directly to Himself. He said that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament (5:17-19). He took it upon Himself to give the deeper meaning of the commandments (5:21, 5:27, 5:31, 5:33, 5:38, 5:43). And He had the audacity to say that he would be making proclamations at the final judgment (7:22-23). Jesus set Himself up not only as a master teacher, but as the authoritative King. And in response we all must decide whether or not we will bow the knee to Him as our King.

3. What struck you most about this passage—or about the sermon, if you heard it?

4. Jesus places strong emphasis on the need to practice “these words of mine.” How can you be diligent to focus more attention on the words of Scripture than on the other messages that you regularly receive?

5. Jesus' parable has to do with what foundation we have. In what way do you think our beliefs serve as our foundation for life?

6. If you, like the foolish man, don't have a strong foundation, what are some ways that you might fall with a “great crash?”

7. The crowds responded to the Sermon on the Mount with amazement. As you think back on this entire sermon, what amazes you most?

## Wrestling with Issues

8. In a world where you can hear and read God's Word whenever you want, how can you make sure that you don't grow complacent in the need to respond and practice what you hear?

# Taking it to Heart

9. Reflect back on the whole of the Sermon on the Mount. In light of your life today, what specific part deserves the most focus so that you can put into it practice?

10. Jesus speaks of His words as our foundation. How would you describe how Jesus' words serve as your foundation for life?