



Session Two

The Sermon on the Mount, Pt.2

Matthew 6

Questions to consider as you read Matthew Chapter 6

1) You may find it useful to read verses 1-4 along with verses 16-18. Each set of verses (known as a *pericope*) contains admonitions about Jesus concerning motivation, relative, in 1-4, to giving to the needy and, in 16-18, fasting. Jesus, it seems, wants us to be vigilant about why and how we engage in actions arising from our spiritual convictions, whether they be actions that benefit others (giving to the needy) or ourselves (fasting).

Jesus is particularly concerned that we be sensitive to whether or not we do what we do because we're motivated by a genuine sense of compassion for others and a desire to deepen our own relationship with him, both rooted in what we ourselves have experienced from Jesus, or if we're motivated by a desire for people to see what we're doing and think we're good, spiritual people.

Do you ever examine your motives for why you do what you do, especially if it involves helping others? If there are times you act from a desire to be thought of highly or to impress others, why do you need that? Is it truly sufficient for you if, as Jesus suggests, only God knows what you're doing? Why or why not?

2) Verses 5-15 contain some of Jesus' most pointed teaching about prayer. As you read these verses, you may wish to also look at *Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount* (following).

3) Verses 19-34, about material wealth, are among the most difficult in all of Scripture.

- a) The case can be made that while we tend to think Christianity is about our relationship with Christ, it is just as much—and perhaps more—about our relationship with material wealth. If this idea makes you uncomfortable, consider that in verse 21 Jesus says, *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*. How would you respond to the statement that the most truthful measure of our faith in Jesus is in the relationship we have with material wealth?

- b) It is easy to say that our faith is in Jesus and that he, not material wealth, is the source of our security. Take a few moments and think about your daily life. What does it tell you about where you put your faith and the source of your security?
- c) Read verse 25. Do you feel you have enough? Do you worry? Why?
- d) In verses 30-32, Jesus tells us we needn't worry about material things because God knows what we need and will provide it. Do you *really* believe that? How do you understand the relationship between the providence of God and personal responsibility?
- e) What role do fear and control play in your relationship with material wealth? What role do they play in your relationship with (and faith in) Jesus?