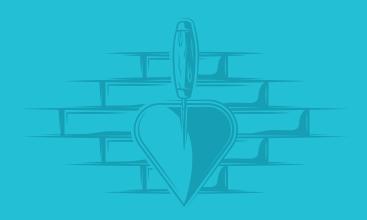


- FOR ADULTS -



GROUP MEMBERS USE *THE BRINK, FUSION FAMILY,* OR *FUSION NEXT*DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDES

MATTHEW PHILIPPIANS



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WELCOME TO THE D6 EVERYDAY FOUNDATIONS ADULT

TEACHING GUIDE. This is the one-size-fits-all guide for teaching adult small groups. It correlates with *The Brink*, *Fusion Family*, and *Fusion Next* devotional study guides.

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum is built on:

- · A high view of Scripture
- Church and Home emphasis
- · Family alignment and resources for every age
- Practical biblical application
- · Intentional focus on developing biblical literacy and a biblical worldview
- · Biblical truth and perspective on important cultural issues
- · Spotlights on Bible characters

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum helps you build confidence in the unchanging, enduring, and authoritative Word of God. The three-year scope and sequence includes an overview of the story of the Old and New Testaments, emphasizing major characters and themes, as well as the application of God's Word to current cultural issues.

Even if the student never misses a single Sunday in the three-year cycle, the task is too much for curriculum alone. We must also depend on the work of the Holy Spirit and the partnership of families so the truth goes beyond head knowledge to heart knowledge and anchors in a permanent place. Combining both at-church and at-home tools, *D6 EveryDay Foundations* curriculum helps churches equip parents with the mortar to hold together the building blocks of faith.

Elementary and Teen students (and preschoolers when possible) study the same family themes as their parents and grandparents. This family-aligned curriculum philosophy opens the door to everyday opportunities for faith conversations.

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum offers a choice of three devotional study guides for adults.

- The Brink—for young adults without children
- Fusion Family—for parents with kids at home
- Fusion Next—for empty nesters

Singles in your group can choose the magazine that best fits their life stage.

In addition to daily devotions to help reinforce biblical principles, readers enjoy relevant articles, columns, and more. Even if your group is made up of various ages, members can choose the guide that fits best.

Every lesson in this teaching guide is built around the CLEAR® Learning System. This time-tested method gives a simple but effective approach to successfully teaching God's Word.

Connect—These suggested activities help capture the group members' attention and answer the question, *Where is this lesson going?*

Learn—What does the Bible say? This section answers this question by digging into the biblical text and explaining it in ways both teachers and group members can understand.

Explore—These notes provide more information for the teacher. They address issues like cultural background, historical context, theological importance, apologetics, and other complementary biblical teachings.

Apply—What difference does all this make in my life? Apply statements help group members see how the biblical truths they have just heard fit into everyday life. These Apply statements, along with thought-provoking discussion questions, are included in with the **Learn** section as they most naturally fit.

Respond—The final section in each lesson answers the question, *What now?* Respond encourages group members to take practical steps to apply the biblical principles they have learned. The lessons are further reinforced in the devotional study guides.

Every lesson also includes:

- · Lesson objective—identify the lesson's main goal
- Building Blocks—encourage biblical literacy for the whole family
- Family Verse of the Month—focus on memorizing key Scripture together
- Teaching Tips—give helps and strategies for effective teaching
- Thought-provoking discussion questions—encourage deeper application of biblical truth
- Teaching essentials—downloadable extras (handouts, posters, outlines, PowerPoint, and more)
- The Teaching Guide is also available for download to help you customize the lesson for your group.

Bonus resources:

- Parent Page—weekly tool that provides the key truths of the lesson, application ideas, talking points to extend family discussion, and family activity ideas, as well as a summary of the preschool lesson
- D6 Family App—this app delivers free resources designed to equip you for generational discipleship
- Family Faith Moment—biweekly email providing simple ideas to turn everyday routines into discipleship moments
- D6 Teacher group on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/D6Family)—a Facebook forum for D6 curriculum users to share ideas and ask questions



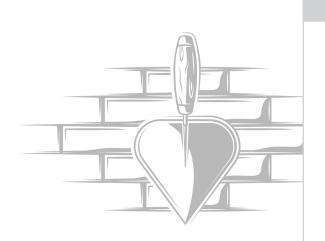
Digital Downloads—To enhance your teaching, digital downloads are available. There you will find PowerPoint slides for each lesson, teaching essentials, and editable teaching outlines. We're also excited to offer a digital version of this Teaching Guide that includes live hyperlinks so you can click directly on a website or Scripture passage and have it pop up on your device. To access these resources, scan this QR code or visit the following: **d6.family/6825.**

FAMILY THEME

The Blessings of Everyday Discipleship

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners take on and live out the godly attitudes of the Beatitudes and are salt and light to those around them.

STUDY TEXT: Matthew 5:1-16



CHECKLIST

- ☐ Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 1-1 or AH 1-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 1* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 1-2), the Weak or Strong handout (AH 1-3), and Parent Page (PP-1) if needed. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-1)* to parents.

— Key Truths

- Find True Happiness by Taking On and Living Out Godly Attitudes (<u>Matthew 5:1–12</u>)
- Impact Others and Glorify God by Being Salt and Light to Those Around Us (Matthew 5:13-16)

Verse of the Month

MATTHEW 6:33

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Consider showing this short video that explains what it means to be a city on a hill: tinyurl.com/CityPDT. Discuss the video with group members. Why is isolated Christianity unbiblical? What should it look like? After discussion, say: God has called us to impact others through our lives. Today we'll study how we should do that.

OPTION 2: Write *Be Salt and Light* on the board. Ask your learners what it means to be salt and light to the world around us. After discussion, say: *The Bible tells us to be salt and light in the world. Today we will examine what that means and how we can do that.*

OPTION 3: Ask your learners what attitudes make people hard to deal with. Then ask what attitudes make people easy to like and get along with. After discussion, say: *Today we will examine some special attitudes Christ wants to develop in us.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 1-2)

The Sermon on the Mount serves as a bridge from the Law to the gospel. Five of the lessons from this block will come from this sermon. This lesson is an introduction to the other four. Jesus illustrated vision casting in this sermon. He described how it would look when kingdom people behave perfectly. Eight attitudes are noted and called the Beatitudes. Jesus did not make a new list of commands. New life in Christ is about Him living through us with exemplary results.

KEY TRUTH: Find True Happiness by Taking On and Living Out Godly Attitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

As was customary, Jesus sat down to teach, and His disciples (those who had already committed to follow Him) and the crowds came near to hear (verses 1–2). He began by stating the kinds of attitudes He wants to develop in His followers that lead to true happiness and blessing. They are called the Beatitudes. Look at the middle part of each verse. These are the attitudes: poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and willing to be persecuted for righteousness' sake. The attitudes are followed by a resulting condition: belonging to the kingdom, comfort, inheriting the earth, satisfaction, receiving mercy, seeing

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 1-1



AH 1-2

TEACHING TIP

Tactfully move away from off-topic ideas that crop up in discussion times. Don't be drawn into meaningless controversy.

APPLY:

Find happiness and blessing by allowing Jesus to develop godly attitudes in you.



PowerPoint 1

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 1-1) and on PowerPoint 1, which is customizable. Files 1A and 1B are provided for customization.

God, called sons of God, and experiencing the kingdom of Heaven. The overriding emotion that occurs when living this way is happiness. Something happens in our spirit when our hearts are in tune with God's ways.

DISCUSS:

- How do these godly attitudes conflict with the attitudes and values of the world?
- Why do these attitudes bring true happiness? (They align with the way God made us and the purpose He has for our lives.)

-EXPLORE:-

In the Beatitudes, a result is clearly pronounced for certain attitudes and behaviors. Nine times in this passage Matthew used the Greek word markarios, which is usually translated as blessed. At first, it might sound like a reward for a certain behavior. Some translate it as *happy* to help convey the understanding. This colors the word properly, but our culture has given it a shallow meaning as if we are happy because things are going well. Jesus was saying something far different than a feeling based on circumstances. In ancient Greek, markarios referred to the mythical gods who lived above the cares of the world. *Elite* bests describes the use of the word in contemporary Greek. Their status lifted them above the problems of the lowly people. Elsewhere, Matthew used a different word, eulogeo (14:19, 21:9; 23:39; 25:34; 26:26) that is translated as some form of bless. If you compare another use of *markarios* in <u>Matthew 16:17</u>, you see the uniqueness of this word. English translators have trouble conveying the full message. Surveying several translations and paraphrases you would find the following offerings: blessed, happy, God blesses, you're blessed, you are fortunate, and you are well off. Through this word, God promises a richness to be enjoyed that is beyond description.

First, a maturing follower of Jesus is *poor in spirit*—continually aware of his or her spiritual bankruptcy **(verse 3).** This contrasts with a self-righteous law-keeper. Admitting our need for God unlocks the door to the kingdom. We gain entrance and continue to enjoy the presence of God by admitting our helpless condition and our need for total dependence on God.

Mourning reflects our attitude toward sin (verse 4). We are sad, even distressed, over sinful behavior, especially our own. The spirit of repentance should continue from the day of conversion until death. As we adopt that perspective, the comfort of forgiveness is ours. No

longer are we condemned. As Christians we are forgiven, and what happiness that brings!

Meekness is not weakness, false modesty, or humility that we try to display, but it is a quality of being unpretentious, gentle, or not desirous of recognition or fame (verse 5). Trumpeting our accomplishments reflects our cultural emphasis on success. Solomon cautioned us not to draw attention to ourselves (Proverbs 27:2). Surprising to all, this kind of person, one not seeking special position, will end up inheriting the earth. This flies in the face of how the world thinks about getting ahead in life.

Hunger for personal righteousness describes those who realize their spiritual bankruptcy and want to be righteous (verse 6). Elsewhere in Scripture we find the exhortation to grow, obey, and respond to biblical teachings. Taking in and practicing the Word of God creates a hunger for more. Those who belong to Christ are never satisfied with their heart condition. They may have begun with addressing outward behavior, but soon they discover the heart needs continual attention. The inner being that is hidden from others becomes the focus. The kingdom is made up of those who partake of heavenly truth, knowing that spiritual nutrition involves regular eating. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the more we eat of spiritual truth, the hungrier we get.

Merciful people are compassionate (verse 7). This value is directed not only to those who are guilty, but also to those who are in need. We offer grace to those who do not deserve it, and we offer help to those who are in need. Merciful people are those who have received mercy and continue to experience it themselves. As we offer mercy to others, our eyes more clearly see the mercy extended to us.

Pure in heart draws our attention to the inner man **(verse 8).** Jesus taught that the condition of one's heart is the source of who that person really is (Matthew 6:21). Proverbs 4:23 alerts us to guard the heart. This beatitude does not explain how to do it but notes that a person who is addressing character and motives is in a position to experience God. As taught in Psalm 24:3-6, our heart condition will affect our ability to understand God's ways and be in close fellowship with Him.

Earthly kingdoms often use power and violence to gain advantage. Unrest, quarrels, and violence are the ways of this world (James 4:1–4). Jesus set a new tone of *peacemaking* (verse 9). This is not an embrace of "peace at all costs," but an indication that we can be different from the world. The kingdom dweller is alert to maintaining peace, resolving problems, and bringing opposing parties to the table. We have the opportunity to discard the ways of the world and manifest self-control, listening, extraordinary patience, and tactful use of

words for noble means. This otherworldly attitude distinguishes us as people belonging to God.

As He was ending His earthly ministry, Jesus warned His disciples that they would be *persecuted* (John 15:18–21). Paul echoed Christ's teaching in his instructions to Timothy (2 Timothy 3:12). In essence, Jesus was presenting a cost/benefit analysis (verse 10). Yes, you are going to be subjected to all kinds and degrees of misunderstanding, opposition, attacks, and losses. However, you will experience the kingdom and the presence of God. When we experience ridicule, misunderstandings, false accusations, or outright persecution, we can say a prayer of thanksgiving for those uncomfortable encounters. We can claim Jesus' promise of great reward in Heaven and declare it will be worth it all when we see Him.

Since this revelation strikes a chord of fear and despair in our hearts, Jesus encouraged us **(verse 11).** The object of our persecutors is Jesus. We need not take it personally; they are reacting against the One who died on the cross for us, ushering in His kingdom. Clothed in that perspective, we can have an attitude of accepting persecution, knowing we join that privileged group, the prophets of old who stood up for God in God-forsaken societies. Note that this is the first command of the passage: *Rejoice and be glad* **(verse 12)**!

There is a direct connection between having these attitudes Jesus mentioned in the Beatitudes and experiencing true satisfaction and happiness. Some might look at this as attitudes for which to strive while others believe that God will automatically produce these. Perhaps both are true. Regardless, it is good to evaluate our lives for the presence of these attitudes. Are they present and growing in our lives? Are they something we strive for? Is God making changes in us, producing humility and a hunger for righteousness? As we hold up these ideals as desired behavior, asking God to work in us, He will produce them in us, like the Spirit produces spiritual fruit. When we think of Christian maturity, we should think of these inner attitudes, not just outward activity.

APPLY:

Evaluate yourself for the presence and strength of these attitudes.

DISCUSS:

- What role does humility play in the Beatitudes? Why is pride in direct conflict with the things Jesus mentioned?
- Which attitudes need to grow stronger in you? What can you do to help make that happen?
- Some of the Beatitudes involve suffering. How should Christians view suffering?

These attitudes are especially important for our relationships with others. Actions speak louder than words. The home is the laboratory for Christian growth. Our relationships—especially those closest to us—provide an opportunity for evaluation and stimulus. Ponder the Beatitudes. What response would we expect if we asked our spouse or close friend how our behavior corresponds to those qualities? Do those around us recognize that we realize our sinfulness and our need for the Lord? Do we demonstrate humility and meekness? Are we seeking after what is good and right from a pure heart? Do we show mercy to those around us and seek to help others be at peace with God and those around them? As God produces His life in us and makes us more like Christ, these attitudes should become more evident to those around us.

DISCUSS:

• Which attitudes would those around you say are strengths for you? Which would they say are weaknesses?

EXECUTE: Glorify God by Being Salt and Light to Those Around Us (Matthew 5:13-16)

Jesus summarized this introduction to His sermon with a declaration of the distinctiveness of those in the kingdom, highlighting influence and responsibility. He plucked two ideas from daily life. The first one is salt (verse 13). When we think of salt we tend to think if it as a seasoning—making something taste better. Another idea that might have related better to these hearers is the preserving nature of salt. It is hard to know which application was intended. Perhaps this is a case where both apply.

The notion of seasoning is that the Christian presence flavors situations with kingdom values and attitudes. Concerning preservation, these attitudes serve as a resistance to the onslaught of sin around us. We have seen the flicker of kindness in the darkness of selfishness. The kind of righteous living described in the Beatitudes serves as a bastion for truth in a world of evil and decay. The warning is somber: if these eight qualities do not flow out of your life, your value as an influence for God diminishes.

DISCUSS:

- What does it look like to flavor our lives and relationships with kingdom values? How can we help preserve those values?
- What should be a Christian's role in trying to influence the culture?

APPLY:

Ask those closest to you to help you determine where you need to grow in these attitudes.

APPLY:

Like salt, flavor your life and relationships with kingdom values and preserve those values in the midst of the sin around us.

• Is it simply enough to lead by example, or are we called to do more to influence the world around us? Explain.

The other idea is light **(verses 14–16).** Light is distinct from darkness as kingdom living is diametrically opposed to the ways of the world. There is no need to be inconspicuous or ashamed of our countercultural behavior. We should let our light shine for all to see. What were the hearers thinking on that hillside when Jesus spoke of light from cities on a hill? Masterfully, He engaged the imagination of the hearers with a concept to which they could connect instantly. This is not a suggestion to promote ourselves or trumpet our righteousness to others. In fact, the intention is for God to get the glory for making you into the person you are becoming. These qualities are gifts of grace, not trophies of hard work.

APPLY:

Shine the light of godly values for all to see.

DISCUSS:

- What do we learn from the word pictures Jesus used in verses 14-15?
- What do we mean when we say we should shine our light for all to
- How might shining our light influence our family, friends, and coworkers?

We point people to God when we reflect His character. We are witnesses every minute of every day. What kind of witness are we? Do we speak bitterness or sweet savor? Do we make situations more pleasant, or do we feed the depravity? Do we serve as an impediment for sin, or do we go with the flow and fit into the crowd?

When those around us look at our attitudes and actions, are they drawn to God, or are they pushed away from Him? Does the way we live show them what God is like, or does it cause them to misunderstand His character? Our attitudes and actions should preserve and flavor our culture and draw attention to the character and greatness of our God.

What about our churches? How do we behave when we disagree? What kind of spirit flows in our business meetings? The world has discounted the value of the church, often citing examples of dissension, anger, and ungodliness. Do our attitudes and behaviors light up a darkening world? Are we part of the problem or the solution in our churches? Let's allow Christ to produce godly attitudes in us and put them into practice.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: There are many issues of injustice in our world today. A quick look at missions websites shows that many of our missionaries are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus. In North America, abortion rates continue to be high as our world fails to protect the unborn. Ask your group members to discuss issues of injustice they are particularly concerned about. Is there an issue that most of your group is passionate about? Consider participating in a ministry that addresses this issue.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to evaluate how strong they are in each of the Beatitudes. They could rate themselves from 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong). Then ask them to choose a beatitude they would like to grow in. Ask them to find and memorize one or two passages of Scripture this week that deal with the beatitude they chose and to ask God to develop that beatitude in them. The AH 1-3 Weak or Strong handout can help them.

OPTION 3: Ask your learners to think of a way they could be salt (flavor and protection of godly values) this week and shine their light (live out the truth of the gospel) to those around them. Encourage them to put this in action this week.

Building Blocks 🚣

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Jesus' best-known sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, is recorded in Matthew 5-7.

Pray!



AH 1-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-1

The Parent Page (PP-1) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

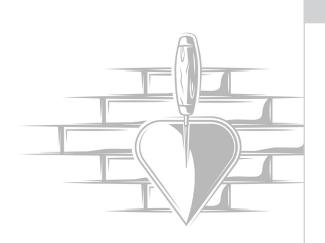
Notes



A Godly Perspective

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners live with heartfelt integrity, honoring and obeying the intent of God's Word.

STUDY TEXT: Matthew 5:17-48



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 2-1 or AH 2-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 2* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 2-2), the Heartfelt Obedience poster (AH 2-3), and Parent Page (PP-2) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-2)* to parents.

Key Truths

- Obey God Even When It Is Difficult (Matthew 5:17-30)
- Show Integrity Even When It Is Inconvenient (Matthew 5:31–37)
- Love People Even When They Take Advantage of You (Matthew 5:38-48)

Verse of the Month

MATTHEW 6:33

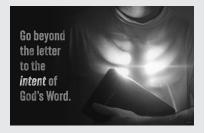
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AH 2-1

A Godly Perspective		
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	What will fact into practice this week?	

AH 2-2



AH 2-3

TEACHING TIP

If you are team-teaching with another person, schedule times to plan and pray for your group together.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that discusses what it means to love our enemies: <u>tinyurl.com/EnemySTR</u>. Why is it difficult to live out that passage? Does it go against our natural inclinations? After discussion, say: *Today we will look at the Sermon on the Mount and examine the practical teachings Jesus gave us for interacting with others.*

OPTION 2: Begin by asking your learners how they feel when someone avoids prosecution by taking advantage of loopholes in the law. Can they give an example of this happening? After discussion, say: *Today we will see how people in Jesus' day tried to create loopholes in the Law so they could get around the intent of the Law. Jesus affirmed God's Law and taught us to go beyond the letter of the Law to heartfelt obedience.*

OPTION 3: Ask learners if they have ever been in a situation where someone raised the bar of expectations. It could be a boss at work, a captain of a sports team, or a pastor urging church members to grow in their faith, etc. After discussion, say: *Today we will see how Jesus raised the expectations for what God expects of those who want to follow Him. He affirmed God's Law and taught us to go beyond the letter of the Law to heartfelt obedience.*

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 2-2) and display the *Heartfelt Obedience* poster (AH 2-3).

One of the interpretational challenges we face where the Bible is concerned is grasping the author's intent in writing or speaking. Too often, we interpret according to our own knowledge and experience and miss the point. So why did Jesus bring up the Law? What was He proposing?

KEY TRUTH: Obey God Even When It Is Difficult (Matthew 5:17-30)

As if He were reading the minds of His listeners, Jesus abruptly declared, If you believe I am getting rid of the Law, you have misunderstood. I have come to fulfill the Law (verse 17). Were they thinking that a new way meant discarding the old? If so, Jesus assured them that even the smallest letter and stroke of the Law would be fulfilled.

The application is that God's teaching from the Old Testament is not to be relaxed in any way; it must be taught, and it is valuable. Jesus was heading off the careless use of language, a lesson we need in our day when some remark, "Forget the Old Testament, embrace just the New Testament," or when they devalue the older testament by neglect.

DISCUSS:

• How should we respond to those who say it is not important to learn and obey the Old Testament?

Verse 20 pulls the loose ends together when Jesus declared that His Jewish listeners would have to do better than their religious leaders and teachers to be part of the kingdom of God. In a stroke of literary genius, Jesus created confusion and generated questions in the minds of the listeners. He set the table well and was ready to explain what He meant. Jesus presented six case studies to make His point. The master teacher hooked His listeners with the known and led them to the unknown when He noted they had been taught earlier about these subjects.

The first two examples were murder and adultery, which some might label as "the big two." Although the Mosaic Law gives details about justifiable homicide (Numbers 35:16-29), the emphasis was on the act of taking a life, even in neglect or carelessness. That is well and good, and the teaching remains until this day. However, Jesus explained that God has more in mind than a specific act; this command includes anger (verses 21-22). Although not sinful in itself, anger must be addressed before it leads to sin (Ephesians 4:26-27). Matthew used the word in a way that suggests ongoing anger. When we are angry, we use abusive words we often regret. This behavior is worthy of judgment.

DISCUSS:

• Why do you think Jesus went beyond outward action to address inward attitudes of the heart? (Ultimately, our actions flow from our heart motivation; God is concerned with the condition of our hearts: etc.)

Whereas murder evokes an image of physical destruction, Jesus alerted us to the emotional destruction left in the wake of anger episodes. Anger is so destructive that it requires immediate attention. Appealing to the worshiper, Jesus explained that we should not think we can worship if this rupture is left untreated (verses 23-26).

APPLY:

The Old Testament is God's inspired Word and should be learned, understood, and obeyed.



PowerPoint 2

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 2-1) and on PowerPoint 2, which is customizable. Files 2A and 2B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Don't let anger spill over into hurtful words or actions. Be quick to forgive.

-EXPLORE:-

The emotion of anger is confusing for the Christian. Some believe it is sinful to feel angry while others defend their anger-driven behavior, citing the righteous indignation of Jesus when He cleansed the Temple (John 2:14–16). The Bible is clear that anger ignored can lead to potential problems (Ephesians 4:26-27). However, the same verse does not condemn anger, just the results that might develop if anger is ignored or wrongly expressed. When Jesus warned about anger in **Matthew 5:22**, the Greek participle suggests a persistent anger—an anger that has been neglected. Are feelings of anger, hate, and resentment sinful in themselves? Rightly channeled, anger can lead us to a strong conviction against sin, drive us to stand up for good and speak against evil, and even motivate us to get involved and take action. It seems the issue is unresolved or wrongly expressed anger. Anger that is not channeled into righteous avenues might explode into sinful behavior. Such anger can lead to nursed resentments and violence.

The second command mentioned is the prohibition against adultery (verses 27–28). Most who desire to follow God would avoid the physical act of adultery. But Jesus clarified the heart of this command: adultery can happen internally, through the eyes and the imagination. What does this mean? It's important to note—this is not a condemnation of noticing someone's beauty. The original Greek word points to a lingering, intentional gaze—one that turns the person into an object of personal fantasy. This Greek word is the same used in Luke 9:62 to describe someone looking back instead of staying focused on the path ahead.

APPLY:

Don't look at others with lustful desire.

DISCUSS:

- What is the difference between appreciating someone's appearance and lusting? (There's a key distinction between a passing glance and a stare fueled by desire.)
- How can a Christian channel their sexual desires in healthy, God-honoring ways?

The warning in Matthew 5 addresses the moment when attraction crosses into objectification. Admiration becomes a problem when we allow desire to shape our thoughts—reducing someone made in God's image to a mental object for personal use, which is the kind of internal betrayal Jesus called out. His strong hyperbole—speaking of gouging out an eye or cutting off a hand—drives home the urgency of guarding our hearts. (Though figurative, some mistakenly interpret this as a literal call for punishment.)

Living according to God's ways isn't always easy, but it is essential. The moral guidance of the Law reflects a holy lifestyle. Even though we aren't saved by our works, we are still called to honor God with our thoughts and actions. Jesus elevated the Law—not by adding burden, but by exposing the deeper purpose behind it. Are we content to harbor bitterness just because we haven't committed murder? Are we excusing inner lust simply because we haven't acted on it physically? Holiness begins in the heart.

EXECUTE: Show Integrity Even When It Is **Inconvenient (Matthew 5:31-37)**

The institution of marriage reveals another abuse of the intent of the Law in the Jewish culture of New Testament times (verses 31-32). Jesus was not giving a full-blown teaching on divorce and the Christian. The context is integrity and highlighting the real intent of the Law.

It was common for people to use loopholes to get out of a marriage. Jesus slammed the door on those abuses, insisting that marriage oaths must be honored. The only possible permission would be in circumstances of sexual impropriety, and even then, divorce is not required. Often lost in the discussion is the lack of respect for the spouse and that this abuse of divorce places people in potentially adulterous situations.

Another kind of oath relates to the third commandment (not taking the Lord's name in vain). Notice the change in language. Jesus modified what they had heard from their teachers (verses 33-37). The original law had been embellished by individual interpretations. It would be like His saying, You have heard some preachers say. Some oaths were dismissed in the spirit of "I had my fingers crossed." It was commonly believed that the object by which one swore could measure the seriousness of the oath. It became so technical that an oath could be sworn by the gold of the Temple and be binding but swearing by the Temple alone could be negated. Obviously, the regard for truth had been missed. Jesus loved the truth the Law taught and hated the abuses manipulated by man. Integrity is not an optional extra for believers. It must be who we are.

DISCUSS:

- How does Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce apply today?
- What excuses or loopholes do people use today seeking to get around the intent of God's Word?

APPLY:

Live with integrity, honoring and obeying the intent of God's Word. Do not look for excuses or loopholes to release you from obeying God.

EXPLORE:

You might wish to explore the use of oaths to better understand Jesus' words in Matthew 5:33-37. In Matthew 23, Jesus condemned the ways of the scribes and Pharisees, noting they placed heavy burdens on people they were unwilling to bear themselves (Matthew 23:4). Jesus indicted them for their preposterous distinctions between binding oaths and those that were not binding. Some oaths were made by swearing by the Temple. After time, the integrity of the oath was dismissed, and a new level of oathmaking was invented—swearing by the gold of the Temple. Swearing by the altar had a similar fate. Soon, the oath required swearing by the gift on the altar or it could be ignored as invalid (Matthew 23:16-22). Jesus cross-examined these legal wizards and shredded their arguments as ignoring the source of the Temple and the altar. Parsing words does not negate the integrity of the promise. Instead of worshiping a holy God with integrity, the legal maneuvering became the focal point.

In our litigious society, loopholes are prized. How much has the world around us affected our integrity? Do we look for excuses to release us from commitments? When Jesus spoke of the immorality exception to the permanence of marriage, He was not advocating taking advantage of it. He was merely acknowledging the devastation that occurs when a marriage is torn apart by adultery. Sometimes, that devastation is so pronounced that reconciliation is impossible.

Care must be exercised to honor our promises. Scripture warns us against rushing into commitments, often called vows. Our integrity is challenged when keeping a commitment will cost us time, money, or convenience. The kingdom people Jesus described protect their reputation by honoring their word.

APPLY:

Keep your promises even when it will cost you.

DISCUSS:

- Why is it important for Christians to be intentional about telling the truth? How might our witness be damaged if we're not known for being truthful or honoring our commitments?
- Does telling the truth involve absolute transparency? Explain.

SEY TRUTH: Love People Even When They Take Advantage of You (Matthew 5:38-48)

Jesus concluded this discussion with illustrations about retaliation (verse 38). Once again, He reminded the people of what they had heard. **Verse 38** is from the Law (Exodus 21:24; Deuteronomy 19:21;

Leviticus 24:20), and was meant to make sure the punishment fit the crime and was not excessive. Careful examination reveals the instructions were given to judges and courts, not individuals. Opportunists misapply the teaching to justify their own personal revenge. Jesus, instead, encouraged going the extra mile to keep the peace, rather than escalating the situation by retaliating (verses 39-41). This was not meant to prohibit self-defense, but to encourage peacemaking and helping those truly in need (verse 42). See also Romans 12:17-21.

In verse 43, Jesus was not directly quoting the Old Testament command; only the first phrase about love is from the Law. He was relating an interpretation taught by their teachers: hate your enemies. Jesus corrected that error, minimizing the value of only loving people who love us, and describing the Christian way as loving and praying for friends and enemies alike. He concluded the teaching by commanding us to be complete and godly, going beyond the publicans and Gentiles. To love those who hate us or mistreat us might be the most Christlike thing a person can do.

DISCUSS:

- What does it look like to go the extra mile to keep the peace, rather than escalating the situation by retaliating?
- How would our world be different if people lived by Jesus' teaching regarding retaliation?

The way we treat our opponents distinguishes us as citizens of God's kingdom. How do we handle attacks and impositions? How quick are we to retaliate? When driving, do we fight to make sure the inconsiderate selfish driver does not get ahead of us? What might happen if we were gracious to thoughtless people? It is easy and quite normal to treat others well who have favored us; anyone can do it. However, treating someone right who has wronged us is unusual and requires the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to do so.

Meeting the challenges of Christlike behavior is the path to spiritual maturity. We cannot afford to labor under the pressure of having to be perfect. Living for Christ is a life of imperfections addressed by a loving, gracious, and highly expectant God. Our goal is not perfection but growth toward maturity. Every event in daily life is an opportunity for the grace of God to work in us and through us to transform us into a more Christlike attitude and behavior.

APPLY:

Follow Christ's example by going the extra mile to keep the peace, rather than escalating the situation by retaliating.

APPLY:

Keep growing in spiritual maturity by loving friends and enemies alike.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-2

The Parent Page (PP-2) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

DISCUSS:

- Jesus set an example of loving all people, including those who opposed Him. How is that different from what comes natural to us?
- Share examples of real-life situations where you saw people loving their enemies. What type of impact did that make?

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Today's Scripture contains a myriad of practical information for all Christians. Encourage group members to review the passages that were read today and find one principle they need to apply to their lives this week.

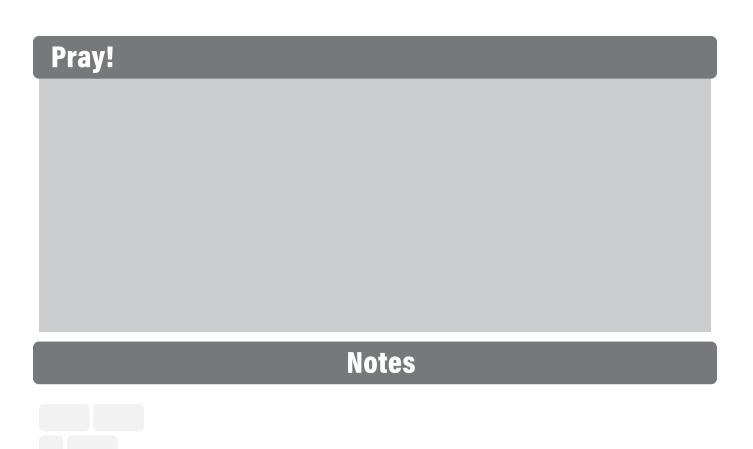
OPTION 2: One of the most difficult commands for believers to obey is to love those who oppose us or treat us badly. Discuss why this is so difficult. Encourage learners to identify someone who opposes them and choose to love that person this week. Ask them to seek to mend hurts or hard feelings and do something kind or loving for that person.

OPTION 3: Our culture knows little about modesty. With the onslaught of sexually charged commercials, programs, movies, and the Internet, lust is now considered a normal or expected aspect of human behavior. Encourage your group members to evaluate their own thoughts and actions for lust. Are they maintaining purity of thought and actions, or are they indulging thoughts and actions that lead to lust? What steps do they need to take to be pure in this area? What first step can they take today?

Building Blocks 🚣

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, eight statements of blessing based on the attitudes valued in God's kingdom.

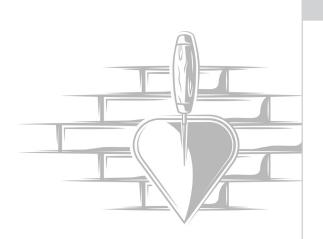


FAMILY THEME

The Model Prayer

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners do good deeds and pray to honor and glorify God, not to be seen by people.

STUDY TEXT: Matthew 6:1-18



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 3-1 or AH 3-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 3* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 3-2), the What to Pray For handout (AH 3-3), and Parent Page (PP-3) if needed. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-3)* to parents.

Key Truths

- Do Righteous Deeds for God's Glory, Not Your Own (Matthew 6:1-4)
- Pray for God's Glory, Not Your Own (Matthew 6:5-15)
- Fast for God's Glory, Not Your Own (Matthew 6:16-18)

Verse of the Month

MATTHEW 6:33

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that walks through the prayer of Jesus in Matthew 6: tinyurl.com/PrayerLaurie. Discuss the video with learners. After discussion, say: Today we will examine prayer and see how what we do should be for God's glory and not our own.

OPTION 2: Today's Scripture warns us against doing good works to be seen by people instead of to glorify God. What are some examples of people doing this today? After discussion, say: Today we will see how Jesus taught His followers to do good deeds for God's glory, not to be seen by people.

OPTION 3: Ask your learners if they are having a difficult time forgiving someone who hurt them or hurt someone they love. Why is it difficult to forgive these people? After discussion, say: Forgiving people who hurt us or someone we love can be very difficult. Today we will see what Jesus had to say about this.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 3-2)

Matthew 6 continues Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Verse 1 serves as a headline for the passage that addresses three activities that were highly valued by the Jews: giving, praying, and fasting. We must take care to avoid overreaction. Jesus was addressing motive, not the action itself or whether others see it. The bottom line is this: What is one's motive in doing it?

KEY TRUTH: Do Righteous Deeds for God's Glory, Not Your Own (Matthew 6:1-4)

This passage refers to doing righteous deeds. These deeds would include things such as visiting the sick, caring for the fatherless, and giving to the poor (Acts 9:36). Such merciful deeds should be performed because of one's love for his neighbor and for God. However, many desired only to look good before people (verse 1). Because of this, Jesus said that such offerings should not be announced as the hypocrites were doing. They made sure everyone around them knew what a great thing they were doing. Jesus likened this to sounding a trumpet for all to hear. Those who performed their acts of righteousness to be seen by other people did receive a reward from those Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 3-1



AH 3-2

TEACHING TIP

Shake it up! Variety protects against boredom!

people, but not from the Father in Heaven (verse 2). What a contrast between the eternal reward granted by God and the fleeting praise of people.

Jesus focused on monetary offerings to make His point. In contrast to prideful giving, offerings should be made quietly and discreetly, like the right hand not knowing what the left hand is giving. The idea seems to be that giving should be done so modestly and discreetly that even the one right next to you would not know what you have done. But God knows, and He will reward us (verses 3-4).

APPLY:

Do good deeds quietly and discreetly out of love for God and others, not to be seen by people.



PowerPoint 3

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 3-1) and on PowerPoint 3, which is customizable. Files 3A and 3B are provided for customization.

DISCUSS:

- Why is it tempting to want our good works to be seen by others?
- How has social media increased the temptation to have our works seen by others?
- How can we guard against doing good things to be seen by people, rather than to please the Lord? (Be careful not to intentionally attract attention; don't mention our service to others; ask forgiveness for pride and seek to keep the focus on God; etc.)
- · When serving others, how can we make sure our hearts are in the right place and we're not simply looking to pat ourselves on the back for a job well done?

EXECUTE: Pray for God's Glory, Not Your Own (Matthew 6:5-15)

After dealing with the matter of giving to glorify God, not the giver (verses 1-4), Jesus turned to the topic of prayer. When we pray in public, what is our focus? Is it the God to whom we pray, or the idea that others are watching us? If we are praying to be seen, then being noticed is our reward **(verse 5).** How do we fall into this trap? Some pray long prayers in public, extra-long and unnecessary. Others adjust their voice to sound more like we imagine a "spiritual" person might sound. Still others drop hints about their own prayer life.

Jesus directed His listeners to pray in secret (verse 6). Is praying in a closet a literal command to be followed? Are we never to pray in public? Is it possible that Jesus was drawing a contrast between praying to be seen and praying without fanfare? Perhaps the principle is this: Be concerned more about God's opinion than the opinions of others.

Verse 7 is often cited as a condemnation of written prayers, prayers that repeat the same phrases, or using prayers repetitively in worship. But Jesus was actually warning against purposeless talking. The idea of repetition is really a stuttering, meaning a word is often

repeated. This is a condemnation of praying to be heard by others or thinking that praying some things over and over makes prayers more effective. Some applaud the length of prayers as if that determines their value. In truth, God already knows what we need before we ask (verse 8). A model prayer is offered in the wake of the admonitions about prayer.

DISCUSS:

• Do you think Jesus intended His prayer to become a specific prayer to be repeated or a model of what elements should be included in our prayers? Explain your answer.

The prayer begins by noting to whom we should pray—our Father (verse 9). This speaks volumes to those who suggest we can pray to other beings such as saints. This privilege is declared in Romans 8:15 where believers are called sons who cry, Abba, Father. Our Father, who is everywhere at once, is spoken of as being in Heaven.

There is a healthy tension in all of this. The Father is otherworldly, beyond our comprehension, a spirit who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. That description seems to set Him out of our reach. Then we remember, Our Father! We are drawn close in an intimate relationship. He belongs to us, and we belong to Him. Better than any earthly father, He loves us without condition and treats us as no longer condemned, but as sons and daughters belonging to His family and joint heirs with Jesus.

DISCUSS:

• How does knowing God loves you and wants what is best for you affect your prayers?

The last part of verse 9 mentions God's name. John recorded Jesus praying for the Father to glorify His name (John 12:28). This means more than a title; it represents all there is to be known about God's character.

Verse 10 acknowledges His kingdom and will. The kingdom, at the very least, refers to His spiritual rule, and some would also direct it to an earthly kingdom expected by the Jews. Your will be done might include God's ultimate will, which most certainly will be accomplished. This prayer asks that the desires of Heaven be fulfilled on earth.

APPLY:

When praying, include elements of Jesus' model prayer.

APPLY:

Remember you are praying to your all-knowing and allpowerful Father who loves you and wants what is best for you.

APPLY:

When praying, focus on God's will and truth rather than what sounds good to other people.

DISCUSS:

• God's Word tells us our prayers should align with God's will and plan (1 John 5:14–15). How should this affect how we pray?

The next section of the prayer turns from God to the petitioner. **Verse** 11 speaks of daily needs, using food as an example. This word translated daily is used only here and in Luke 11:3 in the New Testament. It is hard to fully express its meaning. Perhaps the intent is to ask for provision according to what God knows I need for this day. This is an admission that we must rely on God for all our needs, an acknowledgment of dependence.

Yet our prayers must be bigger than our own little world. Too often we get into the rut of thinking of God as a spiritual vending machine. We have needs and desires. God loves us and wants the best for us, so our prayers become little more than a list of things we want from God. Soon, our focus is centered on self instead of the world of people for whom Christ died.

Taking a cue from the model prayer, we can think about God's purposes and work throughout the world. We can name a country we have heard in the news and pray for their leaders and their people. If we are aware of their situation or crisis, we can call out their needs to the Lord.

Another tool is praying for the "other one." Think of your neighbor, your co-worker, the other church in your community, another ethnic group. Lift these people up to the Lord in prayer. Expand your horizons.

In the spirit of daily needs, our sins need to be forgiven regularly just as it is necessary for other needs to be met (verse 12). This part of the prayer catches our attention by suggesting our forgiveness is connected to the forgiveness we offer others. Jesus was not formalizing a doctrinal statement on forgiveness but teaching us that kingdom people are a forgiving people just like their God. The intention was to remind us that we need to be merciful to others if we want to receive mercy ourselves. This is one of the attitudes Jesus highlighted earlier (Matthew 5:7).

APPLY:

Pray for God to supply your daily needs, including forgiveness of daily sins.

Continuing with the theme of the awareness of sin, we should ask that God keep us away from sin (verse 13). James dispelled any doubt that God might tempt us to sin (James 1:13). This clarification follows his teaching on trials and testing in daily life. God allows us to be in situations that Satan might use to entice us to sin. Whenever we have the opportunity for perseverance and growth, we have the potential of being tempted to sin.

Being aware of our evil surroundings, we ask God to protect us from evil that is in us and around us. Some translations have the evil one, but the meaning is basically the same. This concern for protection from evil was duplicated when Jesus prayed what is known as the High Priestly Prayer (John 17:15).

One of the principles of biblical interpretation is to compare Scripture with other Scripture. **Verses 14–15** require such comparison because a casual glance suggests that the Father waits to see if we forgive others before He decides whether or not to forgive us. That would be contrary to the gospel message.

The point Jesus seemed to be making was that if we are not willing to forgive others, it might indicate we have not yet recognized our own need of forgiveness. Perhaps our prayer lives and ongoing close fellowship with God are hindered. Jesus, in the spirit of the Beatitudes, pointed out that His people should be a forgiving people like the Father who forgives them. The one who fails to forgive is acting like someone who does not belong to the kingdom of God. Failing to forgive others demonstrates an un-Christlike behavior and an unwillingness to show others the same mercy and grace we have been given.

DISCUSS:

• Why is it difficult to forgive some people? Why is it important to do so?

EXPLORE:-

The issue of forgiving those who have hurt or harmed us is difficult. The tendency of our fallen nature is to lash back and to seek retribution. It might seem that God is asking too much when He commands us to forgive others, especially those who have hurt us deeply. How can we forgive the spouse who abandoned us for someone else or the drunk driver who caused the death of our child in an automobile accident? Keeping these principles in mind might help:

- Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling.
- Forgiveness does not mean the other person is not responsible for his or her actions.
- Forgiving someone does not mean we don't take appropriate steps to protect ourselves.
- Understanding how God has forgiven us helps us forgive oth-
- · Forgiving others releases and frees us.

Forgiving others benefits us more than those we forgive.

APPLY:

Forgive others as God forgives you through Christ. The apostle Paul made it clear that we forgive others because God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). Can you think of any quality that is more Christlike than forgiveness? For so many, the love of God seems distant. Words and trite sayings will not pierce the rough exterior that has developed over the years. God might use us and our willingness to forgive to soften their hard hearts and convince others of God's love for them.

KEY TRUTH: Fast for God's Glory, Not Your Own (Matthew 6:16-18)

Fasting was common both to the Jews and to the heathen nations and was often linked with prayer as it is in Matthew 6. By abstaining from food, one can focus his or her thoughts on God. Jesus fasted prior to His temptation. The hypocrites, however, as they did with righteous deeds and prayers, abused the practice, making it a show for people and not an act of devotion to God. They would, through facial expressions, reveal to others their spiritual travail. Their intent was that people would know they were fasting (verse 16).

Jesus presented an entirely different picture of fasting. Instead of making a show, He instructed His followers to keep the practice private. People should anoint themselves and wash their faces as usual so no one would note anything out of the ordinary. The intention is for only God to see the activity, not people. As with righteous deeds and prayer, sincere fasting will be rewarded by God (verses 17–18).

APPLY:

Seek God by fasting, but don't let other people know you are doing so.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

DISCUSS:

- How does fasting help us focus on God?
- Why did Jesus emphasize that fasting should be done in secret?
- In what ways does the Christian life contrast with the selfpromotion we often see in today's world?
- How can we make sure we're living for God's glory and not our own glory?

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Today's passage mentioned fasting. In today's world, we often hear about fasting from electronics, sports, etc., but when we look at Scripture, we see fasting always involved giving up food for a limited time to focus on God. Encourage group members to pick one day or one meal this week and to fast. They can spend that time in prayer and focusing on God. (If any group members have dietary or health issues that would prevent them from fasting, consider alternative ways to focus on prayer this week.)

OPTION 2: Encourage your group members to use Jesus' model prayer as a pattern for their own prayers this week. They could turn to Matthew 6:9-13 each day and use the different elements of the prayer as guides for their prayers. For example:

- Praise God for one of His attributes, honoring and hallowing
- Pray for God's kingdom to advance and His will to be done on earth.
- Ask God to provide for basic needs for the day.
- Seek God's forgiveness for sin and the grace to forgive others.
- Pray for protection from evil and from temptation.

Learners can use the AH 3-3 What to Pray For handout as a guide for prayer.

OPTION 3: Encourage learners to evaluate their motives for doing good deeds. Are they doing them out of love for God and others, or to impress people around them? Encourage them to serve and do good deeds this week, but to do them to honor God, not self.

Building Blocks 🏪

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Prayer is talking with God.

Pray!



AH 3-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-3

The Parent Page (PP-3) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes

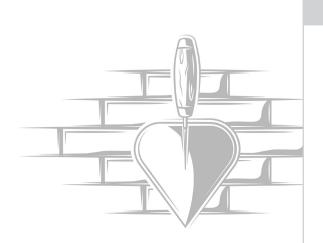


FAMILY THEME

Kingdom Priorities

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners put God ahead of all their possessions and trust Him to meet their every need.

STUDY TEXT: Matthew 6:19-34



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 4-1 or AH 4-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 4* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 4-2), the Handling Earthly Possessions handout (AH 4-3), and Parent Page (PP-4) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-4)* to parents.

Key Truths

- Have a Healthy View of Money and Material Possessions (Matthew 6:19-24)
- There Is No Reason to Worry About Our Needs If We Seek God's Kingdom First (Matthew 6:25-34)

Verse of the Month

MATTHEW 6:33

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 4-1



AH 4-2

TEACHING TIP

Help learners apply the truths of the lesson. The more the teaching relates to the real-life experience of the audience, the better they will pay attention.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Today's lesson discusses battling anxiety. As you begin, consider playing this song for your group: tinyurl.com/PhilBelongs. If group members would like to sing along, you could play the lyric video: tinyurl.com/BelongsLyrics. How does God help fight our fears and anxiety? Why can we trust Him when we're anxious? After discussion, say: Today we will look at the kingdom priorities for all Christians and see why we can trust God with our treasures and concerns.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners to list concerns that people worry about. Examples might include finances, job instability, wayward children, sickness, etc. Which of those listed cause worry and anxiety for your learners? After discussion, say: Jesus talked about worry in His Sermon on the Mount. Today we will see what He had to say about it.

OPTION 3: Ask learners what they think a healthy view of money and possessions would be. What is an unhealthy view of money and possessions? After discussion, say: Jesus talked about money and possessions in His Sermon on the Mount. Today we will see what He had to say about it.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 4-2)

Our priorities often determine the course of our lives. Our thoughts and actions revolve around the things that are most important to us. In this part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He instructed His followers to make God and His kingdom our highest priority, rather than being consumed with money, materialism, or even basic needs.

EXECUTE: Have a Healthy View of Money and Material Possessions (Matthew 6:19-24)

Jesus continued His countercultural teaching with a heavenly view of material possessions. He drew a picture of the earthly and the heavenly, beginning with the admonition not to place too much value on earthly treasure (verse 19a). Having gained the people's attention, He explained that earthly goods are vulnerable to elements that destroy, such as moths and rust (verse 19b). (Clothing and cloth were valuable commodities in that time.) James warned the wealthy that their riches and their clothes would be destroyed, not to mention the corrosion

of their precious metals (James 5:1–3). To add insult to injury, Jesus reminded us that thieves could steal our goods.

In light of this, an alternative is presented—change one's emphasis to eternal matters instead of temporary ones. If a person treasures non-material things, his holdings will be immune from the things that destroy: insects, elements, and robbers (verse 20). Jesus injected a startling analysis that what you treasure reveals your true heart condition (verse 21).

DISCUSS:

- What do you think Jesus meant when He advised us to lay up treasures in Heaven?
- What are some ways Christians can lay up treasures in Heaven and value things that reflect God's presence and authority?

This is not an indictment of material possessions or the wisdom of saving for the future. Joseph advocated and modeled the principle of putting aside excess for times of need (Genesis 41:29–36). Solomon stated that consistent hard work would increase wealth (Proverbs 13:11). Jesus clearly wants His followers to be focused more on eternal matters than earthly ones. He pointed out that eternal matters are a better investment than earthly ones. It is a call to ask what matters most to us. We must reevaluate what is really important to us. We must compare our earthly view with our heavenly one. It is one thing to use possessions for enjoyment; it is quite another for possessions to use us.

-EXPLORE:-

The figures of speech used by Jesus in Matthew 6:19-21 sometimes slip by today's audience. Our financial holdings are not subject to moth or rust. However, Job 27:16 speaks of heaping up silver and piling up clothes. Imagining an expansive and treasured wardrobe being destroyed by moths brings the argument closer to home. The Greek word translated as *rust* means "eating," which is why some translations read destroy. This minimizes the objection to precious metals rusting. Although some houses were made of stone, many used mud bricks that had been sun-dried and then covered with a plaster. The treasures held within a seemingly safe structure were subject to loss as thieves dug through the "secure" walls from the outside. When Jesus spoke in these terms, the listeners readily felt the insecurity of their earthly goods.

Verses 22–24 are challenging to interpret. Jesus mentioned the eye, a light or lamp, and the body. The same word for *light* is used in

APPLY:

Focus on eternal matters more than on earthly ones.



PowerPoint 4

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 4-1) and on PowerPoint 4, which is customizable. Files 4A and 4B are provided for customization.

Matthew 5:15 to denote a lamp. The eye is designated as the lamp or light of the body (verse 22). The question is posed: What if the eye is healthy (translators also use clear, good, or single)? The Greek word haplous means clear or whole, indicating good health. (It is used only here and in a similar discussion in Luke 11:34.)

The observation is this: if a person's eye is healthy, the entire body will be full of light, focused on what is good and right. (verse 23). If we see things properly from God's perspective, our lives will reflect what is good and right. The opposite is then true. If the eye is not healthy (contaminated with evil), then the entire body will be full of darkness. A sinful mindset will lead to wrong attitudes and actions.

APPLY:

Model what is good and right by seeing and doing things God's way.

DISCUSS:

- What is a healthy view of money and possessions? How can we develop that?
- How can we honor God with our money, even when our finances are tight?

The context pushes us to conclude there must be a singleness of purpose. Before these verses we see a contrast of loyalties, and then in the following verse a clear choice is announced (verse 24). This sermon challenges us to think differently from the world. The priorities of the kingdom of God are upside down compared to the worldly systems of thought.

In **verse 24**, the summary thought is stark in its contrast. The Greek word *kurios* means "lord." Devotion can be given to only one lord, not two. Jesus gave no room for giving half-heartedness to both. In reality, the distinction is severe. We might fool ourselves into thinking there is room for both, but Jesus will have none of it. We should devote ourselves to one and despise the other. The choice must be clear. Will it be God or will it be money? Which master will drive our decisions?

We must clarify our loyalty. We must start filtering our decisions through God's will. Financial decisions need to be scrutinized by the Holy Spirit. Which has more influence in our financial life, the Holy Spirit or Wall Street? Are we straddling the fence that divides devotion to God and devotion to money? One of the reasons there is less satisfaction in the lives of some Christians is this so-called divided life. In an attempt to have the best of both worlds, people end up frustrated and unhappy. We have to make a choice and then invest in our decision. As we spend more time with God, He will gain our affections. We must cut off any unholy alliances.

DISCUSS:

- How does our spending reveal where our hearts and priorities
- Why is it impossible to serve two masters? How do we sometimes try to do this?
- A look at our spending reveals our priorities in life. This is not just about giving to the church, but the preoccupation of our minds. How much of our money is used to service debt? How does excessive debt affect our walk with the Lord?

KEY TRUTH: There Is No Reason to Worry About Our Needs if We Seek God's Kingdom First (Matthew 6:25-34)

The first phrase in **verse 25** links what follows to the previous discussion. After announcing that it is either Him or money, Jesus proclaimed that we have no need to worry about the basic needs of life. He implied there is more to life than meals, health, and clothes.

DISCUSS:

- What are some things that create the most anxiety in our world?
- Are you more likely to have anxiety over things that are within your control or out of your control? Explain.
- What is our role in providing for our needs? (Trust God; be willing to work; find and hold a job; etc.)

Now that He had their attention, the logic of such a statement was laid out in verse 26. Watch the birds. They seem to get along fine, and yet aren't we more valuable to God? The second point of the argument was the question in **verse 27**: Does getting uptight do us any good? Let's not forget our wardrobe. Survey the way God dresses the earth with flowers (verses 28–29). A remarkable theme emerges: It seems that God takes care of His creation. Thus, the conclusion is that God will take care of His highest creation, humans, when they follow and obey Him.

Jesus categorized those who were anxious about all these matters as people of little faith in **verse 30.** This uncomfortable diagnosis reveals the folly of worry for those whose faith is in God. Being overly concerned with these earthly matters places us on par with those who have rejected God (verses 31–32).

Instead of being anxious worriers, we need to make God's kingdom and His way of doing things our highest priority. Then, we will have the assurance that God will provide all that we need to follow Him

APPLY:

Devote yourself to serving God, not money.

APPLY:

Don't worry about your basic needs. Trust God to provide as you follow Him.

APPLY:

Make God and His kingdom your highest priority.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children. (verse 33). In a footnote sort of way, Jesus added some practical perspective. Since there are enough problems for today, do not worry about tomorrow (verse 34).

DISCUSS:

- What does it look like to make God and His kingdom our highest priority? How does that apply to our worries?
- What do you think it would take to arrive at a point in life where you trusted God in such a way that you rarely, if ever, worried?
- What are some things that have helped you turn your anxieties and worries over to God?

We must learn to trust God to meet all our needs. When we worry, we are not trusting God. Instead of using euphemisms to dilute guilt from the sin of worry, we must admit it for what it is. Our anxiousness and worry indicate a lack of trust in God for His provision. We will never learn to trust God until we admit our sin and our tendency to worry about things that matter to us. Trust is developed with a growing relationship. Relationships prosper with interaction. We learn to trust God by talking with Him about our worries and the challenges we face. When we speak the worries so we can hear ourselves itemizing them, we begin to break open an intimacy with the Father. We cannot trust until we are willing to expose our concerns.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Anxiety is a major theme in today's lesson. We spend a lot of time worrying about things that won't matter a month from now, and the anxiety we create in our minds is often much bigger than the actual problem in front of us. Discuss with your group how we can battle anxiety and turn it over to God. What roles do prayer, Scripture reading, and trust in God play in this? How can others help us when we're struggling with worry and anxiety? Consider using the songs from Connect Option 1 to close your lesson.

OPTION 2: Encourage learners to evaluate their financial priorities by asking them to consider the following questions:

 How uncomfortable are you when the discussion turns to material possessions? Why?

- Have you been guilty of purchasing things you do not really need? Have you purchased things you have not used?
- How concerned are you about losing the things you have? How devastating would it be for you if you lost your home and your toys?
- Do you enjoy giving money to charity, churches, and missions as much as you enjoy spending money on the latest and greatest things?
- How do you feel about giving away things? How do you feel about stowing away things?
- If someone looked at your bank statements, where would they say your heart is?
- Part of our spiritual growth involves increased generosity and a loosening of attachment to earthly things. How would your attitude and generosity change if you had no debt and lived on less than you earn?
- As we have goals for our financial future here on earth, what are your financial goals for giving and investing in matters of eternity?

Encourage learners to adjust their financial attitude and practices as the Holy Spirit leads.

OPTION 3: Ask your learners what the difference is between enjoying earthly possessions and holding them too tightly. What possessions are too important to them? How can they lay up treasure in Heaven? Encourage them to put God ahead of all their possessions and to trust Him to provide their needs this week. (Remind the group that God is the Giver of good gifts, and He wants us to enjoy them, but there is a great difference between having a possession and allowing it to possess us. (See James 1:16–17; 1 Timothy 6:6–12, 17–19.) The AH 4-3 Handling Earthly Possessions handout can help with this.

Building Blocks 🚣

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The Model Prayer, or the Lord's Prayer, is recorded in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-13) and again in Luke 11:2-4.



AH 4-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-4

The Parent Page (PP-4) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Pray!

Notes

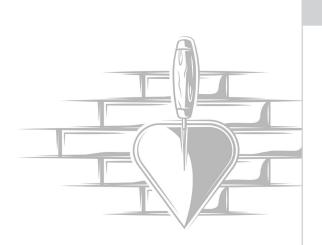


FAMILY THEME

A Solid Foundation

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners keep taking prayer requests to the Father and choose to live the way Jesus instructed us to in Matthew 7.

STUDY TEXT: Matthew 7:1-29



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 5-1 or AH 5-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 5* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 5-2), The Golden Rule in Action handout (AH 5-3), and Parent Page (PP-5) if needed. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-5)* to parents.

Key Truths

- Deal With Your Own Faults Before Correcting Others (Matthew 7:1-6)
- Be Persistent in Prayer (Matthew 7:7-12)
- Choose to Live God's Way (Matthew 7:13-29)

Verse of the Month

PHILIPPIANS

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Begin by showing this video from Dr. Sean McDowell that discusses how Matthew 7:1 is often taken out of context: tinyurl.com/ SeanJudge. Discuss the video. Ask group members why people quote Matthew 7:1 without including the rest of the passage. What does this tell us about the importance of context? After discussion, say: Matthew 7 includes great biblical principles that often get misquoted or ignored. Today we'll examine the words of Jesus in their proper context.

OPTION 2: Write the phrase "You can't judge me!" on the board. Ask group members when they most often hear this phrase. Do they ever hear it when people have done something noble, or is it mainly used after a bad decision to deflect criticism? Why are people so quick to pull the "Do not judge" card? After discussion, say: People are quick to quote Matthew 7:1 when they want to avoid judgment. Today we will look at that verse in its proper context and see what Jesus had to say about judgment.

OPTION 3: Begin by asking learners to list topics that Jesus taught about in His Sermon on the Mount (See Matthew 5-7). After a number of topics are listed, say: Jesus taught about many topics in His Sermon on the Mount. Today we will see how Jesus instructed us to keep taking our requests to God in prayer.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 5-2).

This lesson begins with one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible. When words or sentences are lifted out of the text, they are left dangling on their own instead of in the parameters set by the context. We should always consider the context in order to save ourselves from serious misunderstanding. Use verses 1-6 to teach your learners to respect the context.

KEY TRUTH: Deal With Your Own Faults Before Correcting Others (Matthew 7:1-6)

Have you ever heard someone claim that the Bible says we are never to judge anyone? Although that might sound noble, the root of that philosophy is moral relativism. You have your truth, but I have mine too. You have no right to evaluate me with your set of values!

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 5-1

	A Solid Foundation
o^	Exp Track: Deal Mich Your Own Faults Before Correcting Others (Matthew 77-1), home and application.
o ⁴	Key Tradic be herioant in Prayer Blatthew N2-15) hoto and application
o*	Key Trush: Choese to Lise God's Way (Metthew 7:5-216) feets and Application
	What will I get into practice this week?

AH 5-2

TEACHING TIP

We learn better when the teacher addresses a problem to solve, satisfies a curiosity, relieves a frustration, or provides knowledge for life. Make sure your teaching aims at those needs.

APPLY:

Evaluate your conduct and others' conduct by the teachings of God's Word.



PowerPoint 5

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 5-1) and on PowerPoint 5, which is customizable. Files 5A and 5B are provided for customization.

Christians, however, must evaluate the world around them by the teachings of Jesus in order to reflect His values.

DISCUSS:

• Some evaluation or "judging" is necessary for us to determine how we can best help people. How is that different from the kind of "judging" Jesus referred to in this passage?

The imperative not to judge is given in **verse 1**, and Jesus inserted the reminder that when you judge someone you invite judgment on yourself (verse 2). Jesus knew that many of His listeners were selfrighteous, looking down on others they considered less righteous. His teachings in Matthew 5-6 gave many opportunities for people to take others to task. When we start concentrating on other's faults, our attitude is infected with venom and condemnation. This is no way for a Christian to help another.

Verse 2 is like a proverb. Similar words are found in Mark 4:24. This is a caution regarding the dangers of passing judgment on others. When we start finding fault with others, we get on a roll and it spreads. For some, it might be a defense mechanism to avoid looking in the mirror.

Like any good rabbi, Jesus used questions to teach. Then, He made exaggerations to grab attention and make His point (Matthew 5:39). Much to our chagrin, Jesus minimized the fault we see in others by comparing it to a relatively small particle, calling it a *speck* or a *mote*—a piece of straw or twig. He then contrasted it to what is in our own eye by calling it a *beam* or *log* (or plank) (verses 3–4). Jesus was not saying that our problem is worse; He was making the point that our faults go largely unnoticed while we tend to never miss the faults in others.

Verse 5 rebuts the "no judging" misconception when the appropriate process is followed. First, deal with your own faults, and then you will have the right spirit and vision to help others. Jesus was not necessarily advising us to proceed with judgment. He merely clarified that only after examining ourselves would we be in the right frame of mind and spirit to correct someone else. The warning is against a judgmental attitude, not passing judgment on others or evaluating behavior according to biblical principles.

APPLY:

Consider and deal with your own faults before you try to correct others.

DISCUSS:

• What are some things we can do to have a right perspective about ourselves so we can be helpful to others? (Ask God to reveal our own faults; practice regular repentance; stay in the Word; etc.)

Another example of misunderstanding is verse 6, which is often applied to evangelistic endeavors. In the New Testament, dogs were not held in the esteem they are today. They were not considered man's best friend. This paragraph is oozing with the notion of straightening out someone. Jesus might have been warning against trying to correct someone who is not willing to be corrected.

-EXPLORE:-

In Matthew 7:6, the language seems harsh with the warning not to give holy things to the dogs. In other parts of the world, attitudes toward dogs differ from the traditional idea of "man's best friend." Jews saw dogs as unclean, so the dogs were wild and became scavengers. *Dog* was a choice word for insulting a person. In 1 Samuel 17:43, the Philistine asked David, *Do you think I am a dog?* David chided Saul, asking if he thought he was pursuing a dog or a flea (1 Samuel 24:14). Groups of people were labeled as dogs. Male prostitutes were called dogs in Deuteronomy 23:18, where the wages of such behavior were rejection by God. The apostle Paul did not mince words about those who insisted on circumcision as a requirement for salvation, calling them dogs (Philippians 3:2). Finally, Revelation 22:15 uses the term dogs to describe the unclean people excluded from the eternal city. Intending no insult to dogs, these are examples of speaking in the terms a culture uses and understands to make the communication clear, beyond misunderstanding. In the context of this lesson, dogs might refer to anyone who refuses to follow Jesus or to people who do not wish to be corrected.

Jesus knew very well that receptivity was vital for change to occur. Is our desire to zing someone over a fault, or to help the person avoid trouble? Answering that question will guide us in what to do next.

So what can help us properly evaluate others' behavior? Stop, look, and listen before judging. Human nature is such that we tend to see others' faults rather easily, yet overlook our own. This judgmental behavior can hinder the work of the kingdom. We often either overreact or fail to respond. In our zeal for the Lord, we can sometimes hurt more than we help. More than that, we must look at our own faults before we try to straighten out someone else. Our cry of "Look at you!" should first be "Woe is me!" Several things happen when we do this: (1) We place ourselves on the level of others, not above; (2) Compassion softens our sharp tone as we ponder our own sinfulness; (3) A hurtful spirit becomes a helping spirit. We are not told to ignore improper behavior, but to humbly deal with our own faults before we try to help others.

APPLY:

Be humble and helpful instead of hurtful when helping others change.

DISCUSS:

- What was Jesus really warning about in this passage? (A prideful and judgmental attitude that looks down on others.)
- Describe the attitude we should have when we confront someone else about sin. How should we respond when someone confronts us about our sin?

KEY TRUTH: Be Persistent in Prayer (Matthew 7:7-12)

After His exhortation to deal with our faults before we seek to correct others, Jesus urged His followers to be persistent in prayer, asking, seeking, and knocking (verse 7). These verbs are in the present tense, indicating ongoing action. We are to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. When we do so, we will receive what we need, we will find what we are seeking after, and we will have the door opened to us (verse 8). The scope of this asking, seeking, and knocking goes beyond having basic needs met. It surely refers to all sorts of needs, including wisdom, direction, help to obey the commands of Jesus, and all other needs that might arise for the one seeking to follow God's will.

We must persist in prayer to a generous God. Armed with the knowledge that our loving Heavenly Father longs to give us what we need to follow Him, we must make prayer a priority. Setting aside time daily to ask, seek, and knock is part of seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. If we are too busy to pray, our priorities are out of proper order. What do we need to follow the Lord and do His will? He invites us to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking to have those needs met. How might we reorder our priorities to spend more time in prayer?

APPLY:

Take time daily to take your needs to God in prayer. Keep asking, seeking, and knocking.

DISCUSS:

- What do you find encouraging in verses 7-11?
- If you are not spending enough time in prayer, how could you make time in your schedule to pray more often?

To drive home the truth of this teaching, Jesus then referred to something nearly all the listeners would have been familiar with—the loving actions of a good father. Which of them, He asked, would cruelly trick their hungry children instead of giving them the food they asked for (verses 9–10)? No normal, loving parent would do such a thing. If fallen, sinful human parents can do what is good for their children, then a perfect, loving Heavenly Father will surely give us every good thing we need to follow Him and do His will (verse 11). We can be sure of God's loving response to our prayers because of His character.

Verse 12 again touches how we are to treat others, a prominent theme throughout Jesus' sermon. It is a beautiful summary statement guiding the actions of those who would follow Christ. If we simply treat others as we would like to be treated, we will fulfill the second greatest commandment to love our neighbor and will reflect the character of our Lord and Savior.

DISCUSS:

- We are to treat others as we would like to be treated. How does this principle simplify the Christian life?
- How can we put this into practice when dealing with people who are rude to us or people who want nothing to do with us?

EXECUTE: Choose to Live God's Way (Matthew 7:13-29)

The kingdom life is contrary to the ways of the world. Jesus did not mince words when He called for His followers to make some choices. There is a contrast between the narrow way and the wide way. The wide attracts many while the narrow attracts few. Why is that so? Jesus characterized the wide way as easy (verse 13). This way is easy because it is natural. The narrow way is hard (verse 14). Unfortunately, some take this to mean it requires discipline and hard work to attain this new life. The better understanding is the narrowness restricts access, thus, there is only one way to life and that is through Jesus Christ. Only a few find it because it offends our pride to have to depend on what someone else has done for us. To reject our way and go God's way requires humility.

Immediately, we are warned of false teachers who are deceptive (verse 15). However, we do not need to be deceived because there is a way to evaluate them—it is the fruit of the person's life (verse 16). Jesus referred to a tree. A healthy tree will produce good fruit, and an unhealthy tree will produce bad fruit. The health of the tree is recognized by the fruit it produces (verses 17–20). What is our fruit? For the immediate listener, the fruit was the Beatitudes. Only the grace of God can produce that behavior in someone's life. Now, we know from Galatians 5:22–23 that spiritual fruit is produced by the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSS:

- What kinds of false teachings have crept into today's churches?
- There are some who argue we shouldn't "judge" false teachers or false doctrine. What did Jesus say about false teachers in this passage?

APPLY:

Treat others as you would like to be treated.

APPLY:

Make sure you sit under the preaching and teaching of godly believers. Beware of false teachers.

• What is some "fruit" you might see in a godly teacher's life? In a false teacher's life?

This principle is supported by a sad declaration in **verses 21–23**. Many who are expecting to spend eternity with Jesus will not be invited. Outwardly religious people will argue (verse 22). There will be cries, See what I have done! But their hearts will not have been changed.

Verses 24–27 draw a comparison between two choices. One choice is to go beyond hearing Jesus' words and do something about it while the other is to hear but do nothing. The wise choice is to obey Jesus, which produces stability even through difficulty. The do-nothing approach leaves one vulnerable and the result is destruction.

APPLY:

Go beyond hearing God's Word to put it into practice.

DISCUSS:

• In verses 24–27, what happens if we put God's Word into practice? What happens if we don't put it into practice?

Our choices will have consequences. Jesus has set before us a way of living that is far different from the way of the world around us, and now we must choose. The first choice is whether or not we will surrender our lives to Jesus and trust Him as Lord and Savior, taking the narrow way (verse 13). A second choice is to be careful whom we listen to (verses 15-20). A third choice is to do it God's way, not our own (verses 21–23). And a fourth is to apply Jesus' instructions to our lives, doing what He says (verses 24–27). We must go beyond hearing to doing. That is the only wise way to live, resulting in stability, even when trials and difficulties come.

When Jesus concluded the sermon, the people were astounded by His teaching. He taught with authority because He was God Himself, the source of the Law. He was not another teacher who passed along the teaching and opinions of others (verses 28-29).

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: It's easy to maximize the faults in others and minimize the faults in ourselves. Encourage group members to do a personal self-inventory. Is there a sinful attitude or action that is present in their lives? Is there something that is hindering their relationship with God? Jesus told us we need to deal with these things, especially before correcting others. Discuss the importance of confession and

repentance and encourage group members to turn away from any sin that is hurting their relationship with Jesus.

OPTION 2: Discuss with your learners different ways we can put into practice the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). In what specific way could each learner put it into practice this week? Encourage them to plan how they will practice the Golden Rule this week. The AH 5-3 The Golden Rule in Action handout can help with this response.

OPTION 3: Ask your learners to make a list of people and situations they are asking God to work in. Encourage them to keep asking, seeking, and knocking for those requests as Jesus instructed.

Building Blocks 🛼

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The Lord's Prayer, or the Model Prayer, gives us an example of how to pray in a way that pleases God. It begins with acknowledging who God is.

Pray!



AH 5-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-5

The Parent Page (PP-5) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes

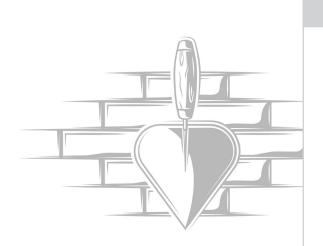


FAMILY THEME

Proclaiming Christ

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners seek ways to spread the gospel and live in a way that honors Christ.

STUDY TEXT: Philippians 1:1-30



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 6-1 or AH 6-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 6* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 6-2), the Gospel Partners handout (AH 6-3), and Parent Page (PP-6) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-6)* to parents.

Key Truths

- Christians Seek Ways to Spread the Gospel Message (Philippians 1:1-18)
- Christians Honor Christ in Life or Death (Philippians 1:19-30)

Verse of the Month **PHILIPPIANS**

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 6-1

ABOUT MEMBER OUTLINE		
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	What will just little provides this work?	

AH 6-2

TEACHING TIP

Ancient Near-Eastern history is important for context and background, but don't allow it to crowd out the practical truth of your lesson.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: To begin, consider showing this video that shows how the gospel is being spread in the Amazon: tinyurl.com/GospelAmazon. Discuss the video with your group. What are some other ways they see the gospel being spread in the world? After discussion, say: Today we will study Philippians 1 and examine Paul's challenge for Christians to proclaim the gospel.

OPTION 2: Begin by sharing people or ministries your church partners with to advance the gospel. These might be international missionaries, church planters in North America, or ministries in your area. After discussion, say: There are many ways our church can partner with other people or ministries to advance the gospel. Today we will discuss ways we as individuals can be involved.

OPTION 3: Begin by asking your learners what it means to be worthy of something. How do we see that concept used in our culture? What is something your learners have tried to be worthy of? After discussion, say: People in our culture often try to be worthy of their ranking or worthy of other's expectations. Today we will see how we are to live in a way that is worthy of the gospel.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 6-2).

The epistle to the Philippians, along with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, comprise a section of the New Testament known as the Prison Epistles. These were letters written by Paul to specific churches, or in the case of Philemon, to a specific individual. They were written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment between approximately AD 60 and AD 62. Reflected throughout these letters is the love of a pastor for his congregation and the concern of a spiritual shepherd for his flock. Paul's ultimate desire was that the Philippians live a Jesus-focused life and experience the joy that living such lives would produce.

KEY TRUTH: Christians Seek Ways to Spread the Gospel Message (Philippians 1:1-18)

The apostle Paul, who was accompanied by Timothy, opened the epistle to the Philippians with a customary greeting (verses 1–2). While

Timothy was not a coauthor of the epistle, he was a frequent companion of the apostle and was with Paul when he first preached the gospel message in Philippi (Acts 16). Timothy cared deeply for the believers at Philippi (Philippians 2:19–23). Here, both Paul and Timothy are described as servants or slaves of Jesus Christ.

As he often did in his letters, Paul opened with words of greeting, commendation, and praise. The apostle offered personal thanksgiving for those in the church at Philippi due to their love for Christ and His people, and their faithful partnership and participation with him in the gospel ministry. The term literally speaks of a joint participation in a common interest. This partnership gave Paul joy as he prayed for them (verses 3-5).

DISCUSS:

- How can we partner in the gospel with other believers? (Share the gospel with people we meet; support pastors and missionaries who are spreading the gospel; give to and support the ministries of our local church; etc.)
- Why is it easier to partner with others to spread the gospel rather than go at it alone?

Paul was confident God would complete His sanctifying work in them upon the day of Christ. What God begins, He finishes (verse 6). In light of this, Paul encouraged these believers to continue their partnership in the advancement of the gospel and to allow their love to continually grow. In this way, they would continue to mature in faith and holiness and bear fruit for God's glory.

Verse 7 provides the reason Paul cared so deeply for these believers. Paul viewed them as partakers or co-sharers with him in the grace of God. This partnership was demonstrated during his time in prison and when he defended the gospel. Their support could have cost them their own lives or freedom. Yet, their mutual love for one another drove the Philippians to faithfully stand with him and by him.

EXPLORE:

The imprisonment of which Paul spoke was likely that referred to in Acts 28. This imprisonment would have been much different from what is typically experienced in today's world as the apostle was free to receive guests, have co-workers at his side, and even write letters such as Philippians. Hearing about Paul's imprisonment, the Philippian believers determined to send a financial contribution to their beloved friend, mentor, and spiritual leader (Philippians 4:10–20). This gift was delivered by Epaphroditus, a possible pastor or leader within the church. While in Rome, he

APPLY:

Partner with your church, with missionaries, and with other believers to spread the gospel.



PowerPoint 6

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 6-1) and on PowerPoint 6, which is customizable. Files 6A and 6B are provided for customization.

became severely ill and nearly died. In writing this letter to the Philippians, Paul accomplished at least three objectives. First, he provided an update on the condition of Epaphroditus. Second, Paul thanked the church for their sacrificial contribution. Third, from a place typically absent of joy, he encouraged the Philippians to be joyful in all circumstances.

Verses 9–11 reveal what Paul prayed for them. First, he prayed they would grow more and more in self-sacrificial, Christlike love. While scholars are divided over whether this is love for God or love for one another, it is the effects of this maturing love that Paul was seeking. When Christian love increases, so do knowledge and discernment. This would include sensitivity to the truth of God and to the needs and situations of those around them.

Paul also prayed that these young believers would be able to approve or discern what was best or excellent (verse 10). The word used here was a term that spoke of the testing of metals and coins to determine value and whether they met specific standards. Finally, Paul's prayer was that these Philippian Christians would be blameless at the day of Christ. This is a righteousness that comes only through Christ but manifests itself in the way believers live (verses 10-11). We can follow Paul's example and make these same requests as we pray for each other.

Paul wanted the Philippian believers' relationships with Christ to continue to flourish and grow. This should be true for us as well. Our lives should be characterized by growing maturity, holiness, and love for God and others. We can bear fruit and bring glory to the One who saved us from our sins.

APPLY:

Continue to grow in love, faith, and holiness, bearing fruit for God's glory.

DISCUSS:

- What can we do to continue growing in love, faith, and holiness? How does that help us bear fruit for God's glory?
- In verse 9, Paul wrote about discernment. Why is discernment so important in today's world?

Knowing that the Philippians were concerned about his imprisonment, Paul informed them that what had happened to him was being used for the advancement of the gospel (verse 12). More than anything else, Paul's desire was to reach people with the gospel. If God could use imprisonment to accomplish this goal, Paul could appreciate that, regardless of how challenging it might prove to be. After

all, everyone who became aware of Paul's imprisonment also became aware of the reason for it—Jesus Christ (verse 13).

A second reason for Paul to rejoice over his imprisonment was expressed in **verse 14.** When other believers heard of Paul's imprisonment and his boldness to preach Christ despite the dangers associated with it, they also attained boldness to preach the Word. Paul was not so naïve, however, to think that everyone was preaching with pure motives. He was aware that some were preaching Christ for selfish reasons (verses 15 and 17). Consider the terms the apostle used to describe their motives. Some were envious or jealous of Paul and the "success" he had in reaching people. This led them to begin preaching also. Some preached Christ because of strife or a contentious relationship with Paul. Others preached Christ out of selfish ambition, striving to make a name for themselves. There were even those who preached the good news in an attempt to stir up trouble or get back at Paul for infringing on their territory.

DISCUSS:

- · Why can believers have joy and advance the gospel, even in difficult circumstances? (God uses difficulty for our good and His glory; the way we handle difficulty can be a witness for Christ; etc.)
- What are some good things in life that allow us to point others to Christ? What are some bad things in life that allow us to point others to Christ?

Regardless of the motives, Paul rejoiced that God's life-changing truth was proclaimed to unbelievers (verse 18). Whether they preached Christ out of envy and faction or out of love for Christ, the good news was spreading. For Paul, this was what mattered.

EXECUTE: Christians Honor Christ in Life or Death (<u>Philippians 1:19-30</u>)

Paul's confidence in and love for the Philippians surfaces again in **verse 19.** He was so encouraged by their love for him and their prayers that he was confident of his deliverance or salvation. The term used here for deliverance implied rescue from danger or vindication in a Roman court. This could not happen, however, without the help of the Holy Spirit. The word for *help* carried with it the idea of support, as a ligament provides support in a physical body.

In **verse 20**, the apostle shared his *eager expectation*, a word that described an individual straining his neck to see what was ahead. This expectation was not in regard to his release from prison, but was instead related to the testimony he could leave to honor his Lord.

APPLY:

Look for ways to use every circumstance, whether good or bad, to advance the gospel.

APPLY:

Live in a way that is worthy of Christ and the gospel.

APPLY:

See life as an opportunity to serve and glorify your Savior and see death as going to be with Christ in Heaven. That was what really mattered. His desire was to live a life worthy of the gospel, so that, whether in life or death, he would bring glory to Christ. This same desire should be ours as well.

DISCUSS:

• What does it mean to live in a way that is worthy of Christ and the gospel? (We avoid and shun sin and practice what is good and right as Christ would.)

In verse 21, Paul expanded that idea. He faced one of two imminent possibilities—to be released or to be put to death. For him, Christ was the very meaning and focus of life. Paul understood that if he were permitted to live, he would be consumed with the concerns, values, and mission of the Savior he loved. His main purpose would be to serve and glorify Christ (verse 22). On the other hand, Paul knew that to die is gain (verse 21). Even in death, the Lord would be glorified as Paul's testimony continued to go forth. Personally, he knew that he would no longer experience the trials of this life. He would forever be in the presence of Christ.

DISCUSS:

- What did Paul mean when He said to live is Christ and to die is gain? (For the believer, life is about knowing and serving Christ. Death is gain for the believer because we go to be with Christ.)
- Compare Paul's perspective to those who have no hope beyond this world. Why is hope so important for Christians?

Verse 23 revealed the struggle between these two options for the apostle. Being hard-pressed portrayed a picture of a man being pressed from each side, with no opportunity to lean either way. Personally, Paul knew it would be better to be with Christ, an experience that comes only through death. On the other hand, he recognized that his life and ministry on earth would be of greater value to the churches that he loved and ministered to (verses 24-25).

Regardless of what happened to Paul, he wanted the Philippian believers to use their lives to honor and glorify Christ (verse 26). The manner of life of verse 27 was a political term that simply meant to live as citizens. Whether he lived and came to visit them, or whether he died and went to Heaven, Paul wanted the assurance that they would do the right things. This included, but was not limited to, standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. In other words, they must be faithful in word and deed to the gospel message while united as one body.

In verse 28, Paul also admonished the Philippian believers not to be terrified or frightened by the adversaries and difficulties they would face for the cause of the gospel. The word picture is that of a horse being spooked or frightened by unexpected noises. Refusing to be frightened in this way would serve as a sign to the adversaries that God was acting on the believers' behalf and that they refused to be deterred from doing the right thing.

Paul did not want these young believers to be surprised by the persecution and challenges that would come their way. In verses 29-30, he reiterated the fact that suffering was not coming as a punishment from God but was instead a privilege that had been granted to them, just as it had been granted to Paul, their spiritual father.

DISCUSS:

- · How do you think Christ would want you to respond when difficulties come?
- If God often works in our lives through trials, why do you think we so often seek comfort and security?
- How can a believer prevent bitterness and anger from being present during difficult seasons of life?

While we cannot know what trying times will come our way, we can determine what our response will be. Like Paul, we can use these times as a chance to advance the gospel and honor Christ. We are to live in ways worthy of Christ, even when it includes suffering.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: We might not experience the same hardships as Paul, but that doesn't mean God doesn't see our problems. Ask group members to name trials they are facing right now. Have a special time of prayer for these requests and ask God to give your group members joy amid their trials. Encourage group members to pray for these requests every day this week.

OPTION 2: Discuss with your group ways we can partner and participate in advancing the gospel. Examples might be supporting and praying for missionaries, sharing with those we encounter, helping with the church's outreach efforts, etc. Encourage learners to participate this week in getting the gospel to others. The Gospel Partners handout (AH 6-3) can help.

APPLY:

Do not be intimidated by adversaries or difficulties you face because of living for Christ. View suffering for Him as a privilege.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-6

The Parent Page (PP-6) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Option 3: Ask and discuss the following:

- · What are some of the difficult circumstances we face in today's
- · How can we respond to these kinds of circumstances in ways that glorify God and point people to Christ?

Encourage your learners to respond to difficult circumstances in a way that glorifies God and points people to Christ.

Building Blocks 🛼

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication (requests) are included in Jesus' Model Prayer.

Pray!

Notes

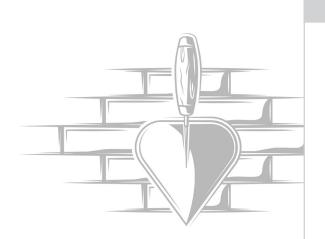


FAMILY THEME

Christ's Example

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners follow Christ's example of humility by putting others first and putting God's Word into practice.

STUDY TEXT: Philippians 2:1-18



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 7-1 or AH 7-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 7* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 7-2), the Christ's Radical Example poster (AH 7-3), the Put Others First handout (AH 7-4), and Parent Page (PP-7) if needed. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-7)* to parents.

Key Truths

- Believers Follow Christ's Example of Humility (Philippians 2:1-11)
- · Believers Put Into Practice What God Is Working Into Their Lives (Philippians 2:12–18)

Verse of the Month

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Show this video that explains what Scripture means when it says Christ "emptied Himself" (tinyurl.com/3MinKenosis). Discuss the video with learners. After discussion, say: Today we are studying Philippians 2 and the example of Christ. We'll learn about His humility and how we can follow in His footsteps.

OPTION 2: Ask your learners what it means to be humble. Ask them to think of someone they would consider as humble. What does (or did) that person do that demonstrates humility? After discussion, say: It's difficult for us to practice humility because it goes against our sinful human nature. Christ, however, demonstrated a perfect example of humility. Today we will consider His example.

OPTION 3: Write the word *Unity* on the board and then ask the following:

- What is unity? How would you define it?
- Why is it difficult for groups of people to have unity?
- Why is it important for Christians and churches to have unity?

After discussion, say: Today we will see how humility is necessary for unity and why unity is important for the body of Christ.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 7-2) and display the AH 7-3 Christ's Radical Example poster.

In Philippians 1, Paul informed the readers that he considered it an honor to suffer on behalf of Christ, even if that meant suffering to the point of death. In chapter 2, he invited the readers to share in his suffering and to live lives of humility, modeled best by Jesus.

KEY TRUTH: Believers Follow Christ's Example of Humility (Philippians 2:1-11)

Verse 1 could easily be misunderstood in the English translation of the original Greek. Paul was not questioning whether the Philippian believers possessed the qualities expressed. In English, the word since, rather than if, better conveys the meaning. Several qualities are mentioned in this verse, each of which would help the Philippians Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 7-1



AH 7-2



AH 7-3

TEACHING TIP

Consider your teaching style. Are you using the Bible as a club to beat students over the head? Or are you serving it as bread to feed and nourish them?

to live as God desired. First, the word encouragement or consolation referred to the comfort found only in Christ that these believers were sharing with others. Second, knowing the blessing of the love of Christ enables the believer to share this experience with those who need it most. Third, the participation or fellowship that the Spirit gives to the believer can be lived out in a world of disunity. Finally, affection and compassion should mark the believer's relationship with members of God's family.

Since the Philippians experienced these key characteristics, Paul asked them to complete or fill-up his joy by maintaining unity within the body of Christ (verse 2). Corresponding to the four qualities mentioned in the previous verse are specific ways these qualities can be manifested. Many commentators see the fact that Paul was specific in his instructions as an indicator that these qualities were needed within the church at Philippi. Paul encouraged them to have the same basic outlook or mindset, have the same unconditional love for one another, and to be united in spirit with the same purpose.

APPLY:

Maintain unity with other believers.



PowerPoint 7

The discussion questions can also be found on the Adult Teaching Outline (AH 7-1) and on PowerPoint 7, which is customizable. Files 7A and 7B are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Like Christ, show humility by considering others as more important than yourself. Consider their interests as well as your own.

DISCUSS:

· According to verse 2, what does Christian unity look like? (Having the same basic outlook or mindset; having the same unconditional love for one another; being united in spirit with the same purpose; etc.)

When believers pursue unity with one another, they are willing to sacrifice their own preferences for another's (verse 3). The word conceit literally means empty glory, the likely cause of the selfish ambitions or inflated egos being addressed by the apostle. Unity is an essential part of the community of faith. But unity is only realized where humility is present. If there is no humility, there can be no real unity. Thus, Paul's admonition was to exercise humility for the sake of building and maintaining unity.

The means of expressing such humility is given in verse 4. Instead of focusing on their own desires, interests, and preferences, believers should be more concerned with the interests of others, especially those in the household of faith. After all, a preoccupation with self is sin and always leads to further sinful actions.

DISCUSS:

- How did Christ demonstrate humility in His thoughts and actions?
- What humble mindset are we called to have toward others? How does this contribute to unity? (We are to consider others ahead of

ourselves and consider their interests as well as our own. This helps us work together and focus on what God wants us to do; etc.)

- Practically speaking, what does it look like for a person to humble himself or herself?
- What are some examples of ways we can put others' interests ahead of our own? (Letting someone go ahead of us in traffic; agreeing to do something another way instead of our way; spending time helping someone when we would rather be doing something else; etc.)

Paul spoke of humility as the attitude that considers others as worthy of service and focuses on their good more than on selfish considerations. To drive home his point, he pointed to Jesus as history's best example of that attitude or mindset. These verses serve as an amazing summary of Jesus' humanity and divinity and are believed by many scholars to be an ancient hymn of the faith the early church sang.

Because Christ is the supreme example of humility and service, the Philippians were exhorted to have the same attitude and mindset that He did (verse 5). This attitude is especially seen in relationships and how individuals treat one another. The specifics of Jesus' mindset of humility were spelled out in verses 6-8.

Paul used the word *nature* or *form* in **verses 6 and 7**. This is a crucial word that stresses reality or essential nature. In **verse 6**, the apostle was stressing the fact that the very essence or nature of Christ is that of God. It is important to note that long before Jesus became man, He was, by nature, God. He did not, however, consider His being equal to the Father as robbery or something to be held on to or taken advantage of.

Instead, according to verse 7, He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant and was born in the likeness of man. The word emptied conveys the notion of divesting of self-interests and not a stripping away of His deity. Instead of clinging to the rights He deserved as God, Jesus took on the form of a servant or a slave and was born in the likeness of men. While He looked like other men and was born in the same fashion as other men, He was more than man; He was still God.

-EXPLORE:-

In **Philippians 2:7**, Paul stated that Jesus *emptied Himself* or *made Himself nothing.* In theology, this is known as the doctrine of *kenosis*, a term that literally refers to a self-emptying. It has been the topic of much discussion and debate throughout Church history. What does it mean that Christ *emptied Himself*? While the Greek term for *emptied* points to the divesting of self-interests, at

APPLY:

Recognize that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. He humbled Himself to die for us on the cross.

no time did Jesus cease to be God. Both His humanity and deity were necessary for Jesus to accomplish the mission for which He was sent. In light of the verses preceding and following verse 7, the term seems to imply that He temporarily laid aside His rights as God in order to become the servant of men. It is not that Jesus laid aside His divinity but that He took on humanity. God the Son emptied Himself by taking on that which He was not—flesh and blood. In doing so, He counted Himself nothing; He rejected any and all self-centered considerations to serve all humanity. This is the greatest demonstration of humility ever.

The human *fashion* or *form* in **verse 8** speaks of an outer appearance that might be temporary. This stands to reason because Jesus' nature as God is eternal. The temporary fashion of His human form is further revealed in the fact that Jesus became obedient to death. He died a cruel death on a cross. Torture and death on a cross were reserved for the worst of criminals. Yet, Jesus humbled Himself to experience such atrocity for our sake. What better illustration of humility could Paul have provided?

In verse 9, the subject changes from Jesus to God the Father. Therefore or For this reason shows a cause-effect relationship between the self-humbling of Christ and His exaltation by the Father. Because of His humiliation and sacrifice, the Father gave Jesus a name that is above every name, referring to the exalted place of honor deserved by the Son.

Consequently, and in keeping with the exaltation of Christ by the Father, every member of the human race will one day respond in the same way (verses 10–11). First, every knee will bow, an act that was prophesied in <u>Isaiah 45:23</u>, written seven hundred years before Jesus' birth. The simple fact is that everyone will bow in recognition of who Jesus is. This refers to spiritual beings (in Heaven), living human beings (on earth), and the dead awaiting resurrection (under the earth). Not only will every creature bow, but they will also confess or acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. These are acts and confessions that bring glory to the Father for His amazing work of salvation and the ministry of His Son (see also Romans 14:11).

APPLY:

Bow before Jesus and acknowledge that He is Lord of all.

DISCUSS:

• How should it affect our lives to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord of all?

KEY TRUTH: Believers Put Into Practice What God Is Working Into Their Lives (Philippians 2:12-18)

Next, Paul called the Philippians to work out or live out their salvation with a sense of their own inadequacy and of the seriousness of representing Christ (verse 12). *Work out*, as used by the apostle, had the basic sense of bringing to completion. This was not an admonition for the believers to work for their salvation or devise their own means of salvation, but for them to put into practice in their daily living what the Spirit was working into their lives.

At the same time, he assured them that God would be at work in them (verse 13). He would give them the will and power to do it if they relied on Him. Because they lived in a sinful generation, they were challenged to let their actions and attitudes reflect their identity in Christ. Because they were God's children, they needed to model how living for Christ is different from living for the world. In doing so, they would be holding firm to God's Word and proving the genuineness of their faith.

DISCUSS:

- God is constantly at work to make us more like Christ. What is He teaching you that needs to be put into practice?
- How are you seeing God at work in your life right now?

In verse 14, Paul gave the Philippians a specific command regarding how they could work out their salvation. They should do all things without grumbling or complaining. The specific use of these terms seems to indicate that these were recurring issues within the Philippian congregation. By definition, grumbling is typically directed at specific individuals. While complaining often referred to a person complaining within themselves or toward God concerning their situation, here it seems more likely to be directed toward or about others within the church.

As verse 15 states, believers, both then and now, live in a crooked and depraved generation. The wording of this verse echoed the description given by Moses in <u>Deuteronomy 32:5</u>. In the midst of a people fitting this description, children of God are to live lives that are above criticism and are thoroughly wholesome in character. Without blemish was an expression used to describe acceptable animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. When believers live in the way Paul portrayed here, they shine as lights in a dark world.

APPLY:

Don't do good works to try to earn salvation, but put into practice what God is working into your life.

APPLY:

Live in ways that are above criticism and thoroughly wholesome in character.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.

DISCUSS:

- In what situations do you find it most difficult to obey what the Bible says?
- Why is it important for us to live above criticism and be thoroughly wholesome in character? (It gives the world nothing to blame us for; it shines a light on the sin of the lost world and the difference it makes to know Christ; etc.)
- How can we make sure what we're learning goes beyond Sunday and influences every aspect of our lives?
- In verse 18, Paul called on his readers to rejoice with him. How can we rejoice with each other? How often should this happen?

In **verse 16**, the Philippians were encouraged to *hold fast* to the word of life. The expression could mean either to "hold firmly" or to "hold forth." Paul could have been encouraging them to hold out or offer the word of life, the message that brings life, to those around them. Or, he could have been encouraging them to keep obeying God's Word with the return of Christ in view. Most translators tend to lean toward the latter.

In verses 17 and 18, the apostle returned to the subject of his imprisonment and the fact that his life might be taken because of his faith. The drink offering of which he spoke was an ancient old covenant sacrifice that represented pouring out one's life for God. Despite this possibility, Paul could rejoice, and he encouraged the Philippian congregation to rejoice with him.

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Humility is not valued in our society. People are constantly trying to become influencers, get "likes" and followers, and promote their personal brand. But we are called to be humble like Jesus. Discuss with group members what this looks like. How can we emulate Christ's humility? What might we have to give up to do this? Is it worth it? Encourage group members to follow the example of Christ this week.

OPTION 2: Discuss with your group members ways we can follow Christ's example and put others' interests and needs ahead of our own. How could your learners do that at home, at work, at church, and in the community? Encourage them to put one or two of the ideas into practice this week. The Put Others First handout (AH 7-4) can help.

OPTION 3: Discuss how God is constantly at work to make us more like Christ. Encourage your learners to choose an area of obedience and to more fully put it into practice this week.

Building Blocks 🛼

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

The believer has a responsibility to pray for the needs of others. This is called intercessory prayer.

Pray!



AH 7-4

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.



PP-7

The Parent Page (PP-7) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes

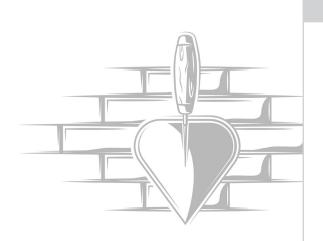


FAMILY THEME

Christ's Provision

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Learners find joy, peace, and contentment as they seek to know Christ better.

STUDY TEXT: Philippians 3:1–21; 4:10–20



CHECKLIST

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- ☐ Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 8-1 or AH 8-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- ☐ Review *PowerPoint 8* and insert your own questions if needed.
- ☐ Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 8-2), the Press on to Know Him handout (AH 8-3), and Parent Page (PP-8) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to d6.family/6825.
- ☐ Distribute *Parent Page (PP-8)* to parents.

Key Truths

- · Christ Provides Everything Needed for Salvation for Those Who Know and Trust Him (Philippians 3:1-21)
- · Christ Provides Strength and Contentment in Any Circumstance (Philippians 4:10-20)

Verse of the Month

PHILIPPIANS

Cue up videos and have them ready to play. D6 Family Ministry does not control ads shown before or after videos.



AH 8-1



AH 8-2

TEACHING TIP

The warmer your relationship with your students, the better you will connect with them.

CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

OPTION 1: Consider showing this video that discusses the difference between contentment and complacency: <u>tinyurl.com/ContentComp</u>. Discuss the video with learners. How would they explain the difference between contentment and complacency? After discussion, say: The apostle Paul knew what it meant to be content. Today we will learn from his example and better understand how Christ provides.

OPTION 2: Begin by showing a picture or video clip (if possible) of runners leaning forward and straining to get to the finish line of a race. If you cannot show a clip or picture, ask your group members to picture that scene in their minds. Then say: Today we will see how we are to keep pressing on to reach the goal of knowing and walking with Christ.

OPTION 3: Begin by asking your group members what it means to be content. After some discussion, ask the following:

- Why do you think many people are not content?
- What role do circumstances play in whether or not we are content?

After discussion, say: Today we will see how the apostle Paul had learned to be content no matter his circumstances.

LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

Distribute copies of the Adult Member Outline (AH 8-2).

KEY TRUTH: Christ Provides Everything Needed for Salvation for Those Who Know and Trust Him (Philippians 3:1-21)

Verse 1 serves as a transition verse, moving into the next major section. Paul began this section with a reminder to rejoice in the Lord. This rejoicing (or joy) is a recurring theme of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Joy is the natural byproduct of a personal relationship with Christ. Knowing that repetition was a means of effective learning, Paul considered a review of the essentials helpful and necessary for these young believers.

DISCUSS:

• Why should every Christian be joyful no matter their circumstances?

Paul then warned the Philippian believers to watch out for those who put their confidence in their own works and not in Christ. Paul called them *dogs* (verse 2). This was a derogatory term and was often used by the Jews to describe the Gentiles. Here, the term was applied to the Judaizers of the first century. These Judaizers would prowl around Christian congregations seeking to win Gentile converts over to Judaism. Paul warned the Philippian believers to *beware*, a term that means to constantly observe with the intent of avoiding.

The final descriptive term used by Paul regarding the Judaizers was false circumcision or those who mutilate the flesh. In their deception, they accepted and required circumcision as a means of justification. Instead, according to **verse 3**, the apostle drew a clear line in the sand that he and the Philippians were the true circumcision because they put no confidence in the flesh and gloried only in Christ Jesus.

Even as Paul condemned those who trusted in the flesh for salvation, he knew his list of credentials surpassed them all (verse 4). Consider the list of seven things in verses 5-6 that Paul could boast about if he relied upon in his own righteousness. Not only was Paul circumcised, he was circumcised on the eighth day in the specific manner and time prescribed by God in Genesis 17:11-12. He was also of the people of Israel, an expression that indicated that both his parents were true Jews. Paul's heritage also included the fact that he was from the tribe of Benjamin, a tribe that was viewed with great esteem among the Jews. He was also a *Hebrew of Hebrews*. The apostle was not only a son of Hebrew parents but was also an avid student of both Hebrew culture and the Hebrew language. Paul was a devout Pharisee, the strictest sect among the Jews. He could point to the fact that his zeal for Jewish tradition had led him to persecute the early believers. Finally, as far the demands of the Mosaic Law were concerned, he was blameless and had nothing to be ashamed of. Yet, despite all these reasons he had for boasting, Paul considered all these gains as loss and a false basis of spiritual confidence (verse 7). If Paul could not depend on good works and accomplishments for salvation, then no one could.

DISCUSS:

• Give some examples of how some people today try to depend on their own righteous works to be right with God. (Other religions teach that people must do certain works to earn favor with God, or a combination of doing certain works and holding to certain

APPLY:

Be joyful because of all that Christ has done for you.



PowerPoint 8

The discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 8-1) and on *PowerPoint 8*, which is customizable. Files *8A* and *8B* are provided for customization.

APPLY:

Put no confidence in your own righteous acts and accomplishments. Trust in Christ alone to save you.

beliefs; some believe salvation comes if our good works outweigh our sinful works; etc.)

• In verse 7, Paul stated that whatever gain he had, he counted it as loss for the sake of Christ. Why is this a difficult mentality to have in today's world?

Paul continued to emphasize how knowing Christ is the only thing worth pursuing, in contrast to those who put confidence in their own righteous acts and accomplishments. In verse 8, he stated again that nothing really mattered to him compared to knowing and walking with Christ. Knowing Christ surpassed everything he previously placed value in. The loss of all things included his place in Judaism and his position as a Pharisee. Yet, compared to the value of a genuine relationship with the God of Heaven, all that had previously meant so much to him now held the same value as rubbish or dung, not only worthless, but unclean—a detriment. Paul's desire, according to verse 9, was to possess the righteousness that came only through faith in Christ and His finished work. This righteousness could not be earned or achieved by good works and adherence to the Law.

Paul's great passion was to fully and finally know Christ (verse 10). Involved in this pursuit were experiencing the power of Christ's resurrection in his own life and service and participating in suffering as Christ did. The word know, as used in this verse, simply meant to know by experience. Knowing Christ by experience includes experiencing the power that enables us to live a new life and experiencing the suffering and affliction that come from identifying with Christ in a lost and hostile world. One way or another, Paul looked forward to being resurrected from the dead (verse 11).

Paul did not claim to have already arrived at this goal of fully knowing Christ. He had not already been made perfect. He was still in pursuit, seeking to take full possession of all Christ had for him. Christ had taken hold of Paul, making Paul His own, an experience the apostle would never get over (verse 12).

Verses 13 and 14 use the example of a runner in a race to further illustrate Paul's spiritual drive. Forgetting carries the idea of continually putting the past out of mind, focusing only on the goal ahead. Paul did not let anything in the past keep him from fully pursuing his goal. He compared himself to a runner who stretches forward or strains as he approaches the finish line. His mind was fixed on the prize that the judge would award him when he was called to the judges' stand. This testimony reminded the believers that there must never be a time in which they are not pursuing spiritual growth.

Paul urged mature readers to share the attitude of people who realize they have not yet arrived (verses 15–16). These people press on to reach the goal of knowing Christ and becoming more like Him. Paul trusted that the Holy Spirit would make the need for this clear to anyone who disagreed. He wanted all believers to live up to, and according to, the standard of righteousness they had already attained through Christ.

DISCUSS:

- Why should knowing Christ be the highest on our priority list?
- What was Paul talking about in verse 13 when he spoke of "forgetting what lies behind"? How do shame and guilt try to thwart this?
- How can we "press on" to know Christ? (Spend time in Bible reading and prayer; avoid getting caught up in the things of the world; put His Word into practice; etc.)

In **verse 17**, Paul told the Philippian believers to follow his example and to imitate him. While Paul knew he was not perfect, he was seeking to know and follow Christ with all that was in him. The Philippians could certainly follow his lead. (See also 1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1.)

In verses 18 and 19, the apostle warned against enemies of the cross of Christ who, by their false teaching and influence, disrupt the work and lead immature believers astray. According to Paul, their destination is eternal ruin. They worship themselves and the things that satisfy their physical desires, and they glory in shameful works. In essence, their minds (and way of life) are fixed on worldly things.

DISCUSS:

• Why is it important to have mature believers in our lives who we can imitate as they serve Christ? (It encourages us to do the same; it gives us someone to be accountable to; etc.)

Paul reminded his audience that believers' ultimate citizenship is in Heaven (verses 20-21). Believers eagerly await the return of the Lord and the glorified bodies (like Christ's) we will receive. At His return we will fully know Christ and be made like Him.

-EXPLORE:

An often-overlooked theme in the book of Philippians is the idea of dual citizenship. Paul used citizenship as a metaphor only in Philippians. In **Philippians 3:20** he described the believer as a citizen of Heaven. In Philippians 1:27 he stated that one's way of life ought to be worthy of the gospel. The phrase translated as your

APPLY:

Make knowing Christ your greatest passion and priority.

APPLY:

Follow the example of faithful believers but avoid false teachers and their teachings.

manner of life or conduct yourselves literally means to live like a citizen. There were certain rights and privileges experienced by Paul as a citizen of Rome. Even Paul's treatment as a prisoner and his legal standing depended on this citizenship. Paul's point was to show his readers that being "in Christ" is far superior to being "in Rome." As citizens of Heaven, believers across all ages and walks of life await the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

KEY TRUTH: Christ Provides Strength and Contentment in Any Circumstance (Philippians 4:10-20)

In **Philippians 4:10**, Paul expressed gratitude for the gifts sent by the Philippian church to help meet his needs. Because they had not forgotten him and the spiritual impact he made on their lives, he could rejoice as they once again tangibly expressed their appreciation. Paul recognized that they had been concerned about his needs but had not recently had an opportunity to demonstrate it.

Paul did not beg people for help but merely presented the need and trusted God to meet it as He saw fit. He had learned that in whatever situation he found himself, he could remain content with God's help (verse 11). By definition, to be content means to be self-sufficient, not dependent on circumstances. This self-sufficiency, however, did not come from himself, but instead came from Christ.

The apostle had lived through both plentiful and needy times (verse 12). He could look on either experience with contentment because of the strength and hope that Christ provided. Verse 13 is often misunderstood and misapplied. The all things Paul spoke of referred specifically to the abundance or need he had alluded to in verse 12. Paul knew he could handle poverty or abundance because of the strength Christ provided him. Christ enabled him to be at peace whether in need or enjoying plenty. Material needs and outward circumstances did not determine his sense of satisfaction and well-being in the Lord.

APPLY:

With the Lord's help, learn to be content in all circumstances, including the tough ones.

DISCUSS:

- What is the difference between contentment and complacency?
- Why can believers be content no matter their circumstances? (Christ becomes more important to them than their circumstances; they know God uses all circumstances to grow us and teach us; they know the glory of Heaven awaits; etc.)
- What is the difference between being content in every situation and being happy?

• We often hear verse 13 used in the context of athletics or competition. What is the proper context of the verse? How can we apply it to our lives?

Many in our society never seem to be satisfied and are constantly looking for the newer and better. Further, their contentment is based mostly on their circumstances. For the believer, however, contentment is not dependent on newer or better. Nor is it dependent on life panning out as we hoped and expected. Instead, true contentment comes through Christ and the strength He provides.

Paul was grateful for the generosity and goodness of the Philippians as they partnered with him for ministry. By uniting with him, they also participated with him in his affliction, thus taking it upon themselves and bearing it with him (verse 14). The Philippians frequently contributed financially to support Paul's ministry. No other church had supported him early on when he left Macedonia. At least twice they had sent gifts while he was in Thessalonica (verses 15–16). Paul was appreciative of their faithful support.

Yet, this grateful acknowledgement did not mean that Paul selfishly sought their gifts or money. He was interested in something far greater—to see fruit, in abundance, credited to their account with God (verse 17). The greatest value of their support was not financial but spiritual, and not to his benefit but to theirs, as their gifts enabled the apostle to continue ministering for Christ. Their partnership then would result in spiritual rewards to be received in the future—true spiritual blessings for faithful service, not the financial gains promised by health and wealth false teachers.

Paul assured the Philippians that their support of his ministry was pleasing and acceptable to God (verse 18). Because of their faithfulness to support God's work, Paul prayerfully promised that the same God who had met his need would also meet their needs in Christ Jesus, in a manner and measure that are in accord with His own glorious wealth (verse 19). God sees the sacrifices His people make and will reward them accordingly, perhaps in this life, but certainly in the one to come. Verse 20 reflects the heart of Paul and these believers, expressing the praise and glory due to God both now and forever.

In the same way that God used the gifts of the Philippian congregation to further the gospel, so He uses our prayers and support today. We can find ways of partnering with pastors or missionaries who are taking the gospel to those who need to hear and watch how God uses our gifts and prayers to reach the world with the gospel message.

APPLY:

Partner with your church, with missionaries, and with other ministries to share the gospel and disciple others.

D6 Devotional Study Guides provide resources to help parents disciple their children.



AH 8-3

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 **Devotional Study Guides this** week.

DISCUSS:

- What do we learn from these verses about how God views the gifts that are given to support His work? (These gifts and support are acceptable and pleasing to God; God provides for those who sacrifice and give to His work; etc.)
- · What opportunities do you have to help meet people's needs, both within the church and outside the church?

RESPOND

Use one or more of these **Respond** options to help your group members put into action the principles they learned in this lesson.

OPTION 1: Discuss ways we can be involved with supporting God's work and getting the gospel to those who need to hear. Talk about how what we give to the local church helps support God's work in the community and around the world. Talk about how we can support missionaries through finances, prayer, encouragement, and other gifts. Remind them that God is pleased when we give to support His work. Encourage your learners to get involved in supporting God's work if they have not already.

OPTION 2: Ask your group members to consider and discuss the following:

- What are some things in your life you could set aside to better pursue your walk with Christ?
- What can you do that will help you "press on" toward the goal of really knowing Christ?

Encourage your learners to put at least one or two of these ideas into action this week. The Press on to Know Him handout (AH 8-3) can help with this.

OPTION 3: Ask your group members to consider an area in which they need to learn to be content. Review reasons believers can be content and encourage your learners to reflect on those reasons this week. Encourage them to ask God to help them be content until He changes their situation.

Building Blocks 🛼

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

God answers prayer according to His will. He might answer yes, no, or later.

Pray!



PP-8

The Parent Page (PP-8) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at D6home.com. (No password required.)

Notes



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