



SERMON ON THE MOUNT CHALLENGE

Week One: Matthew 5:1-12

- Memory Verse: 8 Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.
- Prayer: Pray for an intentional focus toward being pure in heart so that you will see God in more of your day, and the ability to steer away from the negative things that typically steer you away from God.
- Challenge: Look for a moment that would typically push you toward anger or cynicism and try to be more pure of heart at that moment in order to see God.

Week Two: Matthew 5:13-16

- Memory Verse: 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
- Prayer: Lord, give me eyes to see places where I can shine a light before others. Put opportunities before me that I can perform good deeds, not for my own glory but for yours.
- Challenge: Look for a way to bless a friend, stranger, or coworker this week and if the opportunity arises, share with them why you did it.

Week Three: Matthew 5:17-20

- Memory Verse: 17
- Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, open my heart to those that I judge because they are different from me and give me the strength and wisdom to show them the same love that You have shown me.

- Challenge: Take a few minutes to think about how you judge/perceive others' walk with Christ in comparison to yours. Are you becoming a Pharisee or do you love those that are different from you? Reach out to one of the people you judge who is different from you and send them love and encouragement.

Week Four: Matthew 5:21-26

- Memory Verse: 23-24
- Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the way you have forgiven me and reconciled me to yourself through your Son. Help me to identify people in my life who I need to seek reconciliation with. Help me to identify areas in my own life where anger is present and needs to be dealt with. Calm me. Guide me. Amen.
- Challenge: Take a few minutes to think about people in your life who you've had a falling out with/have completely blown it. How did that situation get resolved? Are there people you're currently at odds with? Pray for them/the situation and send a text, make a phone call, maybe even write a letter, confessing where you have been wrong, and seeking reconciliation in the matter.

Week Five: Matthew 5:27-30

- Memory Verse: 30
- Prayer: Pray for God to open your eyes to the stumbling blocks in your life that keep trapping you in the same sin trap. Also, ask Him to illuminate people in your life that you can invite in to help you.
- Challenge: "The words of Jesus are not to be taken with a crude literalism. What they mean is that anything which helps to seduce us to sin is to be ruthlessly rooted out of life." - William Barclay. Are there things in your life that continue to be a stumbling block that traps you again and again into sin? Find a way to get around that stumbling block, and maybe invite someone into your life to help you with this.

Week Six: Matthew 5:31-32

- Memory Verse: 32
- Prayer: Spend some time in prayer this week asking God to illuminate the joys behind your relationship with your spouse. Meditate on the sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated for his bride (the Church/us) and ask God to open your eyes to ways you can sacrificially love your spouse this week.
- Challenge: Spend some time this week looking for ways to love, care for, and serve your spouse. Whether you do this often or haven't done so in a very long time, remember your motivation is to love them just as Christ loved you.

Week Seven: Matthew 5:33-37

- Memory Verse: 37
- Prayer: Spend a few minutes praying about honesty, ask for forgiveness for the times you have failed to be honest, and ask God to give you the strength to remain honest.
- Challenge: The life you lead is an honest reflection of your faith. If someone were looking at the decisions you make, words you say, and how you spend your time, would they come to the conclusion that your faith reflects Christ working inside of you? What needs to stay the same for this to happen? What needs to change? Tell someone one thing you are going to change about your life to ensure that you are reflecting Christ.

Week Eight: Matthew 5:38-42

- Memory Verse: 39
- Prayer: Lord, help me to be generous towards those that have taken advantage of me, and help me to trust in Your timing and Your faithfulness.
- Challenge: Select one person/entity in your life that you feel has treated you unfairly or unreasonably. This could be a family member, boss, or section of the government, and perform one generous task towards them as an example of Jesus' call to choose love instead of vengeance.

Week Nine: Matthew 5:43-48

- Memory Verse: 44
- Prayer: Lord, give me the fortitude to forgive those that have sinned against me, and provide me opportunities to show them the love of Christ regardless of how they have treated me.
- Challenge: Engage in a difficult conversation with someone that you need to forgive. Forgive them and commit to showing them love moving forward.

Week Ten: Matthew 6:1-4

- Memory Verse: 1
- Prayer: Father, more often than not I'm motivated to do whatever benefits me or makes me look better. Whether it's a post on social media, holding a door open for someone, or being generous to others. Please continue to sharpen and convict me in a way that I do everything from a place of loving you and loving others, not as an act to lift myself up.

- Challenge: As a way of not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing, spend some time this week looking for ways to help or serve others in a way that you remain anonymous.

Week Eleven: Matthew 6:5-15

- Memory Verse: 9-13
- Prayer: Spend more time in prayer today, use the model of the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) to shape how you pray. First, praise God for who He is and what He has done. Second, ask God to align your will with His so you can be an active part of His kingdom. Third, ask God to provide for your needs and the needs of others. Fourth, confess to God a sin you are struggling with and forgive someone who has wronged you. Fifth, ask for God's protection against temptation and sin.
- Challenge: During prayer time this week use the above five steps to shape your daily prayer time.

Week Twelve: Matthew 6:9-15

- Memory Verse: 9-13
- Prayer: Spend more time in prayer today, use the model of the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) to shape how you pray. First, praise God for who He is and what He has done. Second, ask God to align your will with His so you can be an active part of His kingdom. Third, ask God to provide for your needs and the needs of others. Fourth, confess to God a sin you are struggling with and forgive someone who has wronged you. Fifth, ask for God's protection against temptation and sin.
- Challenge: During prayer time this week use the above five steps to shape your daily prayer time.

Week Thirteen: Matthew 6:16-18

- Memory Verse: 17-18
- Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for the way that you care for me and sustain me. Thank you that even when I am physically hungry, you can fill me spiritually. Guide me this week as I consider when and for how long I can fast. As I draw close to you and find your goodness to truly be all I need, may I surrender to Your will and where You are leading. Amen.
- Challenge: Identify a time this week when you can fast from eating. Spend that time (maybe only once this week or maybe once daily) reading God's word and in prayer. Take note of how you physically feel while fasting and use it as a tool of refinement. You can do it!

Week Fourteen: Matthew 6:19-24

- Memory Verse: 21
- Prayer: Pray that God identifies the idols in your life that you are worshiping instead of Him. Ask for His help in dealing with these idols in a healthy way.
- Challenge: Identify and remove one idol/master from your life that you spend too much time focusing on. Tell someone else about this decision so they can pray for you and encourage you.

Week Fifteen: Matthew 6:25-34

- Memory Verse: 26-27
- Prayer: Lord, I trust in Your goodness, I trust in Your role as provider, I trust in Your will, help me to align my priorities with Yours. Help me to lean on You in my moments of weakness and anxiety with the knowledge that You love and care for me.
- Challenge: Write down the three most common elements of your life that cause you worry/anxiety. What do these elements say about what you value most in life? Talk to one person about these elements and what you are willing to do in order to align your priorities with your faith.

Week Sixteen: Matthew 7:1-6

- Memory Verse: 1-3
- Prayer: Father, it's often my nature to jump to conclusions and to assume I know all sides of every story and situation. But if I'm being completely honest, that's rarely or never the truth. Lord, create in me a humble heart that is not quick to judge others but to first love, then seeks to understand. Thank you, Lord, for the grace you've shown me, even though I was completely undeserving. When I'm tempted to judge others, may I be able to extend the same grace to them.
- Challenge: We all have different personalities, and some of us struggle more with judging others. But we've all likely been caught in this tempting trap. This week, try and dial up your self-awareness. When you notice the temptation to judge someone rising up, or you notice you're getting angry at someone for something they did wrong. Say a quick prayer, thanking God for the grace he's shown you through all your shortcomings, and then extend that same grace to others.

Week Seventeen: Matthew 7:7-12

- Memory Verse: 12

- Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the many “good gifts” that you have given me. Give me a thankful heart for your faithfulness and goodness and not just for the many material things that I oftentimes can get consumed with. You are a good Father who cares for me perfectly. Teach me to trust you even more. And may I give of myself to others as a result of your faithfulness towards me. Amen.
- Challenge: Take a blank piece of paper or open the notes app in your phone and make a list of all the things that you are thankful for. As you look at the list, how many are temporary (possessions, titles, status, etc...) and how many will last forever (family, faith, ways God has sustained you in the last year+, etc...)? Write down something that you’d like to ask God for. What is it? What would receiving it change in your life? Now think of someone else that you could “give a good gift” to that would be completely unexpected. Bless them this week as you continue to learn and become more like Jesus.

Week Eighteen: Matthew 7:13-14

- Memory Verse: 13-14
- Prayer: Ask God to surround you with a Christ-centered community that will support you when following Christ becomes difficult and demands sacrifice or persecution.
- Challenge: Send an encouraging letter to someone in your circle whom you know is struggling with difficulties in their life. Use this as an opportunity to love on someone who needs it.