

**Adult
Bible Study
in
Simplified
English**
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**Study
Guide**



The Gospel of Matthew

JESUS' TEACHINGS

INCLUDES BONUS CHRISTMAS LESSON

**Carolyn
Cree**

BAPTISTWAY PRESS
Dallas, Texas

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

Study Guide

The Gospel of Matthew: Jesus' Teachings

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The Gospel of Matthew: Jesus' Teachings

Teaching is an important idea in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus did much teaching in this gospel. There is more of Jesus' teaching in this gospel than in any of the other gospels. Jesus is called "teacher" many times in these verses. Jesus taught His disciples. The word "disciple" means "learner." Jesus' disciples had much, much to learn. How wonderful it would be to sit and listen to the greatest teacher in Heaven and on earth! Those teachings are as true, helpful, and important now as they were all those years ago.

Remember, Jesus was not killed on the cross because He was a good teacher. It was because He taught things that were new and different. The leaders of the people were afraid of those new ideas. Today, we do not need to be afraid. We need to learn from Jesus. If we are to be followers of Jesus, we must study His teachings. We must try to live the way He taught His disciples. Let us learn together from Jesus, the Teacher.

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The Gospel of Matthew: Jesus' Teachings

Word List

Lesson 1

dialysis center: a place where people go for medical treatment when their kidneys do not work

argument: a fight or disagreement

honest: truthful

precious: valuable

brag: to boast or talk in a prideful way

Lesson 2

authority: power

adultery: being unfaithful in marriage

divorce: the legal act of breaking-up a marriage

enemies: people who are against us

Lesson 3

landmark: a building or some other object that helps us remember where we are

instruction: teaching or direction

Lesson 4

destroy: to ruin something

international: from many nations or countries

widows: women whose husbands are dead

orphans: children whose parents are dead

prejudice: an opinion formed beforehand; irrational dislike of someone or something

jealousy: a feeling of unhappiness because you want what someone else has

Lesson 5

polite: nice or kind; well-mannered

foundation: the base or bottom level of any structure

Lesson 6

villages: little towns

synagogues: Jewish churches

pity: sorrow or sympathy

Pharisees: religious teachers of the Jewish law

missionary: someone who tells others about the One True God

permanent: final

Lesson 7

betray: to be disloyal

persecute: to abuse or treat wrongly

Word List

Lesson 8

shallow: lacking depth

pep: energy

confused: not understanding

Lesson 9

patience: the ability to wait

yeast: a baking ingredient

discouraged: to be upset or to lose faith

Lesson 10

humble: low in rank; putting others first

inexperienced: lacking skills or knowledge

forsaken: left something behind

foreigner: somebody born in another country

Lesson 11

reconcile: work out a problem and bring two sides together

private: in a quiet manner; not done in front of others

earnestly: sincerely or seriously

trial: a problem or difficulty

Lesson 12

pretense: acting in a way that is not genuine or sincerely felt

hypocrisy: saying one thing and doing something different

woe: sadness or misery

piety: religious devotion

Lesson 13

marble: an expensive type of stone used for building

justice: fairness

mercy: loving-kindness

dentist: a doctor who takes care of people's teeth

Lesson 14

betrothal: a promise to marry

binding: mandatory or required

flaw: a weak spot

suspicious: distrustful or fearful

frankincense: a valuable and sweet-smelling perfume

myrrh: another valuable and sweet-smelling perfume

Matthew



Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English

A New Way of Life

Lesson 1

Jesus' Design for Life
(Matthew 5:1-16)

Lesson 2

A New View
on Old Teachings
(Matthew 5:17-48)

Lesson 3

When God Is
the Only Audience
(Matthew 6:1-18)

Lesson 4

The Wealth That Lasts
(Matthew 6:19-34)

Lesson 5

Choose Life
Under God's Rule
(Matthew 7:1-27)

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

What is life supposed to be like? That is a very good question. If you ask many young people, you might get many different answers. One person answered, "I want to earn a lot of money." Another person said, "I want an important job."

The book of Matthew is full of Jesus' teachings about many things. In Matthew, Jesus talked about the Law. The Law had been taught to the Jewish people for years and years. It told what the people should believe. It taught how people should live.

God wants us to know what life should be like for His followers. Jesus told people about good ways to live. We call this teaching the Sermon on the Mount. In this unit, we will study these teachings of Jesus.

These lessons in Matthew were written by Carolyn Cree of Fort Worth, Texas. Carolyn has been a teacher and director of international programs since 1971. She is the author of the book, Beyond the Golden Door: A Layman's Ministry to International Families. She and her husband, Dick, are members of University Baptist Church in Fort Worth. They have two daughters and two grandchildren.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 5:1-16

Memory Verse

“Let your light shine in front of men. Then they will see the good things you do and will honor your Father Who is in heaven”
(Matthew 5:16).

Word List

dialysis center: a place where people go for medical treatment when their kidneys do not work

argument: a fight or disagreement

honest: truthful

precious: valuable

brag: to boast or talk in a prideful way

Jesus' Design for Life

I spend twelve hours each week at a **dialysis center**. A young woman works there. She is the social worker. She has a husband, two children, and does work in her church. She is very busy, but she has time to help people. She takes time to talk to the patients. She helps with problems. She is always kind and pleasant. Jo Nell is always helping. What a wonderful way to spend a life!

Rules for a Good Life (Matthew 5:1-11)

In His sermon, Jesus gave His rules for living. We call these rules the Beatitudes. Jesus gave instructions on how to be blessed. Blessed means “holy and happy.” Each of the Beatitudes begins with “Blessed.”

Verse 3 says that those who love the Lord will go to the kingdom of heaven. This is the place all Christians want to be after death. Other places in the Bible talk about the kingdom of God. The meaning is the same.

Verse 4 says that who are sad will be comforted. Many times in my life, I have been sad. In those times, I have prayed and thought about how God takes care of us. Then I have always felt better. I have been able to go on with my life.

Verse 6 says that people who want to be good are blessed. We all make mistakes. It is part of life. But we must always keep trying. God understands. He forgives us if we keep trying to do the right things.

**Things To
Think About**

What does it mean to be blessed?

What is life supposed to be like?

What are some ways Christians can be salt and light?

Verse 7 talks about anger. Do you know people who are always angry? I do. Sometimes people stay angry. They do not forgive. Jesus told us to be full of mercy and to forgive.

Verse 8 talks about purity. It would be wonderful if we could always be pure in heart. Sometimes hateful thoughts come into our minds. The devil is always trying to lead us away from God. We must keep trying to stop thoughts that are sinful. We must always look to the things of God. And one day we will see Him! Verse 9 talks about peace. There is a man in our church who is a peacemaker. Whenever there is an **argument** in our church, he steps in to make peace. He makes people listen. He speaks in a calm voice. He listens to both sides of the **argument**. He decides who is right. He makes peace.

Verse 10 talks about those who suffer for doing right things. I know a person who had a hard time because he was religious. He would not rob a store with some of his friends. When the police caught the robbers, they said my friend had been with them. It was a lie. It was hard for my friend to prove that he was innocent. His neighbors thought he was guilty. He felt that he was ruined. A witness told the police he was innocent. He did not have to go to jail.

In some parts of the world, it is hard to be a Christian. People can be hard on those who do not believe the way they believe. Some of our missionaries have hard times in countries that do not believe in God. They make life difficult. But the missionaries keep trying. It is not always easy to do God's will. The devil is always watching. He tries to put bad things in our way. We must always keep our eyes on God's plan.

One time, a long time ago, my husband was offered a good job. It was with a bank. He would be president. He would have a nice car, an airplane, and a big salary. I wanted him to take the job. The devil was tempting me. My husband thought about the job. He thought something was wrong. He did not take the job. The man who did take that job went to jail. My husband was right. The people with the bank were not **honest**. They wanted a good man to be president. Then they could do bad things. They thought they would not be caught. But they were wrong!

Salt (Matthew 5:13)

Have you ever thought about salt? Because my kidneys do not work, I cannot eat much salt. I miss salt. Salt makes food taste better. The flavor of food is helped with salt. In Jesus' time, there were no refrigerators. The people did not have a way to keep food cold. To keep food from spoiling, the people used salt. Meat was salted so that it could be kept a long time. Other foods were salted in the same way. Salt was **precious**.

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the

earth." This was a great thing to say to a person. He meant that we are important. God loves us. We are **precious** to Him. But if we fall away from God's plan, we are lost. We lose our "saltiness."

Light (Matthew 5:14-16)

If I want to light a room, I press a switch. I light a lamp. I don't have to think about it. I have always had lights. In Jesus' day there was no electricity. Lights did not come on at the touch of a switch. A light was lit with fire and oil.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." This means we are to be bright and shining. We are to be a light to guide people to Christ. We are a light showing people the way. What more could we want? Jesus tells us not to hide our light. This does not mean that we are to **brag**. If we live our lives by God's plan, our lights will shine naturally. People will see that our lives are good. They will praise our Father in Heaven.

Matthew 5:1-16

1 Jesus saw many people. He went up on the mountain and sat down. His followers came to Him.

2 He began to teach them, saying,

3 “Those who know there is nothing in good in themselves are happy, because the holy nation of heaven is theirs.

4 Those who have sorrow are happy, because they will be comforted.

5 Those who have no pride in their hearts are happy, because the earth will be given to them.

6 Those who are hungry and thirsty to be right with God are happy, because they will be filled.

7 Those who show loving-kindness are happy, because they will have loving-kindness shown to them.

8 Those who have a pure heart are happy, because they will see God.

9 Those who make peace are happy, because they will be called the sons of God.

10 Those who have it very hard for doing right are happy, because the holy nation of heaven is theirs.

11 You are happy when people act and talk in a bad way to you and make it very hard for you and tell bad things and lies about you because you trust in Me.

12 Be glad and full of joy because your pay will be much in heaven. They made it very hard for the early preachers who lived a

long time before you.

13 “You are the salt of the earth. If salt loses its taste, how can it be made to taste like salt again? It is no good. It is thrown away and people walk on it.

14 You are the light of the world. You cannot hide a city that is on a mountain.

15 Men do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. They put it on a table so it gives light to all in the house.

16 Let your light shine in front of men. Then they will see the good things you do and will honor your Father Who is in heaven.



*Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

Matthew 5:17-48

Memory Verse

“But I tell you, love those who hate you. Pray for those who do bad things to you and who make it hard for you” (Matthew 5:44).

Word List

authority: power

adultery: being unfaithful in marriage

divorce: the legal act of breaking-up a marriage

enemies: people who are against us

A New Look at Old Teachings

The Scribes and the Pharisees were very important in Jesus’ day. The Scribes worked out the rules. The Pharisees were a special group of men who saw that the rules were obeyed. For years, they added to God’s rules. There were thousands of rules about how to live every part of the day. Following the rules was important to a good Jewish person. Jews believed they must obey the rules to go to heaven. The Law had become a mess.

Many times Jesus broke laws added by the Scribes. Jesus said that He came to bring out the real meaning of the law. The Scribes and Pharisees were right that we must look for God’s will. They were wrong in making so many, many rules for living. Jesus came to show people the true meaning of God’s law.

Murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

For many years, Jews had been told not to murder. Jesus taught them that just feeling like killing someone was sinful. Feeling hate in your heart was as bad as murder. Jesus had the right to point out things that were wrong with the Law. He did not argue. He claimed the right because God told Him to do so.

The Jewish people had never heard anything like this. A scribe or rabbi (preacher) never dared to give his own opinion. He would repeat something that was said many years ago. No person would pretend to change the Word of God. But Jesus was the Son of God. He had the **authority**, and He used it.

Adultery (Matthew 5:27-30)

Adultery was a terrible sin in Jesus’ day. The Jewish

Things To Think About

Who are the Scribes and Pharisees?

How did Jesus change the Jewish law?

What kind of love does God want us to show? Why?

teachers believed that people caught in **adultery** should be killed. Jesus said that the thought was as bad as the deed. Just thinking of **adultery** was as bad as actually doing it.

Jesus was not talking about the natural desire every human feels to be loved in marriage. Let us understand what Jesus was saying. Many things in our culture can make a person think about **adultery**. Books, magazines, and movies show people in adultery. This is not how Christians should live. We should be aware of these things and avoid them.

Unclean thoughts come into our minds even when we don't want them to. It can be very hard not to think about them. One good way to rid our minds of bad thoughts is to fill your life with good things. Think about Bible verses or Christian songs. Leave no time for thinking about bad things. Christian work and Christian service should fill our lives.

Divorce (Matthew 5:31-32)

When Jesus talked about **divorce**, the world was in a bad state. The world was about to see the break-up of the home. Marriage was in trouble. The Lord had said He hated divorce.

In those days, women were treated like property. A woman had no legal rights. A woman could not **divorce** her husband. A man could divorce his wife for no reason at all. In Jesus' time, **divorce** was becoming easier. Marriages were breaking down. The nation's morals were becoming getting bad. This was an important thing for Jesus to talk about.

Oaths (Matthew 5:33-37)

Many times in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the

Jews things they already knew. Jewish teachers told the people, “Always tell the truth.” But again, things were changing. People were in the habit of saying they would do something, but not doing it. They would take an oath when it was not needed. Jesus said they should not swear at all. “No” should mean “no.” “Yes” should mean “yes.”

An Eye for an Eye (Matthew 5:38-42)

This law was one of the oldest laws of the Jews. It became part of Christian beliefs. The law was clear. If a person caused an injury to another, that same injury would be done to him. In early days, if one did an injury to another, revenge was necessary. His whole tribe became angry. Jesus’ law was the beginning of mercy. Only the person who injured another was to receive the same injury.

Love for Enemies (Matthew 5:43-48)

There are four meanings for the word “love” in the Greek language. There is family love and romantic love. There is also love for nearest and dearest friends. *Agape* love is good will toward everyone no matter what a person may do. *Agape* love

means we will not hate those who harm us. Jesus did not ask us to love our **enemies** the same way we love our family. *Agape* love means that we try not to hate. We try to forget the wrongs people do to us. This kind of love is not of the heart. It is of the mind and will. We must feel good will even toward the person who has hurt us.

Why did Jesus ask us to give *agape* love? The answer is simple. That kind of love makes a person more like God. God is love. We learn that truth when we first learn about our Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:17-48

17 “Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses or the writings of the early preachers. I have not come to do away with them but to complete them. **18** I tell you, as long as heaven and earth last, not one small mark or part of a word will pass away of the Law of Moses until it has all been done. **19** Anyone who breaks even the least of the Law of Moses and teaching people not to do what it says, will be called the least in the holy nation of heaven. He who obeys and teaches others to obey what the Law of Moses says, will be called great in the holy nation of heaven. **20** I tell you, unless you are more right with God than the teachers of the Law and the proud religious law-keepers, you will never get into the holy nation of heaven.

21 “You have heard that men were told long ago, ‘You must not kill another person. If someone does kill, he will be guilty and will be

punished for his wrong-doing.’ **22** But I tell you that whoever is angry with his brother will be guilty and have to suffer for his wrong-doing. Whoever says to his brother, ‘You have no brains,’ will have to stand in front of the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be sent to the fire of hell. **23** If you take your gift to the altar and remember your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift on the altar. Go and make right what is wrong between you and him. Then come back and give your gift. **25** Agree with the one who is against you while you are talking together, or he might take you to court. The court will hand you over to the police. You will be put in prison. **26** For sure, I tell you, you will not be let out of prison until you have paid every piece of money of the fine.

27 “You have heard that it was said long ago, ‘You must not do sex sins.’ **28** But I tell you, anyone who even looks at a woman with a sinful desire of wanting her has already sinned in his heart. **29** If your right eye is the reason you sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** If your right hand is the reason you sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go to hell.

31 “It has been said, ‘Whoever wants to divorce his wife should have it put in writing, telling her he is leaving her.’ **32** But I tell you, whoever divorces his wife except if she has not been faithful to him, makes her guilty of a sex sin. Whoever marries a woman who has been divorced is guilty of a sex sin.

33 “You have heard that it was said long ago, ‘You must not make a promise you cannot keep. You must carry out your promises to the

Lord.’ **34** I tell you, do not use strong words when you make a promise. Do not promise by heaven. It is the place where God is. **35** Do not promise by earth. It is where He rests His feet. Do not promise by Jerusalem. It is the city of the great King. **36** Do not promise by your head. You are not able to make one hair white or black. **37** Let your yes be YES. Let your no be NO. Anything more than this comes from the devil.

38 “You have heard that it has been said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ **39** But I tell you, do not fight with the man who wants to fight. Whoever hits you on the right side of the face, turn so he can hit the other side also. **40** If any person takes you to court to get your shirt, give him your coat also. **41** Whoever makes you walk a short way, go with him twice as far. **42** Give to any person who asks you for something. Do not say no to the man who wants to use something of yours.

43 You have heard that it has been said, ‘You must love your neighbor and hate those who hate you.’ **44** But I tell you, love those who hate you. (Respect and give thanks for those who say bad things to you. Do good to those who hate you.) Pray for those who do bad things to you and who make it hard for you. **45** Then you may be the sons of your Father Who is in heaven. His sun shines on bad people and on good people. He sends rain on those who are right with God and on those who are not right with God. **46** If you love those who love you, what pay can you expect from that? Do not even the tax gatherers do that? **47** If you say hello only to the people you like, are you doing any more than others? The people who do not know God do that much. **48** You must be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.



Lesson
3
Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

Matthew 6:1-18

Memory Verse

“Be sure you do not do good things in front of others just to be seen by them. If you do you have no pay from your Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:1).

Word List

landmark: a building or some other object that helps us remember where we are

instruction: teaching or direction

When God Is the Only Audience

One day a little boy walked away from his home. He was chasing after his dog. After a while, he looked around. He was lost. He began to cry. He was very afraid. Soon, a police officer saw the boy. He said, “What’s the matter, son?”

The boy said, “I went after my dog, and now I’m lost.”

The officer was kind. He said, “I’ll help you get home. Where do you live?”

“I can’t remember,” said the boy. “And we don’t have a telephone.” He began to be afraid again.

“Can you give me a **landmark** of some kind?”

“Yes,” the little one said. He smiled. “There is a church near our house. It has a high steeple with a cross on it. Do you know where that steeple is?”

The officer smiled, too. “Yes, I do.”

The boy was happy. He said, “Well then, please take me to the foot of the cross. I can get home from there.” We all can find our way home at the foot of the cross.

How do we know how to worship God? The answer is the Bible. It tells us how to have a good life. It is a guide for life. It points us toward a life of ministry to others. It helps our faith to grow. All the members of our families can grow in learning the ways of God.

We should obey and serve Jesus. Faith in Him will take care of our physical needs. It takes care of our spiritual needs.

Things To Think About

For what reason should Christians worship God and serve others?

What is fasting? Have you ever fasted in worship?

How religious would you be if only God were watching?

Faith in Jesus gives us the strength to handle our emotional needs. Sometimes we are worried. We are sick at heart. Jesus is always there to comfort us. He will help us see the right way to solve our problems.

I have lived many years. I have had many problems. Each time I have cried to the Lord, He has given me an answer. When I have tried to handle those problems by myself, I have failed. It is a wonderful feeling to know that the Lord is in charge. By reading the Bible, I have found answers. We must remember to put our trust in God. He will never fail us.

Giving to the Needy (Matthew 6:1-4)

Do you read the newspaper? Sometimes there is a headline about the gift someone has given. There is a picture of the one who has given the gift. The gift-giver looks happy to get credit for what was done. The Bible says that is not the way for Christians to behave.

A picture was in our newspaper the other day. It was a picture about Habitat for Humanity. This is a group of people who work to build houses for poor people. This group does not earn money for their work. They do the work out of the goodness of their hearts. They want to help people who need help.

The people in the picture were smiling. They were happy to be working on a new house. I noticed something strange about the picture. There were no names under the picture. The workers were not seeking attention. They had their reward simply by helping others.

I have read many lists of people who have given gifts to the needy. Usually at least one “anonymous” gift is listed. “Anonymous” means the giver did not give his or her name. That person did not want public credit for the gift. That person was following the **instruction** of God’s Word.

Prayer (Matthew 6:5-14)

I have a good friend who prays beautiful prayers. When Norma prays aloud, she says the things I would like to say. I would like to pray aloud, but I don’t very often. For some reason, it is hard for me to pray when other people are listening. I don’t often pray out loud. However, I know the Lord listens even when my prayer is a silent one. I talk to God often. And He listens and answers me.

I think Jesus’ followers did not know how to pray. Jesus told His followers that God knows what our needs are before we ask. Then, Jesus told the people how to pray. This prayer is called The Lord’s Prayer. We teach our children to say this prayer when they are little. In this prayer, Jesus says again that we must forgive. We must forgive those who hurt us. Then, the

Father will forgive us when we make mistakes.

Fasting (Matthew 6:16-18)

I have never known a person who fasted. Fasting means not eating. Sometimes I fast before a visit to the doctor, but I only fast a little. Missing one meal is easy. At times, people do not eat so they can think about holy things. Fasting is a way of worshiping God.

Even though I have never known a person who was fasting, that does not mean no one did it. It means they did it in secret. They dressed and acted like nothing was different. We do not have to tell others about our worship. Many people tell others about their worship so that others will appreciate their efforts. Our Father knows what we do in secret. If we do things in worship of Him, He will reward us.

Listen to Jesus’ Rules

These words of Jesus are rules for living. They are as true today as they were so many years ago. Jesus wants believers to obey His rules. If we follow those rules, we can live good, fruitful, helpful lives.

Matthew 6:1-18

1 “Be sure you do not do good things in front of others just to be seen by them. If you do, you have no pay from your Father in heaven.

2 When you give to the poor, do not be as those who pretend to be someone they are not. They blow a horn in the places of worship and in the streets so people may respect them. For sure, I tell you, they have all the pay they are going to get.

3 When you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand gives.

4 Your giving should be in secret. Then your Father Who sees in secret will pay you.

5 “When you pray, do not be as those who pretend to be someone they are not. They love to stand and pray in the places of worship or in the streets so people can see them. For sure, I tell you, they have all the pay they are going to get.

6 When you pray, go into a room by yourself. After you have shut the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret. Then your Father Who sees in secret will pay you.

7 When you pray, do not say the same thing over and over again making long prayers like the people who do not know God. They think they are heard because their prayers are long.

8 Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 “Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, Your name is holy.

10 May Your holy nation come. What You want done, may it be done on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us the bread we need today.

12 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

13 ‘Do not let us be tempted, but keep us from sin. Your nation is holy. You have power and shining-greatness forever. Let it be so.’ ”

14 “If you forgive people their sins, your Father in heaven will forgive your sins also.

15 If you do not forgive people their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

16 “When you go without food so you can pray better, do not be as those who pretend to be someone they are not. They make themselves look sad so people will see they are going without food. For sure, I tell you, they have all the pay they are going to get.

17 When you go without food so you can pray better, put oil on your head and wash your face.

18 Then nobody knows you are going without food. Then your Father Who sees in secret will pay you.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 6:19-34

Memory Verse

“For wherever your riches are, your heart will be there also”
(Matthew 6:21).

Word List

destroy: to ruin something

international: from many nations or countries

widows: women whose husbands are dead

orphans: children whose parents are dead

prejudice: an opinion formed beforehand; irrational dislike of someone or something

jealousy: a feeling of unhappiness because you want what someone else has

The Wealth that Lasts

Do you anyone who is interested in helping others? I do. Edlyne Dickson is a person who spends her life working for the good of others. She was a school teacher before she retired. She does not have a lot of money. She spent more than a year in China. She paid for two trips by herself. She taught English and told others about Jesus.

Edlyne also took two trips to Cambodia. She went with a group from our church. This group helped build a place for people to worship. Edlyne taught people how to teach children about Jesus. Every week Edlyne works in an apartment teaching poor children. She teaches about Jesus on Sunday. On some weekdays, she helps the children with their school work. Edlyne does not take any pay for these jobs.

During other weekdays, Edlyne works in our church’s International House. Once a month she cooks dinner for a great group of students from around the world. She makes friends with the students. She helps them feel comfortable in the United States. She tells them about Jesus.

There is not space to tell you about all the things Edlyne does for other people. Every week she gathers food and clothes to give to poor people. Just now she is in another state helping a friend who is ill. If there is a need, Edlyne is ready to help.

Wanting Things (Matthew 6:19-21)

Jesus’ teaching went on to talk about everyday things. He warned people about wanting things. He warned about getting

Things To Think About

Do you know anyone who unselfishly does things for others?

What kind of treasure does Jesus want us to have?

What do you worry about most?

What does Jesus say about worry?

things that moths could **destroy**. A rich person always wanted beautiful clothes. A moth could get at the clothes and ruin them.

Jesus warned about getting things that could rust away. In those times, a rich person had large barns. He stored corn and grain there. Rats and mice could get to the corn and grain. They could eat the grains. They could ruin the man's harvest.

Jesus also warned about hiding gold. He warned about hiding silver and other treasures. In those days, most houses were made of baked clay. It was easy for thieves to dig through the wall. A thief could take a person's treasure easily. Jesus wants us to think of higher things. He wants us to think about what God wants us to do and be.

If You Don't Know, Just Look Around!

I think you could tell me about good Christian people who spend their lives helping others. They are everywhere. Two people who do that are Ann and Gene Pitman. They were medical missionaries to Africa. Then Ann became ill, and they had to return to the United States. In 1970, Ann began a program to help **international** women. The teachers give English lessons. They teach about computers. They teach about many helpful things. They teach about Jesus. Their actions show their love for Jesus.

Ann is another person who gives to others. She and her husband have a nice home. They have enough money. But they give and give to others. They don't just give money. They give their time and all kinds of help. Think about the people you know who help others. Pray for them as they do God's work.

Treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21)

Jewish people knew about building treasures in heaven. They believed the kind things you did on earth became treasure in heaven. The members of the early church cared for the poor. They also cared for the sick and the helpless. They fed the **widows** and **orphans**. They nursed sick people. From the beginning, the church has believed that what we keep, we lose. Think about this belief. Do we still think this way now?

The Jewish people thought good character built treasures in heaven. All the riches a person has on earth will be lost when he or she dies. The only thing a person takes out of this world is his body. A dead person takes nothing with him. If a Christian does good deeds, he or she has treasures in heaven.

The Lamp of the Body (Matthew 6:22-24)

The eye is the window of the body. The Jews believed light came into the body through the eyes. Jesus said if the eye is clear, the light gets into the whole body. If the window is dirty, the room will be dark.

We have to keep our windows clear.

Prejudice can cloud our windows.

Jealousy can make our lives dark. **Pride** can make us think we are better than others. These things mean light cannot come into our lives.

Do Not Worry (Matthew 6:25-34)

Jesus taught that God gives us life. If He gives us life, we can trust Him for smaller things. He will help us get the things we need for living. When Jesus talked about birds, He was teaching that they work hard. Getting enough food takes most of their time. They do not spend time worrying. Jesus was showing that worry does no good.

We cannot see tomorrow. We only have today to do our work. Jesus said worry is what people do who do not know Him. The Christian should not worry because he believes in the love of God.

We must live one day at a time. We must do the work of that day. Tomorrow may not come. We can make plans, but they may not come to pass. Christ wants us to do our work without worrying about tomorrow.

Matthew 6:19-34

19 “Do not gather together for yourselves riches of this earth. They will be eaten by bugs and become rusted. Men can break in and steal them.

20 Gather together riches in heaven where they will not be eaten by bugs or become rusted. Men cannot break in and steal them.

21 For wherever your riches are, your heart will be there also.

22 The eye is the light of the body. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 If your eye is bad, your whole body will be dark. If the light in you is dark, how dark it will be !

24 No one can have two bosses. He will hate the one and love the other. Or he will listen to the one and work against the other. You cannot have both God and riches as your boss at the same time.

25 “I tell you this: Do not worry about your life. Do not worry about what you are going to eat and drink. Do not worry about what you are going to wear. Is not life more important than food? Is not the body more important than clothes?

26 Look at the birds in the sky. They do not plant seeds. They do not gather grain. They do not put grain into a building to keep. Yet your Father in heaven feeds them! Are you not more important than the birds?

27 Which of you can make himself a little

taller by worrying?

28 Why should you worry about clothes? Think how the flowers grow. They do not work or make cloth.

29 But I tell you that Solomon in all his greatness was not dressed as well as one of these flowers.

30 God clothes the grass of the field. It lives today and is burned in the stove tomorrow. How much more will He give you clothes? You have so little faith!

31 Do not worry. Do not keep saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or, ‘What will we drink?’ or, ‘What will we wear?’

32 The people who do not know God are looking for all these things. Your Father in heaven knows you need all these things.

33 First of all, look for the holy nation of God. Be right with Him. All these other things will be given to you also.

34 Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will have its own worries. The troubles we have in a day are enough for one day.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 7:1-27

Memory Verse

“Do for other people what you would like them to do for you” (Matthew 7:12a).

Word List

polite: nice or kind; well-mannered

foundation: the base or bottom level of any structure

Choose Life Under God's Rule

Have you heard about DNA testing? It is a way to test blood. Sometimes, innocent people have been judged and sent to prison. They were not guilty, but they could not prove it. There was no DNA blood test at that time.

I saw an article in the newspaper. It told about a person who had been in jail for years. He asked for a DNA test. The blood test proved he was not the guilty person. He was let out of prison. This test can keep people from being wrongly judged.

Do Not Judge (Matthew 7:1-5)

How often we look at a person and judge him or her? We may not think we are judging that person. But we are. We look at their clothes. Are they clean? Are they new or old? Do they have patches or do they have holes? We look at hair. Is it too long? Is it clean? Long, dirty hair bothers me. I judge people by the way they look. That is wrong, and I keep trying not to judge.

Many years ago I flew to another city. A young man was on the plane. When we left the plane, the young man was stopped. He was taken to another room. He was searched. He had no guns, so they let him go. I was in the waiting room. I saw his family. They were a nice looking family. When the boy was with them, he looked fine. He was not a bad person. He just made the police suspicious because of the way he was dressed.

How good it would be if we could see the real person instead of the dirty clothes and long hair! I have met many people who were poor. They could not dress well. They could not always be clean. But when I got to know them, I liked them.

**Things To
Think About**

Why is it wrong to judge others?

Upon what foundation should Christians build their lives?

What difference would it make in how we relate to God and others if we followed Jesus' teachings?

Once, I met a girl who came to America from Africa. She believed it was wrong to bathe in the winter. That is not what we believe where I live. We like to bathe often. We don't like to smell bad. Her teachers thought of a way to help her understand why she should bathe more. Now, she bathes often. If the teachers had judged her, they would have missed a friend.

We cannot know the whole person. We cannot know the facts that made the person what he or she is. It is hard for us not to judge. But no one is good enough to judge another person.

Ask, Seek, Knock (Matthew 7:7-12)

This is one of my favorite teachings of Jesus. A loving father gives his child whatever he needs. If an earthly father gives good things, think of what our heavenly Father gives. We only have to ask. Our Father gives us good gifts when we ask.

Then comes Jesus' command: Do to others what you would have them do to you. This is one of Jesus' most important commands. If we are kind to others, they are likely to be kind to us. If we are **polite**, they are likely to be **polite**, too.

Have you been in a car when someone made a rude sign to you? Don't return a rude sign. Smile and go on your way.

Narrow and Wide Gates (Matthew 7:13-14)

Jesus told the people that it is easy to do wrong. There are many things that can trap us. Jesus said many people take the easy way. It leads to ruin. The way to heaven is through a narrow gate. It takes careful living to go through that gate. Only those who love the Lord and follow His teachings can enter that gate. They can find the road that leads to life.

Watch Your Step! (Matthew 7:15-22)

Did you ever watch some of the programs on TV that seem to be church services? I do not mean services of real churches. I mean services by people who pretend to be good. They pretend to have God's blessing. They pretend to heal people. But they fool people. They ask for money. They pretend the money is for poor people. The money is really for them. Their lives are full of sin. They pretend to be good, but they are evil.

Jesus warns us about these people. Jesus says that only people who follow God's laws will enter the kingdom of heaven. We must think about what we are doing. It is easy to be sinful. Only Jesus' way is the right way.

Wise and Foolish Builders**(Matthew 7:24-29)**

Have you heard of someone whose house has a bad **foundation**? I know a person whose house has a cracked **foundation**. The house leans to one side. There are cracks in the walls. The pipes sometimes break. The floor is not even. The house is a mess! How much better it is to

build a house on a good foundation!

Jesus was talking about our lives. If we try to do His will, and do the best we can, God will reward us. People were amazed to hear Jesus' teaching. He taught as though He knew much more than the Jewish teachers. He taught that way because He was the Son of God.

We will be rewarded when we follow His teachings.

Matthew 7:1-27

- 1** "Do not say what is wrong in other people's lives. Then other people will not say what is wrong in your life.
- 2** You will be guilty of the same things you find in others. When you say what is wrong in others, your words will be used to say what is wrong in you.
- 3** Why do you look at the small piece of wood in your brother's eye, and do not see the big piece of wood in your own eye?
- 4** How can you say to your brother 'Let me take that small piece of wood out of your eye, 'when there is a big piece of wood in your own eye?
- 5** You who pretend to be someone you are not, first take the big piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you can see better to take the small piece of wood out of your brother's eye.
- 6** "Do not give that which belongs to God

to dogs. Do not throw your pearls in front of pigs. They will break them under their feet. Then they will turn and tear you to pieces.

7 “Ask, and what you are asking for will be given to you. Look, and what you are looking for you will find. Knock, and the door you are knocking on will be opened to you.

8 Everyone who asks receives what he asks for. Everyone who looks finds what he is looking for. Everyone who knocks has the door opened to him.

9 What man among you would give his son a stone if he should ask for bread?

10 Or if he asks for a fish, would he give him a snake?

11 You are bad and you know how to give good things to your children. How much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?

12 “Do for other people whatever you would like to have them do for you. This is what the Jewish Law and the early preachers said.

13 “Go in through the narrow door. The door is wide and the road is easy that leads to hell. Many people are going through that door.

14 But the door is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life that lasts forever. Few people are finding it.

15 “Watch out for false teachers. They come to you dressed as if they were sheep. On the inside they are hungry wolves.

16 You will know them by their fruit. Do men pick grapes from thorns? Do men pick figs from thistles?

17 It is true, every good tree has good fruit. Every bad tree has bad fruit.

18 A good tree cannot have bad fruit. A bad tree cannot have good fruit.

19 Every tree that does not have good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 So you will know them by their fruit.

21 Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will go into the holy nation of heaven. The one who does the things My Father in heaven wants him to do will go into the holy nation of heaven.

22 Many people will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not preach in Your Name? Did we not put out demons in Your Name? Did we not do many powerful works in Your Name?”

23 Then I will say to them in plain words, ‘I never knew you. Go away from Me, you who do wrong!’

24 “Whoever hears these words of Mine and does them, will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

25 The rain came down. The water came up. The wind blew and hit the house. The house did not fall because it was built on rock.

26 Whoever hears these words of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

27 The rain came down. The water came up. The wind blew and hit the house. The house fell and broke apart.”

◊ Matthew ◊

Unit 2

*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

Instructions to Disciples on Mission

Lesson 6

Called to Jesus' Mission
(Matthew 9:35-10:15)

Lesson 7

Toward Trust in Jesus
(Matthew 10:16-42)

INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCIPLES ON MISSION

This is the second unit in the study of Jesus' teachings. It studies Jesus' instructions to the disciples. Jesus spent much time training the disciples. Then He sent them out. He sent them out to complete His mission. They were to minister in His name. The two lessons in this unit explore how Jesus trained and empowered the disciples. By studying Jesus' teachings to the disciples, we can be trained for ministry. We can learn how God will empower us to minister.



Lesson
6
*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 9:35
to 10:15

Memory Verse

“You have received much, now give much” (Matthew 10:8b).

Word List

villages: little towns

synagogues: Jewish churches

pity: sorrow or sympathy

Pharisees: religious teachers of the Jewish law

missionary: someone who tells others about the One True God

permanent: final

Called to Jesus' Mission

Today we live in a world full of trouble. There are wars. People kill other people. There is too much hate in the world. We need to learn about Jesus' word from God. Jesus taught about God's love. In today's world we need that love.

Jesus: The Herald, the Teacher, the Healer (Matthew 9:35)

A herald is a person who brings a message from a king. Jesus brought a message from God. A herald brings a message of truth. A preacher must be sure what he says is true. Jesus told the truth from God. Jesus went around to the towns and **villages**. He preached to the people. He preached in the **synagogues**. Jesus brought a message from God.

It is not enough to preach about God. We cannot tell the truth and stop. We must show the truth by living it. Have you known a person who acted religious only on Sundays? I have. That person forgot what he heard in church on Sunday. The rest of the week, he did bad things. We must show Jesus' teachings by the way we live. Others can see Christianity in us.

Our duty is not so much to talk about Christianity. Our duty is to show by our lives that we believe. Every Christian must be a teacher. We must teach others what Christianity is. We must not teach only by our words. We must teach by the way we live.

Jesus' teaching did not stop with words. He did many good things. He spent much time healing the sick. He felt sorry for those who were sick. They had no one else to heal them. He saw that hungry people were fed. That is the reason our churches feed people who are poor and hungry today.

Things To Think About

Do you know a person who is compassionate? Describe that person.

Why does Jesus send the disciples to the Jews first?

How does Jesus' call to the disciples to work in His mission apply to us today?

Jesus turned God's love into good deeds. He gave comfort to people who were sad. When our loved ones die, only God can really comfort us. But our Christian friends can remind us of God's love. His comfort is the best comfort.

Compassion (Matthew 9:36)

One who shows compassion is one who is kind and thoughtful. This is a person who feels **pity** for another person. Jesus showed compassion for the sick. He was sad for the blind and the people sick with demons. He wanted to ease their pain.

The people were longing for God. But the **Pharisees** only told them about the Law. They only taught what they could and could not do. They had no compassion for the people. They did not give comfort or strength. The **Pharisees** gave the people a religion full of rules. The Christian religion encourages people. It gives them a reason to live good lives. It does not weigh them down. Love lifts them up.

Workers for the Harvest (Matthew 9:37-38)

Jesus saw the people as a harvest to be saved. Harvest is the time for gathering the crops. But we cannot save the harvest if there are no people to work. When Jesus was on the earth, only a few people believed. There were not many workers.

Today we need believers. Every Christian should be a **missionary**. Every Christian must do his or her part. It is true that every person cannot work. But even the sick or old person can pray. Prayer helps us all. Giving money helps, but it is not enough. There is someone each of us can bring to God.

Jesus Chooses and Sends His Disciples (Matthew 10:1-15)

Any leader must choose his followers carefully. Jesus was no different. He chose carefully. The men He chose were important. They were the men who would carry on His work. When He was gone from this earth, they would be His messengers.

The men Jesus chose were plain men. There was nothing special about them. They did not have a lot of money. They had no special education. Jesus chose these men not for what they were. Jesus chose these men for what they could become in Him. Jesus still chooses people who can become what Jesus wants them to be. Every person has something he or she can offer Jesus Christ. Jesus can take what you or I can offer. He can use it for greatness.

Jesus looked at all His disciples. Out of all those, Jesus called twelve men. They were the chosen ones. They were the ones Jesus wanted to do His work. He called them. He was ready to give them the tools to help them do His work.

A disciple is one who is a learner. The twelve disciples were to learn from

Jesus. A person who wants to be Jesus' disciple must be willing to learn. You and I must be willing to learn as we live our lives. We must not develop a closed mind. Each day we must be a little nearer to God.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve (Matthew 10:1-15)

The disciples were to live with Jesus. They were to learn. They had to learn much in a short time. They were to be called apostles. "Apostle" means to be sent out. An apostle goes out to tell people of the beauty and words of Jesus. The apostle tells people the words of God.

The next Scriptures are a bit hard to understand. Jesus told the apostles not to go to the Gentiles. They were not to go to the Samaritans. There were only twelve men. Twelve men could not go everywhere at once. They must first minister to the Jews.

However, this command was not permanent. Jesus talked to Samaritans. He ministered to people everywhere. In Matthew 15:28, Jesus told His disciples to go into the world. He wanted them to bring the gospel to all people. This command is ours today.

Matthew 9:35 to 10:15

9:35 Jesus went on to all the towns and cities. He taught in their places of worship. He preached the Good News of the holy nation of God. He healed every sickness and disease the people had.

36 As He saw many people, He had loving-pity on them. They were troubled and were walking around everywhere. They were like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then He said to His followers, "There is much grain ready to gather. But the workmen are few.

38 Pray then to the Lord Who is the Owner of the grain fields that He will send workmen to gather His grain.

10:1 Jesus called His twelve followers to Him. He gave them power to put out demons and to heal all kinds of sickness and disease.

2 These are the names of the twelve followers. There were Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John who were the sons of Zebedee.

3 There were Philip and Bartholomew and Thomas. There was Matthew, the man who gathered taxes. There were James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeaus, and

4 Simon the Canaanite. There was Judas Iscariot who handed Jesus over to be killed.

5 Jesus sent out these twelve followers. He

told them to go, saying, "Stay away from people who are not Jews. And do not go to any town in the country of Samaria.

6 But go to the Jewish people who are lost.

7 As you go, preach. Say, 'The holy nation of heaven is near.'

8 Heal the sick and those with bad skin diseases. Raise the dead. Put out demons. You have received much, now give much.

9 Do not take gold or silver or brass money with you.

10 Do not take a bag of things for the trip. Do not take two coats or shoes or a walking stick. A workman should receive his food and what he needs.

11 "When you come to a city or town, find a home that is respected and stay there until you leave.

12 As you go into a house, tell them you hope good comes to them.

13 And if the house is respected, give them your good wishes. If it is not respected, let your good wishes come back to you.

14 Whoever does not receive you or does not listen to what you say, as you leave that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

15 For sure, I tell you, it will be easier for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day men stand before God and are told they are guilty, than for that city.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 10:16-42

Memory Verse

“Whoever makes me known in front of men, I will make him known to my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32).

Word List

betray: to be disloyal
persecute: to abuse or treat wrongly

Toward Trust in Jesus

The men Jesus chose to be His disciples were an interesting group. They were not men who studied the Law. They were workers. Matthew was a tax collector. The others worked for a living. Several were fishermen.

The disciples were not educated men. But they were intelligent men. Jesus knew what they could become. Except for one, they were good men. Judas was the one who **betrayed** Jesus to the bad men. Jesus knew that the others would follow Him. He knew that they would lead others to Him. He knew they would follow Him to death if necessary.

Jesus Instructs His Disciples (Matthew 10:16-20)

Jesus told the truth to His disciples. He did not pretend that everything would be easy. He knew life for His disciples would be hard. He wanted them to be prepared.

The men were plain men. They had never been before kings and governors. They were not easy with the thought of speaking to such as these. Jesus gave them comfort. He told them the Spirit of God would speak through them.

Think what a relief that must have been to the disciples! They did not have to worry about what they would say. But they had to stand before powerful people. They had to stand up for what they believed. We can learn from Jesus’ teachings. Have you been with friends who did wrong things? Did you go along with your friends? Did you stand up for your beliefs? It is easy to go along with the crowd. It is harder to do the right thing.

Think how hard it must have seemed to the disciples. They

**Things To
Think About**

What kind of men were the twelve disciples?

What is Jesus' promise to Christians who are working for Him?

What kinds of problems do Christians face today?

How can we gain courage for working in Jesus' mission?

lived at a time when few people knew about Jesus. The leaders of the country wanted to kill Him. The disciples still believed.

Americans have an easy time being Christians. We can belong to any church. We can share the gospel with anyone. We can obey and serve Jesus. We can help people. The rest of the world is different. Many people do not have the freedom we have. In many countries people cannot choose their religion. They must worship as the government tells them to worship. It was the same in the early years of Jesus' ministry.

The disciples had a great task. They were to go out and preach the gospel. They had to speak before powerful people. They had to face dangers and suffer hardships. But they knew Jesus was with them in spirit. God would protect them.

The Promise (Matthew 10:21-23)

Jesus promised that all who stood for Him would be rewarded. He was honest. He did not tell His disciples life would be easy. He knew there would be terrible troubles. He told His disciples to stand firm. If one place gave them trouble, they were to go to another place. If the state brought them to trial, the Holy Spirit would speak through them.

The church would **persecute** them. They would be beaten in the synagogues. The church leaders were afraid of the disciples. They were afraid the disciples would lead people to Jesus. The church leaders would do bad things to the disciples.

The families of the disciples would be against them. Their dearest family members would be afraid of them and for them. Sometimes Christians must leave their families because

of their beliefs.

Jesus promised that all who stood for Jesus would be saved. The early Christian church was seeking help. They were very afraid. What Jesus said was true. The kingdom of God would go on. People would turn their hearts to God. Matthew was looking to the future.

Beelzebub (Matthew 10:24-33)

Beelzebub was another name for the devil. The disciples were not to be afraid of the devil. This is an important word from Jesus. He knew that He must suffer. His disciples must suffer, also. Jesus was warning his followers. Jesus calls us to share His glory. He also calls us to share His suffering.

The devil will try to defeat us. He will try all kinds of things to lead us away from Christ. When it is hard to be a Christian, we can be sure we are following Jesus. One of life's pleasures is belonging to the great company of Christians.

When we find trouble in our lives, we will be closer to Jesus. If we know of Jesus' suffering, we will also know the power of His resurrection. It is normal to

feel fear. But Jesus tells us that we are valuable to the Father. He will take care of us. God cares for us!

The Offers of Jesus (Matthew 10:34-42)

Again, Jesus told His followers the truth. When a great change happens, people will be divided. There will be people who will change and people who will not.

The Christian may have to give up many things. He or she must give up what is easy. The Christian must do what Christ wants. What Jesus wants may be hard. But He promises that He will be with us all the way. We will never be alone.

We cannot all be preachers. We cannot all be teachers. But each of us can work for Jesus. Each of us has something we can do. Those who do small things will get as great a reward as the person who gets the world's attention. A good person gets a good reward.

Matthew 10:16-42

10:16 "I am sending you out like sheep with wolves all around you. Be wise like snakes and gentle like doves. **17** But look out for men. They will take you up to their courts and they will hurt you in their places of worship. **18** They will take you in front of the leaders of the people and of the kings because of Me.

You will tell them and the people who do not know God about Me. **19** When you are put into their hands, do not worry what you will say or how you will say it. The words will be given you when the time comes. **20** It will not be you who will speak the words. The Spirit of your Father will speak through you.

21 “A brother will hand over a brother to be put to death. A father will hand over his child to be put to death. Children will hand over their parents to be put to death. **22** You will be hated by all people because of Me. But he who stays true to the end will be saved. **23** When they make it hard for you in one town, go to another. For sure, I tell you, before you have gone through the Jewish cities, the Son of Man will come.

24 “A follower is not greater than his teacher. A servant who is owned by someone is not greater than his owner. **25** A follower should be happy to be as his teacher, and a servant who is owned by someone should be happy to be as his owner. If they have called the head of the house Satan, how much more will they speak against those of the house. **26** Then do not be afraid of them. For nothing is covered up that will not be brought out into the light. There is nothing hid that will not be made known. **27** You tell in the light what I tell you in the dark. You must speak with a loud voice from the roofs of houses what you have heard. **28** Do not be afraid of them who kill the body. They are not able to kill the soul. But fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. **29** Are not two small birds sold for a very small piece of money? And yet not one of the birds falls to

the earth without your Father knowing it.

30 God knows how many hairs you have on your head. **31** So do not be afraid. You are more important than many small birds.

32 “Whoever makes Me known in front of men, I will make him known to My Father in heaven. **33** But whoever does not make Me known in front of men and acts as if he does not know Me, I will not make him known to My Father in heaven.

34 “Do not think I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. **35** I came to turn a man against his father. I came to turn a daughter against her mother. I came to turn a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. **36** A man will be hated by his own family.

37 “He who loves his father and mother more than Me is not good enough for Me. He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not good enough for Me. **38** He who does not take his cross and follow Me is not good enough for Me. **39** He who wants to keep his life will have it taken away from him. He who loses his life because of Me will have it given back to him.

40 “Whoever receives you, receives Me. Whoever receives Me, receives Him Who sent Me. **41** Whoever receives a preacher who speaks for God because he is a preacher, will get the pay of a preacher who speaks for God. Whoever receives a man right with God, because he is a man right with God, will get the pay of a man right with God. **42** For sure, I tell you, anyone who gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he follows Me, will not lose his pay.”

◆ Matthew ◆

Unit 3

*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

Teaching in Parables

Lesson 8

When the Harvest Comes
(Matthew 13:1-23)

Lesson 9

Will You Be Patient
(Matthew 13:24-43)

TEACHING IN PARABLES

The third unit of study is on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 13. Here, Jesus teaches in parables. A parable is a short, simple story that teaches a religious lesson.

Jesus often spoke in parables. Jesus used these stories to confuse those who were opposed to Him. He used parables to teach His disciples. We will study five parables in the two lessons of this unit.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Matthew 13:1-23

Memory Verse

“The seed which fell on the good ground is like the one who hears the Word and understands it. He gives much grain. Some seed gives one hundred times as much grain. Some gives sixty times as much grain. Some gives thirty times as much grain” (Matthew 13:23).

Word List

shallow: lacking depth

pep: energy

confused: not understanding

When the Harvest Comes

At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, He preached in synagogues. The synagogues were not closed to Him yet. But they were closing. The common people welcomed Him. But every time, the Jewish leaders were listening. They were listening to everything He had to say. The Jewish leaders wanted to find something to use against Jesus. When Jesus spoke, the Scribes and Pharisees were watching everything He said or did. They did not listen to learn. They wanted to hear something they could use to hurt Jesus.

It is sad that Jesus was stopped from preaching in the synagogues. But that did not stop His preaching. It did not stop His teaching. When He could not preach in the synagogues, He went into the streets. He preached on the open roads. He taught by the seaside. He talked to people in their own homes. At this time, Jesus began to teach in parables. A parable is a story to help people understand a lesson. Even before, Jesus had used a bit of parables in His teaching.

It is hard for some people to understand ideas. They think in pictures. Sometimes a teacher wishes to teach people about things they do not understand. Sometimes the teacher starts by teaching things they *do* understand. Jesus taught by using things that everybody would know. Then, He went on to teach things that were new. A parable opens a person’s mind. It helps that person think. We will study some of Jesus’ parables.

Things To
Think About

What is a parable?

Why did Jesus use them?

What is the soil like in your life?

In a world like this, what will happen to Jesus' mission?

The Farmer (Matthew 13:1-9)

On this day, Jesus went to a lake. A big crowd came to hear Him. Because there were so many people beside the lake, He got into a boat. He taught sitting in the boat. The people stood on the shore.

Jesus told them the story of a farmer. In that time, a farmer cast his seeds on the ground before he plowed. Perhaps the wind was blowing. Some of the seed fell on the path near the field. Birds ate the seed. Some of the seed fell on ground full of rocks. The soil was not deep. The seeds grew quickly. When the sun shone on the plants, they died as quickly. Some of the seed fell among thorns. The weeds kept the seeds from growing. The seeds were choked out.

More of the seed fell on good ground. There was room to grow. The ground gave the seeds a place to grow into good plants. A good crop grew. Do we hear what Jesus was teaching?

Jesus Explains (Matthew 13:10-17)

The disciples were learning. They watched Jesus as He taught. They wondered why Jesus taught in parables. They asked questions. Why teach this way? Jesus explained.

There are some who hear with a shut mind. They listen but they do not really hear. When they hear something they do not like, they stop listening. Many people will not listen when the truth is hard to bear. When the truth hurts, the people will stop paying attention.

There is the person with a mind like the **shallow** ground. This is the person who does too many things. His or her mind is

full of the latest idea. That person is full of **pep**. He wants to get busy. But he does not finish the task. He goes on to some new idea. His mind is like **shallow** ground. We sometimes get so busy with many little things. We forget the important things. We forget to study the Word of God. We forget to pray. We are busy with good works. We forget why we do the good works. We forget who tells us to do good things.

There is the person who is like good ground. That person has a mind that is open. He is ready to hear. He understands. He is ready to do the right things. That person grows good fruit. The person who listens, understands and obeys the Lord's teaching is following Jesus.

A Double Meaning (Matthew 13:18-23)

Jesus taught the people who heard. He also was teaching His disciples. They would be preaching His words to the world. It was important to teach the listening people. But it was even more important to teach his closest followers.

The disciples must have been **confused**. Jesus was everything to them. They knew him to be wise and caring. But

he did not have much success with the leaders. The religious leaders were out to destroy Jesus.

Sometimes the people listened and learned. Many times they just came to listen. They did not understand. They forgot his message. The Jewish leaders hated him. It is not a surprise that the disciples were discouraged.

The lesson of this parable is that the harvest is sure. Seed may fall on hard, stony ground. Birds may eat the seed. But it is a sure thing that there will be a good harvest.

Every farmer knows some seed will blow away. Some seed will fall outside the good ground. But knowing that will not stop his sowing. He does not give up his hope of the harvest. He keeps on keeping on. Let us learn from this parable in our own lives.

There is so much to learn from Jesus' teachings. When we do something good for a person, we may never hear praise for it. We can sow the seed. We may never see the harvest. We should not stop doing good things. We may never know about the harvest. But like the farmer, we must keep sowing the seed.

Matthew 13:1-23

13:1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the shore of the lake.

2 Then He got in a boat and sat down because so many people had gathered around Him. Many people were standing on the shore.

3 Jesus taught them many things by using picture-stories. He said, “A man went out to plant seeds.

4 As he planted the seeds, some fell by the side of the road. The birds came and ate the seeds.

5 Some seeds fell between rocks. The seeds came up at once because there was so little ground.

6 When the sun was high in the sky, they dried up and died because they had no root.

7 Some seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew and did not give the seeds room to grow.

8 Some seeds fell on good ground and gave much grain. Some gave one hundred times as much grain. Some gave sixty times as much grain. Some gave thirty times as much grain.

9 You have ears, then listen.”

10 The followers of Jesus came to Him and said, “Why do You speak to them in picture-stories?”

11 He said to the followers, “You were given the secrets about the holy nation of heaven. The secrets were not give to the others.

12 He who has will have more given to him. He will have even more than enough. But he who has little will have even that taken away from him.

13 “This is why I speak to them in picture-stories. They have eyes but they do not see. They have ears but they do not hear and they do not understand.

14 It happened in their lives as Isaiah said it would happen. He said, ‘You hear and hear but

do not understand. You look and look but do not see.

15 The hearts of these people have become fat. They hear very little with their ears. They have closed their eyes. If they did not do this, they would see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts. Then they would be changed in their ways, and I would heal them.’ (Isaiah 6:9-10)

16 But how great are your eyes because they see. How great are your ears because they hear.

17 For sure, I tell you, that many early preachers and men right with God have wanted to see the things you see, but they did not see them. They wanted to hear the things you hear, but they did not hear them.

18 “Listen to the picture-story of the man who planted seeds in the ground.

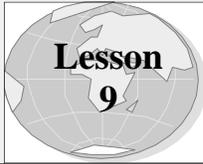
19 When anyone hears the Word about the holy nation and does not understand it, the devil comes and takes away what was put in his heart. He is like the seed that fell by the side of the road.

20 The seed which fell between rocks is like the person who receives the Word with joy as soon as he hears it.

21 Its root is not deep and it does not last long. When troubles and suffering come because of the Word, he gives up and falls away.

22 The seed which fell among thorns is like the person who hears the Word but the cares of this life, and the love for money let the thorns come up and do not give the seed room to grow and give grain.

23 The seed which fell on good ground is like the one who hears the Word and understands it. He gives much grain. Some seed gives one hundred times as much grain. Some gives sixty times as much grain. Some gives thirty times as much grain.”



Lesson
9
Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Matthew 13:24-43

Memory Verse

“The hearts of these people have become fat. They hear very little with their ears. They have closed their eyes. If they did not do this, they would see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts. Then they would be changed in their ways and I would heal them” (Matthew 13:15).

Word List

patience: the ability to wait

yeast: a baking ingredient

discouraged: to be upset or to lose faith

Will You Be Patient?

What is **patience**? It is being willing to wait. It is not rushing God. It is waiting for answers in God’s time. It does no good to rush God. He does things in His own time. It is foolish to expect things to happen in our own time. This is one of life’s hardest lessons to learn.

A type of teaching Jesus used was to tell parables. A parable is a story. It helps people understand His meaning. It is hard for us to understand ideas. If a teacher wants us to understand new ideas, he starts by talking to us about things we know. Then he shows us new ideas. Jesus used this way of teaching.

The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30)

Weeds were a problem for every farmer in the country. There was a weed in Palestine called bearded darnel. Sometimes it was called tares. When wheat was just beginning to grow, farmers could not tell the wheat from the weeds. They looked much the same. It was a problem for every farmer. The people knew exactly what Jesus was talking about. Farmers could not tell one from the other. It was only when the weeds and wheat were almost full-grown that the farmer could tell the difference. Then, it was too late. The roots of both had grown together. If the farmer tried to pull out the weeds, he would pull out the good grain. The wheat and weeds could not be safely separated until they were ready to be harvested.

In the end, they must be separated. The grain of the

Things To
Think About

What should we do when things don't work out as we want them to?

How does the devil try to sow bad seed in our lives?

How does the kingdom of God change our lives and the lives of those around us?

bearded darnel was poison. It tasted bad. It could make a person sick. Women were paid to take the bad grain out of the good grain. When it was grown, the darnel seeds were a different color. The bad grain could be taken out. But it took much work.

The idea of someone sowing darnel in another's field is what often happened. If one person was angry with another, he might sow the bad seeds. This caused trouble and expense for the farmer. It would be hard to prove who had done the bad sowing.

The parable of the weeds is one of the most practical parables Jesus told. It teaches that there is something in our world trying to destroy the good seed. There are two things that control our lives. There is that which will help our good seed to grow. It will be healthy and good.

There is another kind of action that is bad. The devil is always trying to stop the good in our lives. He wants to stop the good seed from growing at all. We must always be careful. We must always be on guard against him.

Judgment comes in the end. It may not come quickly, but judgment does come. The good and the bad will be separated. Sometimes it seems that bad people are not punished. But there is a life to come. God is the only judge, and He will judge.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-33)

Mustard plants were different in Palestine. In that country, the mustard seed grew to be something like a tree. It was common to see birds on the branches. They would sit and eat the seeds.

Jesus said that His kingdom was like the mustard seed. It would start out as a tiny thing. But it would grow into a mighty tree. The kingdom of God started from the smallest beginning. No one knows where it will end.

Sometimes the disciples must have been sad. They must have been afraid. They must have been afraid of tomorrow. There were only a few of them. So many people were against them. How could they change the world? How could they win the world to Christ?

Jesus was saying to His disciples that each must do his best. All anyone can do is his or her best. If each of us does the best we can, the kingdom will grow. We must not be **discouraged**. We must keep on keeping on.

The Parable of the Yeast (Matthew 13:33)

Bread was very important in Jewish life. It was almost always baked at home. Jesus had watched His mother bake bread. She used a little piece of dough from the day before. When it was kept overnight, the dough changed. It became **yeast**. Yeast

would make the dough rise.

Jesus shocked His hearers. To them, **yeast** was evil. But Jesus showed them the power of yeast for good. Yeast changed the whole baking process. Bread without **yeast** is hard and dry. With yeast, bread is soft and good to eat.

Putting **yeast** in bread changes the bread. In Jesus' time on earth, women were owned by men. Women had nothing. They had to obey men in everything. Christianity changed women's lives. Men and women were equal in God's sight.

Christianity changed life for women. It changed life for the old and the sick. Christians built hospitals. Christians took good care of children. It was common in Rome to kill girl babies. Romans let boys live. God loves all his children. In our world, all children are loved. The changing power of Jesus can be seen in our lives. It can be seen in our world.

We cannot see yeast as it is working. It works unseen. Sometimes God works in ways we cannot see. We cannot see the end result, but we know that God is always working for our good. The kingdom of God goes on forever.

Matthew 13:24-43

13:24 Jesus told them another picture-story. He said, “The holy nation of heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his field.

25 During the night someone who hated him came and planted weed seed with the good seed in his field and went away.

26 When the good seed started to grow and give grain, weeds came up also.

27 “The servants of the man who planted the seed came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not plant good seed in your field? Why does it have weeds also?’

28 The man who planted the seed said, ‘Someone who hates me has done this.’ The servants asked him, ‘Should we go and pull the weeds out from among the good grain?’

29 He said, ‘No, because if you pull out the weeds, the good grain will come up also.

30 Let them grow together until the time to gather the grain. Then I will say to the workmen, “Gather the weeds first and put them together to be burned. Then gather the good grain into my building.” ’ ’

31 Jesus told them another picture story. He said, “The holy nation of heaven is like mustard seed which a man planted in his field.

32 It is the smallest of seeds. But when it is full-grown, it is larger than the grain of the fields and it becomes a tree. The birds of the sky come and stay in its branches.”

33 Jesus gave them another picture-story. He said, “The holy nation of heaven is like yeast that a woman put into three pails of flour until it had become much more than at first.”

34 Jesus told all these things using picture-stories to the many people. He did not speak to them without using picture-stories.

35 It happened as the early preacher said it would happen, “I will open My mouth in picture stories. I will tell things which have been kept secret from the beginning of the world.” (Psalm 78:2)

36 After Jesus sent the people away, He went into the house. His followers came to him and said, “Tell us what You mean by the picture-story of the weeds in the field.”

37 Jesus said, “He Who plants the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 The field is the world. The good seeds are the children of the holy nation. The weeds are the children of the devil.

39 The devil is the one who got in and planted the weeds. The time to gather is the end of the world. The men who gather are the angels.

40 As the weeds are gathered together and burned in the fire, so it will be in the end of the world.

41 The Son of Man will send His angels. They will gather out of His holy nation all things that cause people to sin and those who do sin.

42 They will put them into a stove of fire. There will be loud crying and grinding of teeth.

43 Then the ones right with God will shine as the sun in the holy nation of their Father. You have ears, then listen!”

◆ Matthew ◆

Unit 4

*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

Life in the Fellowship

Lesson 10

You and the Little Ones
(Matthew 18:1-14)

Lesson 11

Relating to
Imperfect People
(Matthew 18:15-35)

LIFE IN THE FELLOWSHIP

This fourth unit of study is on Jesus' instructions in Matthew 18 about life in the fellowship of believers. No believer is meant to live out their faith alone. God designed the body of believers to accomplish His will. Christians are forgiven through Jesus. We are in right-standing before God.

But Christians are not perfect. Sometimes there are problems in the fellowship of believers. This unit explores Jesus' teaching on how Christians should treat one another.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 18:1-14

Memory Verse

“For sure, I tell you, unless you have a change of heart and become like a little child, you will not get into the holy nation of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

Word List

humble: low in rank; putting others first
inexperienced: lacking skills or knowledge
forsaken: left something behind
foreigner: somebody born in another country

You and the “Little Ones”

A long time ago, I was in church. A little child came down the aisle to join the church. The little boy was afraid. He wanted to be a believer in Christ. He came, but he was not sure what to do next. One of our deacons, Mr. Spencer, came to help the boy. He got on his knees beside the child. This put him on the same level with the boy. He helped the boy. Mr. Spencer was a powerful man in his church and in his city. Even so, he was **humble** with the boy. I have always remembered how **humble** Mr. Spencer was.

Humility and Responsibility

Humility is the first quality of the Christian. He or she must forget self. The Christian must be **humble**. That means the Christian must be full of the Spirit of Christ. He must not be full of himself. He or she should be ready to do anything needed to aid Christ’s mission. The lowest person who works in the kitchen is important. The person who gives clothes to the needy is important. Every Christian who gives of himself or herself is important in God’s kingdom.

The greatest of all sins is to lead another person into sin. It is very bad to cause a weaker or **inexperienced** Christian to sin. The Christian is always aware that his or her life is an example to others. The Christian’s deeds and words have an effect on others. Christians must always be responsible for his or her actions.

Things To
Think About

Who is the most important person in your church?

Why must Christians be humble?

In following God, how are we to be like children?

What are some ways we can help others?

Who Is the Greatest? (Matthew 18:1-4)

The disciples asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” This question showed they had no idea what the kingdom of heaven was like. Jesus warned them that they were looking in the wrong way. If they did not change their thinking, they would never understand.

If one is trying to be a person of importance, he is going the wrong way. If a person only wants power over others, he or she is going in the wrong direction. If self is the most important thing in a person’s life, that person has **forsaken** God. To reach God’s kingdom, that person must turn around and face the other way.

Jesus took a child. He let the child stand among them. Jesus said that in a child we could see what a Christian should be. A child only has to learn, not to unlearn. She is full of wonder. She forgives and forgets bad things others do to her. A child is **humble**. A child is dependent. That means that the child depends on those who take care of her. A child trusts his or her parents. A child cannot buy clothes or food. A parent must provide a warm, comfortable home. When children begin life, they do not know where they will end. But they trust their parents to guide them to that end.

If we all could depend on God to take care of us, we would be true children of God. The child’s humility is most important. A child trusts and depends on God, the Father. This is the way we should all follow Him.

Jesus’ Children (Matthew 18:10-14)

The word “child” had two meanings for Jewish people. It meant a young child. But it also meant grown children. A child is a beginner in the faith. It is one who has begun on the right way. A child can easily lose the right way.

The mature Christian knows the way. He knows that a misstep is easy. He knows to be careful. We must follow Jesus’ way. Jesus says to receive a person who has humility like a child. It is easy to receive a person who is full of self-confidence. It is easy to receive a person who is successful in life. Jesus seeks people who are humble and ready to work.

We should welcome children. We should teach children to become good men or women. To help a child learn to live a good life is to help Jesus. It can help us see Jesus in that child. It is not easy to raise a child in God’s way. Those who do this find God’s blessing.

Responsibility (Matthew 18:10-14)

The Jews believed that one of the worst sins was to cause another person to sin. It is terrible to ruin someone’s

innocence. A person’s sins can be forgiven. Causing another to sin is much worse.

A millstone was a very heavy stone used to grind corn. A person could not turn the stone. It was so heavy that a donkey must pull it to turn it around. Think how heavy it must have been. A millstone around the neck would be a horrible way to drown. The Romans sometimes drowned a person in the sea. The Jews were afraid of the sea. To be drowned in the sea was a terrible fate. The man who sinned would be better off to be drowned in the sea. This death was the most terrible a sinning person could face.

The Church Today

Does your church try to help others? There are many ways to help. Think of how you could work. Could you teach little children? Could you work in the clothes closet? Could you give food to the hungry? Could you teach English to the **foreigner**? Ask your teacher what is needed in your church. You may find a job you can do. You can become part of Jesus’ plan.

Matthew 18:1-14

18:1 At that time the followers came to Jesus. They said, “Who is the greatest in the holy nation of heaven?”

2 Jesus took a little child and put him among them.

3 He said, “For sure, I tell you, unless you have a change of heart and become like a little child, you will not get into the holy nation of heaven.

4 Whoever is without pride as this little child is the greatest in the holy nation of heaven.

5 Whoever receives a little child because of Me receives Me.

6 But whoever is the reason for one of these little children who believe in Me to fall into sin, it would be better for him to have a large rock put around his neck and to be thrown into the sea.

7 It is bad for the world because of that which makes people sin. Men will be tempted to sin. But it is bad for the one who is the reason for someone to sin.

8 If your hand or your foot is the reason you sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to go into life without a hand or a

foot, than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the fire of hell.

9 If your eye is the reason you sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better for you to go into life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

10 Be sure you do not hate one of these little children. I tell you, they have angels who are always looking into the face of My Father in heaven.

11 “For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

12 What do you think about this? A man has one hundred sheep and one of them is lost. Will he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to look for that one lost sheep?

13 If he finds it, for sure, I tell you, he will have more joy over that one, than over the ninety-nine that were not lost.

14 I tell you, My Father in heaven does not want one of these little children to be lost.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 18:15-35

Memory Verse

“Then Peter came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, how many times may my brother sin against me and I forgive him, up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I tell you, not seven times but seventy times seven!’ ”
(Matthew 18:21-22).

Word List

reconcile: work out a problem and bring two sides together

private: in a quiet manner; not done in front of others

earnestly: sincerely or seriously

trial: a problem or difficulty

Relating to Imperfect People

A long time ago, I said something that made another teacher angry. I did not realize I had done anything wrong until another person told me. I thought about it. Then I wrote a letter to that teacher. I said I was sorry. She forgave me at once. We were good friends as long as I knew her.

It is good to try to make things right when we have done wrong. Jesus was saying it is the thing to do to work things out. We must never let a fellow Christian hurt us without trying to put it right. This passage gives us a way to mend broken relationships with other Christians.

Righting Wrongs (Matthew 18:15-18)

If we feel someone has wronged us, we should not wait a long time. If we wait to reach the other person, we may become angry. We should talk about the problem with the other person. To wait is to poison our whole mind and life. To suffer in silence is sometimes the worst thing a person can do. If we have a difference with a person, we can write a letter. Or, we can talk face-to-face. It depends on the problem. Often a talk is better. It is better to settle a problem as quickly as possible.

Sometimes a **private** meeting fails to right the problem. Then we should take some good, wise persons with us. This is not to convince the person he or she is wrong. It is possible that we are in the wrong. This meeting is to help us **reconcile**.

If all else fails, we must take our troubles to the Christian fellowship. It is in a Christian fellowship that people work

**Things To
Think About**

What can be done when believers fight and hold grudges against one another?

What kind of prayers should Christian offer to God?

Why should Christians forgive?

together. Going to the law does not settle anything. It is only through loving Christian fellowship that wrongs can be righted.

Jesus did not mean to set limits on forgiveness. When he talked about sinners, he spoke with gentleness. He did not leave Gentiles and tax collectors without hope. He tried to win them to himself. Matthew and Zacchaeus became his best friends. Even if a person is as bad as the Gentiles or tax collectors, he or she can be won to Christ.

The Power of Jesus (Matthew 18:19-20)

Many times two people have agreed to pray about a certain thing. Their prayers have not been answered. People pray very **earnestly**. They do not get what they pray for. We cannot expect everything to happen as we wish.

When we pray for ourselves, we must not be selfish. That prayer will not be answered. We are not meant to pray for ourselves. We should pray for the good of all. If we pray for ourselves, we may disappoint the prayers of another.

When a prayer is unselfish, it is always answered. Sometimes the answer to our prayer is no. God in His wisdom knows what is best. We pray to be saved from some **trial**. We pray to be saved from sorrow. We pray to be saved from a hard problem. God does not save us from a human problem. He helps us cope with the problem. He gives us wisdom to deal with the problem. Without our Heavenly Father, we could do nothing.

Jesus is in every gathering which is held in His name. Jesus is present in the little church. He is present in the big

church. Wherever a few or many people are gathered in his name, he will be there. He gives all of himself to each person.

How to Forgive (Matthew 18:21-35)

Peter had a quick tongue. He thought he was being good to forgive seven times.

The Jewish rabbis said to forgive three times. Peter thought he was good. He must have been surprised to learn from Jesus that he must forgive many more times. There is no limit to forgiveness. A person must forgive in order to be forgiven. The parable of the unmerciful servant is an example of Jesus' teaching.

The first servant's debt was big. It was equal to 150,000 years of work. He could never repay it. And yet, he was forgiven. The second servant's debt was smaller. It was equal to 100 days of work. He was not forgiven. The first servant had him thrown into jail.

God has forgiven all our sins against Him. We must forgive the sins of others—not once, but many times over. We were responsible for the death of God's own Son. How could God forgive us? And yet, He did. We must forgive others as God has

forgiven us. If we are not willing to forgive, we cannot hope to be forgiven.

Matthew 18:15-35

18:15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him what he did without other people hearing it. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back again.

16 But if he will not listen to you, take one or two other people with you. Every word may be remembered by the two or three who heard.

17 If he will not listen to them, tell the trouble to the church. If he does not listen to the church, think of him as a person who is as bad as one who does not know God and a person who gathers taxes.

18 “For sure, I tell you, whatever you do not allow on earth will not have been

allowed in heaven. Whatever you allow on earth will have been allowed in heaven.

19 Again I tell you this: If two of you agree on earth about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am with them.”

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and said, “Lord, how many times may my brother sin against me and I forgive him, up to seven times?”

22 Jesus said to him, “I tell you, not seven times but seventy times seven!

23 “The holy nation of heaven is like a king who wanted to find out how much money his parents owed him.

24 As he began, one of the servants was brought to him who owed him very much money.

25 He could pay nothing that he owed. So the king spoke the word that he and his wife and his children and all that he had should be sold to pay what he owed.

26 The servant got down on his face in front of the king. He said, ‘Give me time, and I will pay you all the money.’

27 Then the king took pity on his servant and let him go. He told him he did not have

to pay the money back.

28 “But that servant went out and found one of the other servants who owed him very little money. He took hold of his neck and said, ‘Pay me the money you owe me!’

29 The other servant got down at his feet and said, ‘Give me time, and I will pay you all the money.’

30 But he would not. He had him put in prison until he could pay the money.

31 “When his other servants saw what had happened, they were very sorry. They came and told the king all that was done.

32 Then the king called for the first one. He said, ‘You bad servant! I forgave you.

I said that you would not have to pay back any of the money you owed me because you asked me.

33 Should you not have had pity on the other servant, even as I had pity on you?’

34 The king was very angry. He handed him over to men who would beat and hurt him until he paid all the money he owed.

35 So will My Father in heaven do to you, if each one of you does not forgive his brother from his heart.”

◆ Matthew ◆



*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

Teachings about Accountability

Lesson 12
Against Religious
Hypocrisy
(Matthew 23:1-30)

Lesson 13
For the Least of These
(Matthew 25:31-46)

TEACHINGS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

In this unit we will explore Jesus' teachings about judgment and accountability. Accountability means being responsible for what we say and do. Jesus calls us to consider our own religious practices. Remember that Jesus condemned the religious leaders of His day. He condemned them because of their religious practices.

Jesus also reminds us about caring for people in need. This is what Jesus commanded us to do.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 23:1-30

Memory Verse

“He who is greatest among you will be the one to care for you. The person who thinks he is important will find out how little he is worth. The person who is not trying to honor himself will be made important” (Matthew 23:11-12).

Word List

pretense: acting in a way that is not genuine or sincerely felt

hypocrisy: saying one thing and doing something different

woe: sadness or misery

piety: religious devotion

Against Religious Hypocrisy

What are **pretense** and **hypocrisy**? We don't use those words very often, but we see them in action too much.

A person who is hypocritical is one who says one thing and does another. Have you ever known a person who is proud and acts “religious” all the time? That person is quick to criticize others. He or she is quick to tell us what we are doing wrong. This kind of person always knows a better way to do things. He or she judges others. This person pretends to be better than everyone else. We call that person a hypocrite.

Making Religion Hard (Matthew 23:1-4)

The Law of God was given to Moses. Moses gave it to Joshua. Joshua handed it to the elders. From the elders, it passed to the prophets. At last, the prophets gave the Law to the Scribes and Pharisees. The Scribes and Pharisees made a mess of God's law. They added so many rules that no one could follow all of them. Jesus was saying that God's law was not so hard to follow.

The Ten Commandments were based on reverence for God, His day, His name, and for the parents He gave us. They were also based on respect for a person's life, property, and reputation. Those rules are good. They will last forever. But the Scribes and Pharisees made religion too hard to follow.

The test of a religion is this: Does it lift a person up? Or does it drag a person down? Does it fill us with joy or make us afraid? Does it help us to live? Or does it make us fall down? Whenever a religion becomes a burden, it is not a true religion.

The Pharisees' religion was not what Jesus taught.

Things To**Think About**

What do the Ten Commandments say?

Are there people like the Pharisees today?

Why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees and Scribes?

The Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:5-12)

Most Scribes were Pharisees, but all Pharisees were not Scribes. Scribes studied the Bible and interpreted it. The Pharisees made many rules. They tried to let everyone know that they followed those rules. They wore things to call attention to themselves. They put leather boxes on their foreheads and wrists. The boxes held Scriptures. They did not wear these things to remind people to obey the rules. They wanted to look religious.

The Pharisees liked to have the best places at meals. They liked the front seats at the synagogues. They liked to be treated with respect. They said they should be treated with more respect than parents. They said parents gave physical life to their children. But Pharisees gave them eternal life. They were too proud.

A Christian does just the opposite. He tries to let people see Jesus in his actions. Our good deeds should show our Heavenly Father. A religion that puts pride in the heart is not a true religion.

Woe to You (Matthew 23:13-32)

These verses have terrible words against the Scribes and Pharisees. The word *hypocrite* means one who is a pretender or who acts a part. Jesus felt that the Scribes and Pharisees were acting a part. A few of the men really believed in Jesus. Most did not believe. They were afraid of Him. They did not like to hear His words. They did not want people to think Jesus was powerful.

Jesus felt Scribes and Pharisees could not enter heaven. They tried to shut the door to heaven for the common people. God's kingdom is everywhere that God's will is done—on heaven and on earth. Pharisees believed people must keep all the rules to

enter God's kingdom. Nothing could be more wrong.

The Pharisees liked their idea of God's kingdom. They had forgotten God's plan. God's idea is love. The Pharisees had forgotten that if a person teaches others, he first must learn from God. He should not teach his own rules and ideas. The truth of God's Word is what should be taught.

Woe and Hell (Matthew 23:15, 33-39)

Jesus said the Pharisees were not trying to bring people to God. They were trying to bring people to their own kind of religion. People who were not Jews liked the idea of one true God. But they did not become Jews. The Pharisees' sin was that they did not want to lead men and women to God. They had forgotten God's love. They wanted to take God's place.

Jesus said to them, "**Woe** to you." God hears everything we say. He knows the secrets of our hearts. The Christian must be honest with God. God is not fooled by our outward signs of **piety**.

Over forty years would pass by. Jerusalem would be in ruins. This was because the people rejected Jesus. Any

nation which rejects Jesus will be destroyed. And so, **woe** and sorrow came to that nation.

We must be careful not to let the world turn us away from Jesus' teachings. If we turn from His teaching, we will not be in heaven, but in hell. We are to live as He lived—with love in our hearts and minds.

Matthew 23:1-30

23:1 Then Jesus talked to the many people and to His followers. **2** He said, "The teachers of the Law and the proud religious law-keepers have put themselves in Moses' place as teachers. **3** Do what they tell you to do and keep on doing it. But do not follow what they do. They preach but do not obey their own preaching. **4** They make heavy loads and put them on the shoulders of men. But they will not help lift them with a finger. **5** Everything they do, they do to be seen of men. They have words from the Holy Writings written in large letters on their left arm and forehead and they make wide trimming for their clothes. **6** They like to have the important places at big suppers and the best seats in the Jewish places of worship. **7** They like to have people show respect to them as they stand in the center of town where people gather. They like to be called teacher.

8 "But you are not to be called teacher. There is only one Teacher and all of you are brothers. **9** Do not call any man here on earth your father. There is only one Father and He is in heaven. **10** You are not to be called leader. There is only one Leader and He is Christ.

11 "He who is greatest among you will be the

one to care for you. **12** The person who thinks he is important will find out how little he is worth. The person who is not trying to honor himself will be made important.

13 “It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You keep men from going into the holy nation of heaven. You are not going in yourselves, and you do not allow those to go in who are about to go in. **14** It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! (You take houses from poor women whose husbands have died. Then you try to cover it up by making long prayers. You will be punished all the more because of this.) **15** It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You go over land and sea to win one follower. When you have him, you make him twice as much a child of hell as you are.

16 “It is bad for you, blind leaders! You say, ‘Whoever makes a promise by the house of God, his promise is worth nothing. But whoever makes a promise by the gold of the house of God, then his promise has to be kept.’

17 You fools and blind men! Which is greater, the gold or the house of God that makes the gold holy? **18** You say, ‘Whoever will promise by the altar, his promise does not have to be kept. But whoever makes a promise by the gift on the altar, then his promise has to be kept.’

19 You fools and blind men! Which is greater, the gift, or the altar that makes the gift holy?

20 Whoever makes a promise by the altar, promises by it and by everything on it.

21 Whoever makes a promise by the house of God, promises by it and by Him Who is in it.

22 Whoever makes a promise by heaven, promises by the throne of God and by Him Who sits there.

23 “It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You give one-tenth part of your spices, and have not done the most important things of the Law, such as thinking what is right and wrong, and having pity and faith. These you should have done and still have done the other things also. **24** You blind leaders, you take a small bug out of your cup but you swallow a camel!

25 “It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You clean the outside of the cup and plate, but leave the inside full of strong bad desires and are not able to keep from doing sinful things. **26** You blind proud religious law-keepers! Clean the inside of the cup and plate, then the outside will be clean also.

27 “It is bad for you, teachers of the Law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You are like graves that have been made white and look beautiful on the outside. But inside you are full of the bones of dead men and of every sinful things.

28 As men look at you, you see to be good and right but inside you are full of sin. You pretend to be someone you are not.

29” It is bad for you, teachers of the law and proud religious law-keepers, you who pretend to be someone you are not! You make buildings for the graves of the early preachers, and you make the graves beautiful of those who are right with God. **30** You say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our early fathers, we would not have helped kill the early preachers.’



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Matthew 25:31-46

Memory Verse

“Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you have done it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me’ ” (Matthew 25:40).

Word List

marble: an expensive type of stone used for building

justice: fairness

mercy: loving-kindness

dentist: a doctor who takes care of people’s teeth

For the Least of These

Jerusalem was a large, beautiful city. The temple was huge. It was built on a high place. It was made of white **marble**. The marble was covered with gold. Think how it must have looked when the sun shone on it. It may be that some of the disciples had never been to Jerusalem before. They were people from the mountains or from the country. They were fishermen or workers of the land. They were shocked by what they saw. At that time in history, no other building in the world was like the temple.

Jerusalem Destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2)

It is no wonder the disciples were impressed at the sight. It is no wonder they called Jesus’ attention to it. Jesus answered that the day would come when the temple would be destroyed. Not one of the stones would be left standing. Jesus was right. He knew that when people leave God’s way, they will fail.

The Romans grew tired of trying to work with the Jews. Instead, they ruined the town of Jerusalem. They tore down the temple. It was all lost. When people lose God, they lose everything.

Jesus advised the people to run to the hills. They did not listen. They stayed in the city. They did not have enough food. Many people starved to death. When the Romans took the city, 97,000 people were captured. They became slaves. More than a million people died.

Things To
Think About

What happened to Jerusalem?

How does God judge Christians?

How well do you show your faith through acts of mercy and kindness to people in need?

God Has Not Left Us Alone (Matthew 24:29-31)

There is an encouraging truth in this passage. God has not left us alone. He will never leave us. Evil people and evil things will not make us afraid. We know that God will make a world full of **justice** and **mercy**. It may not be soon, but it will come. The basic truth is that God has not forgotten us.

The Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

This is the story about the end of the world. The lesson is clear. God will judge all of us. He will judge us by the way we took care of the needy people around us. God will not judge us on how much we know. He will not judge us on how much money we have made. He will not judge us on the fame we have gotten. How will He judge us? God will judge us on the help we have given to other people.

Jesus gave instructions to His people. Christians are to help the people of the world. There are so many needs. So many people are sick and hungry. There is no way we can right all the wrongs in the world. Jesus says we must try our best. Jesus did not mean we should only give our money. We should be busy doing the Lord's work. We should give simple, kind help to those around us.

Today, I went with my husband to the **dentist**. The **dentist** was very excited. Next month she will go to Nigeria with a church group. She will see about 300 people a day. These people have no one to help them. She will help them with their teeth. I will give her some toothbrushes and toothpaste. I cannot go to Nigeria, but I can help right here in my hometown.

That is a little thing for me to do. But every toothbrush I give will help someone.

Help (Matthew 25:31-46)

Jesus lets us know that all help given to someone is given to Christ Himself. We cannot win the Lord's blessing if we do kindness only to help ourselves. We can help in big things. We can help in small things.

The things Jesus picks out are simple things. Give a hungry person a meal. Give a thirsty person a drink of water. These are important. When we welcome a stranger or visit the sick, we are doing His will. When we minister to prisoners we are doing God's will.

Not long ago, a friend called me. She told me about a woman from Cambodia. The woman gave a speech at a meeting. She gave her testimony. She came to this country many years ago. Since then, she found a home. She works at a good job. She is happy because she has become a Christian. Then she told the group that two people helped her when she came to this country. One of those people was me.

I have thought about that woman. I

did not do anything special for her. I was just a friend to her. I spoke to her whenever I saw her. I was kind to her. But she was alone and afraid. Having someone who was a friend in a new country must be a great gift. I had no idea that my kindness meant so much to this woman. I only learned this when my friend shared the woman's speech with me.

When we do good things for people, we may never know the result. But God knows. We must never do good things to win approval. We must do those things because Jesus told us to do them. We are God's children. We must try to do the best we can for Him.

Matthew 25:31-46

25:31 “When the Son of Man comes in His shining-greatness, He will sit down on His throne of greatness. All the angels will be with Him.

32 All the nations of the earth will be gathered before Him. He will divide them from each other as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

33 He will put the sheep on His right side, but the goats He will put on His left side.

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right side, ‘Come, you who have been called by My Father. Come into the holy nation that has been made ready for you before the world was made.

35 For I was hungry and you gave Me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me water to drink. I was a stranger and you gave Me a room.

36 I had no clothes and you gave Me clothes to wear. I was sick and you cared for Me. I was in prison and you came to see Me.’

37 “Then those that are right with God will say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink?

38 When did we see You a stranger and gave You a room? When did we see You had no clothes and we gave You clothes?

39 And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?’

40 Then the king will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’

41 “Then the King will say to those on His left side, ‘Go away from Me! You are guilty! Go into the fire that lasts forever. It has been made ready for the devil and his angels.

42 For I was hungry but you did not give Me food to eat. I was thirsty but you did not give Me water to drink.

43 I was a stranger but you did not give Me a room. I had no clothes but you did not give Me clothes. I was sick and in prison but you did not come to see Me.’

44 “Then they will ask, “Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger? When did we see You without clothes or sick or in prison and did not care for You?’

45 Then He will say to them, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 These will go to the place where they will be punished forever. But those right with God will have life that lasts forever.”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Christmas Lesson

Bible Text

Matthew 1:18-2:12

Memory Verse

“A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Word List

betrothal : a promise to marry

binding : mandatory or required

flaw : a weak spot

suspicious : distrustful or fearful

frankincense : a valuable and sweet-smelling perfume

myrrh : another valuable and sweet-smelling perfume

God With Us—And Not Just Us

The book of Matthew contains a special story. Matthew tells about the birth of Jesus. This account of the birth of Jesus is not found in any of the other gospels. It is a beautiful story. It is good to study this story.

Joseph’s Problem (Matthew 1:18-25)

In Jewish marriage there were three steps. First, the couple was engaged. Often, they were engaged when they were children. Their parents thought marriage was too important for the couple to decide for themselves.

Next came the **betrothal** . At this point, the girl could refuse to enter into the marriage. Once the betrothal was entered, the **betrothal** was **binding** . The marriage could not be stopped. The **betrothal** lasted for one year. At the end of one year, they came to the marriage. It took place at the end of the year. This is where Joseph had his problem.

Joseph learned that Mary was to have a child. He thought of a way to call off the marriage. He would put Mary away quietly. He did not want to cause her to be embarrassed. Joseph was a good man.

Joseph had a dream. The Lord came to Joseph. He told Joseph that the child was of the Holy Spirit. Mary would have a son. She would call the boy Jesus. He would save the people from their sins. Jesus came to earth to save us all from our sins. He did not come for His own sake. He came for all of us.

Things To**Think About**

How did God help Joseph with his problem?

What gifts did the Magi bring Jesus?

Why are they important?

What was Herod's problem?

What does Jesus' coming as "God with us" mean?

The Birth Place of Jesus (Matthew 2:1)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a little town near Jerusalem. Bethlehem was called the City of David. The Jews expected God's Son would be born in Bethlehem. It was so.

We are not sure exactly where Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It might have been in a stable. It might have been in a cave. Sometimes a house had a stable carved out of the rocky hill behind the house. It does not really matter where exactly He was born. We know for sure that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

The Wise Men (Matthew 2:2-12)

The wise men were a tribe of priests. They were called the Magi. They were the teachers of the kings of Persia. They became holy men. They had much wisdom. They looked for truth. We do not know which star led the wise men to Bethlehem. They studied the stars. They watched the heavens. They knew the bright star meant a great king would be born.

Do not think that the story of Jesus' birth and the Magi is just a lovely story. It is the truth. This is what happened in that long-ago time. When Jesus was born, there was a feeling of exciting things to come in the world. People were waiting for God. People had learned that they could not build a great life without God. Jesus came into a waiting world. When He came, wise men from outside Israel came to see Him. It was the first sign that Jesus would save the world.

Herod (Matthew 2:3-9)

Herod was a king. Herod was worried. Any king would

be worried if a child was born who would take his place. But Herod had other worries. Herod was part Jewish. He had helped the Romans. They trusted him. Herod had been powerful for a long time.

He was called Herod the Great. He kept the peace in the country. He built the great Temple in Jerusalem. In hard times he reduced taxes. He could be a good man. But Herod had a bad **flaw** in his character.

When he was young he was **suspicious**. He was even more **suspicious** when he was older. If he thought someone wanted his throne, he had that person killed.

Herod called for the chief priests and scribes. He asked them where the Son of God would be born. They quoted Micah 5:2 to him. Then Herod sent for the Magi. He asked them to find the Christ Child in Bethlehem. He said he would go to worship the Child himself. Herod planned to have the Child killed. He was afraid the Christ Child would take away his power.

Gifts for Jesus (Matthew 2:9-12)

The wise men came to Bethlehem. They brought gold, **frankincense** and **myrrh**. These were important gifts. Gold is

the gift for a king. **Frankincense** is the gift for a priest. **Myrrh** was the gift for one who is to die. Jesus was the king of men. He was also a priest. A priest is a person who builds a bridge between man and God. Jesus came into the world to die. He came to give His life and death for all of us. He was the true King. He was the perfect High Priest. He was the Savior of the world.

The Family of Jesus

Jesus was born into a family. He had an earthly father and a mother. Later, He had brothers and sisters. They were a family like yours and mine. Joseph worked as a carpenter. Jesus likely helped His father. Mary did all the things a mother must do.

Did you ever think that your family is like Jesus' earthly family? Well, it is. We are all God's children. When Jesus was born, He came to us all. It does not matter which country we are from. It does not matter what color our skin is. We are all brothers and sisters in His family.

As we celebrate Jesus' birth, let us all remember that He came to save us. We are His. We thank God for His blessing.

Matthew 1:18-2:12

1:18 The birth of Jesus Christ was like this: Mary His mother had been promised in marriage to Joseph. Before they were married, it was learned that she was to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.

19 Joseph was her promised husband. He was a good man and did not want to make it hard for Mary in front of people. He thought it would be good to break the promised marriage without people knowing it.

20 While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She is to become a mother by the Holy Spirit.

21 A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins.”

22 This happened as the Lord said it would happen through the early preacher.

23 He said, “The young woman, who has never had a man, will give birth to a Son. They will give Him the name Immanuel. This means God with us.” (Isaiah 7:14)

24 Joseph awoke from his sleep. He did what the angel of the Lord told him to do. He took Mary as his wife.

25 But he did not have her, as a husband has a wife, until she gave birth to a Son. Joseph gave Him the name Jesus.

2:1 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in the country of Judea. It was the time when Herod was king of that part of the country. Soon after Jesus was born, some wise men who learned things from stars came to Jerusalem

from the East.

2 They asked, “Where is the King of the Jews Who has been born? We have seen His star in the East. We have come to worship Him.”

3 King Herod heard this. He and all the people of Jerusalem were worried.

4 He called together all the religious leaders of the Jews and the teachers of the Law. Herod asked them where Christ was to be born.

5 They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea. The early preacher wrote,

6 ‘You, Bethlehem of Judah, are not the least of the leaders of Judah. Out of you will come a King Who will lead My people, the Jews.’ ” (Micah 5:2)

7 Then Herod had a secret meeting with the men who learned things from stars. He asked them about what time the star had been seen.

8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and find the young Child. When you find Him, let me know. The I can go and worship Him also.”

9 After the king had spoken, they went on their way. The star they had seen in the East went before them. It came and stopped over the place where the young Child was.

10 When they saw the star, they were filled with much joy.

11 They went into the house and found the young Child with Mary, His mother. Then they got down before Him and worshiped Him. They opened their bags of riches and gave Him gifts of gold and perfume and spices.

12 Then God spoke to them in a dream. He told them not to go back to Herod. So they went to their own country by another road.