

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Sermon on the Mount: Syllabus

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### CLASS #1:

I. Introduction.

### CLASS #2:

II. Kingdom Character (Mt 5:3-12).

### CLASS #3:

II. Kingdom Character (cont'd).

III. Kingdom Responsibility (Mt 5:13-19).

### CLASS #4:

IV. Kingdom Standards (Mt 5:20-48).

V. Kingdom Warnings (Mt 6:1-24).

### CLASS #5:

VI. Kingdom Perspective (Mt 6:23-34).

VII. Kingdom Attitude (Mt 7:1-12).

VIII. Kingdom Reality (Mt 7:13-29).

EXAM.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

## **Sermon on the Mount: Exam**

### **Possible 20 Point Questions**

- 1) Explain how the first beatitude stands as a specific introduction and summary of the Sermon on the Mount (p. 69)?
- 2) Choose one of the beatitudes and explain its meaning by referring to its challenge, its provision, and the death to self that is involved. Include a one sentence conclusion or result of the beatitude (pp. 70-80).
- 3) Explain how Mt 5:16 and Mt 6:1 do not contradict each other (pp. 87-88).

### **Possible 10 Point Questions**

- 1) In two or three sentences explain the idea that the message of the Sermon on the Mount is a message of “counter-culture” (pp. 66-67).
- 2) What is the key verse of the Sermon and in what sense is it the key verse (p. 67)?
- 3) Explain how the Sermon on the Mount can be considered as a detailed commentary of Mt 16:24, 25 (p. 69).
- 4) Give a one sentence conclusion of the beatitude found in Mt 5:5 (pp. 74, 75).
- 5) Define “seek first His Kingdom” from Mt 6:33 (p. 90).
- 6) Use the word “Therefore” in Mt 7:12 to offer a conclusion about the kingdom attitude (p. 93).

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Study of Matthew 5-7

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### Discussion Point

**Author's Note:** The “Sermon on the Mount” is the historic title of Jesus’ first recorded sermon in Matthew. In some cultures this title may not be used. Also, note the similarities to the “Sermon on the Plain” (Luke 6:17-49). In this lesson it will simply be referred to as ‘the Sermon.’

### I. Introduction.

#### A. The Importance of the Sermon on the Mount.

1. To some degree, the importance of any topic can be measured by the number of books that have been written about it.
  - a. There have been more books written about the Sermon than on any other portion of the teachings of Jesus.
  - b. It is Jesus’ first recorded sermon in Matthew. It is of great importance. In three brief chapters, the Sermon says what the wisdom of man could not say in 3000 books. Its importance to the Christian is obvious.
2. In his book, A Few Buttons Missing: The Case Book of a Psychiatrist, James Fisher describes the importance of the Sermon in the following way:

“If you were to take the sum total of all the authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene — if you were to combine them and refine them and cleave out the excess verbiage — if you were to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount.”<sup>1</sup>

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

## B. The Purpose of the Sermon.

1. The essence of its message.
  - a. In many ways the Sermon is a commentary on Jn 18:36. It is a practical teaching on how the Kingdom of God is not of this world.
    - 1) John Stott, a well-known British theologian, refers to the heart of the message of the Sermon as a “counter-culture.”<sup>2</sup>
    - 2) Indeed, everything about the sermon is in contrast to the ways of the world. It also contrasts with the ways of the religious traditions of that time.
    - 3) The standards of the Kingdom of God demand a life that is completely different **from** the life of the world. This Kingdom life is not simply a different **form** of the life of the world.
      - a) Thus, the Sermon does not promote the rebellious and violent aspects of “counter-culture.” Yet, it does promote the idea of contrast.
      - b) To live in the Kingdom of God is to be in contrast to the world. It is not simply to be different. It is to be opposite, for the Kingdom of God is the opposite of the world.
  - b. In its message of “counter-culture”, the Sermon challenges us to consider the realities of the Christian life. It challenges us to count the cost of being a Christian and eliminates the opportunity of “nominal” or “uncommitted” Christianity, which is “by name only.”
    - 1) Compared to the perspective of the world, there is nothing “nominal” about Christianity. It is all very radical. It is like the difference between night and day.
    - 2) Thus, God proclaims His disgust for “nominalism” in Rev 3:15,16. To be a “nominal” or “lukewarm” Christian is not really possible.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- 3) God also proclaims His disgust for religiosity (outward religious practices, without inward commitment or devotion) in Mal 1:10 and explains that it is worthless.

- a) As the Sermon indicates, there is nothing “nominal” about living in the Kingdom of God. It is a counter-culture.
- b) It is an opposite lifestyle, not simply a different lifestyle. It should seem like the life of an alien (Phil 3:17, 20; Jn 17:14-16).

**Insert Your Illustration:**

2. The key verse of the Sermon is Mt 6:8.

- a. The words “**therefore do not be like them**” could be used as a very appropriate title for the sermon. These words summarize the message of the sermon and its purpose.
- b. Indeed, this has been the purpose of God throughout all of history. He has sought to gather (separate) a people unto Himself. God’s people have always been called to be holy (separate). They have always been called to be completely different (see Lev 18:1-4).

3. The Sermon is for us today.

- a. Many have tried to argue that the Sermon is a series of statements that describe how life will be in heaven.
- b. They have said that it is impossible to live the Sermon now and that it is only meant to be for the future Kingdom of God.
  - 1) This position reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of the Kingdom of God. The New Testament teaching is that the Kingdom is “already and not yet.” That means it is already available to us, but has not yet come in its fullness.

Notes —

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

- 2) In as much as the Kingdom is already and not yet, the Sermon is for the present and the future.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

## C. The Contents of This Course.

1. We cannot study the entire depth of the Sermon in one short course. However, our goal is to capture an overall understanding of the spirit of its message and to study some of the details of the various parts of the message.
2. In order to do this, we have divided the sermon into seven sections:
  - a. Kingdom character (Mt 5:3-12).
  - b. Kingdom responsibility (Mt 5:13-19).
  - c. Kingdom standards (Mt 5:20-48).
  - d. Kingdom warnings (Mt 6:1-24).
  - e. Kingdom perspective (Mt 6:25-34).
  - f. Kingdom attitude (Mt 7:1-12).
  - g. Kingdom reality (Mt 7:13-29).
    - 1) Within each section, we will make general observations. The first section also includes a more detailed study of the Kingdom character traits and attitudes.
    - 2) The title of each section includes the word “Kingdom” because the sermon is addressed to those who want to live in the Kingdom. That is, it is addressed to Jesus’ disciples or followers (see 5:1, 2).

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## II. Kingdom Character ( A study of Mt 5:3-12).

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### A. The Sermon begins with a List of Kingdom Character Traits and Attitudes.

1. The word “beatitudes” means “blessed, or happy.” In English, these Kingdom traits are lists of “attitudes of the blessed,” and they have been historically called, “the beatitudes.” Indeed, the beatitudes are attitudes to possess. They serve as both an introduction and summary of the whole Sermon. Therefore, this course focuses on this section first.
2. The first beatitude stands as a specific introduction and summary of the Sermon.
  - a. The sermon is about life in the Kingdom of God.
  - b. It is only those who are poor in spirit (which means empty of themselves) who can live in the Kingdom, because it is only those people who are empty who can allow in the King.
  - c. In some ways, those who say that it is impossible to fully live out the demands of the Sermon are correct. That is the point of the first beatitude. We cannot, by ourselves, even begin to live according to such standards. Jesus is the only one who can live like this.
    - 1) Thus, the only way we can live this sort of life is to let Jesus live it in us. That possibility necessitates being poor in spirit.
    - 2) Another way to say this is, the only way we who are imperfect can manifest perfection (5:48), is to allow Him who is perfect to live in us.
3. The beatitudes (even the whole Sermon) could be understood as a detailed commentary of Mt 16:24, 25.
  - a. Each beatitude challenges us to live by dying to ourselves in some way.
  - b. The emphasis is placed on giving. The action of each beatitude is to give something of ourselves.

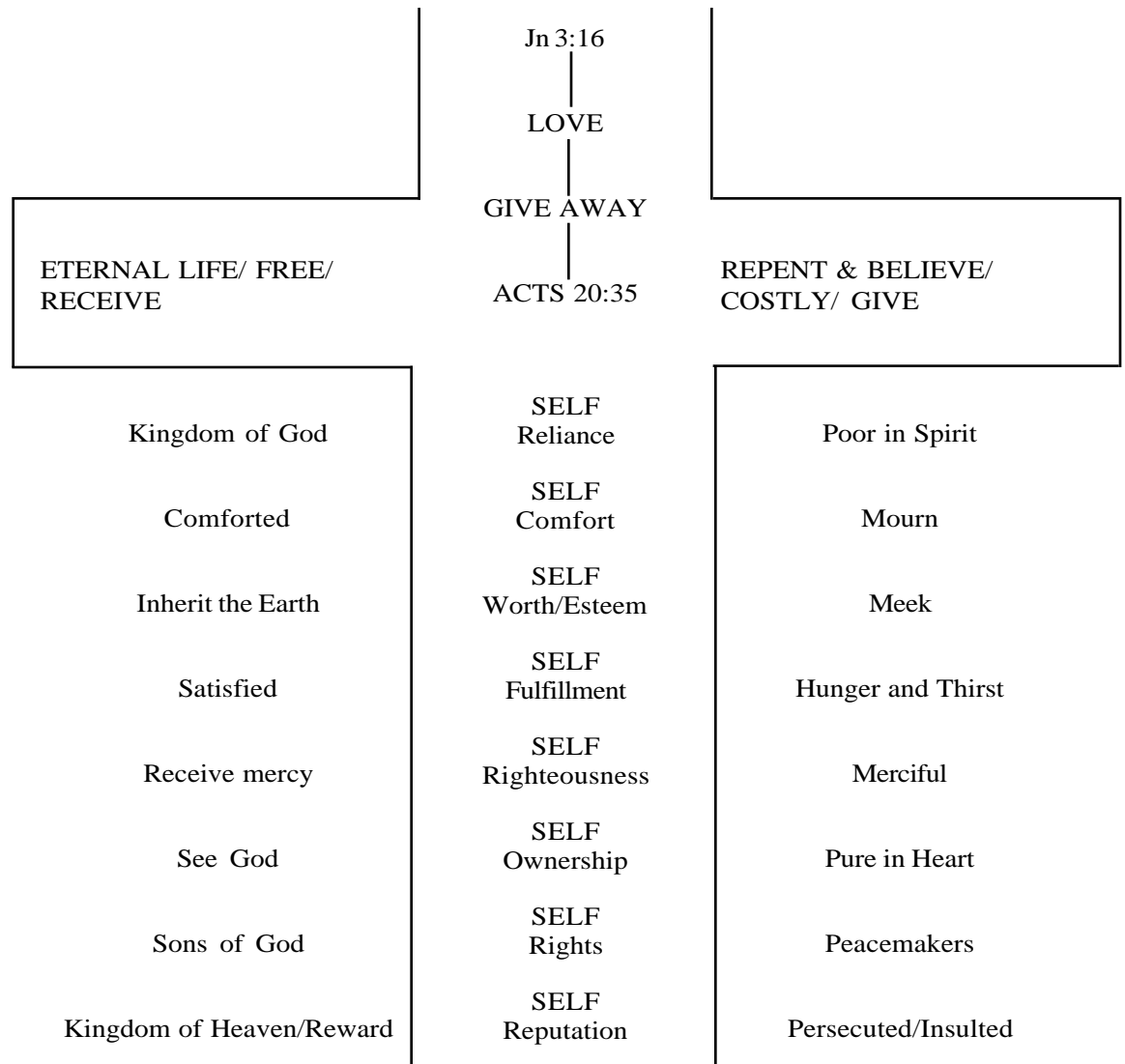
#### Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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Use the following diagram to help teach through the study of the beatitudes.  
Note how the various aspects of “self” must be put on the cross.



## B. Detailed Study of Mt 5:3-12.

### 1. Introduction: Giving and Receiving.

- a. It is not as difficult to receive, as it is to give. All people want to have eternal life, but not all people want to repent and believe. Salvation (life in the Kingdom) is free, but it is costly.



# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- b. It is not costly in the sense that we must give in order to earn salvation. It is costly in the sense that we must give in order to surrender to God what is rightfully and already His.
- c. Giving is the action of love (Jn 3:16).
- d. Giving must be our focus (Acts 20:35). Note how Acts 20:35 and the beatitudes are connected.
  - 1) Blessed are the givers. That is, blessed are those who give of themselves by dying to themselves.
  - 2) The character of those who live in the Kingdom of God is described by the word “give.”

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## Author's Illustration:

**The Dead Sea is the salt filled sea in Palestine. It is so stale that nothing can live there. However, the Dead Sea is not dead because it does not receive any water. It is 48 miles long and 10 miles wide. Each day, 6.5 million tons of water flow into the Dead Sea. There is much water (potential), but nothing can live there.**

**The Dead Sea is dead because it does not give. Nothing flows out of the Dead Sea. It does not give anything.**

**Giving is the action of love. It is also the producer of life. This is the message of the beatitudes. To give of yourself (die to yourself) is to receive life (to live in the Kingdom of God). Now review Mt 16:24, 25.**

## Insert Your Illustration:

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Notes

### 2. Detailed study of Mt 5:3.

#### a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.

- 1) To be poor in spirit is to be empty of yourself. It is to confess your spiritual bankruptcy. It is the opposite of being self sufficient. Spiritual poverty confesses complete spiritual need.

#### Discussion Point

Use Jn 15:5 to promote discussion about being poor in spirit.

#### 2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

#### Discussion Point

Use Jn 5:19 to see how Jesus met the challenge of letting go of self-reliance.

#### b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-reliance.

- 1) Those who live in the Kingdom must die to the desire to rely on themselves.
- 2) They must only rely on God (Prov 3:5).

#### c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to be in the Kingdom of God is to live according to the reign or rule of Jesus.

#### d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must confess that we are not able to do anything without Jesus, then we will become able to do all things through Jesus.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

**Insert Your Illustration:**

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### 3. Detailed study of Mt 5:4.

#### a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.

1) To mourn is to be broken over your sin and the sin of the world. It is the correct response to Jesus' command to repent.

a) To mourn is Godly grief, not worldly grief (study the difference as it is explained in 2 Cor 7:10). It is not being sad for yourself, it is being sad for God.

b) This sadness includes a corporate aspect. Mourning is done for the sin of the world (see Ps 119:136).

2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

#### **Discussion Point**

Use the following scriptures to promote discussion of how Jesus mourned over sin and responded to our sin.

Is 53:3, 4, 7, 11, 12; and Mt 23:37.

#### b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-comfort (being satisfied with yourself).

1) Sin must be hated so much that you become very uncomfortable with your sin and the sin of the world.

2) Those who live in the Kingdom must die to the tendency to overlook sin.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

- c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to be comforted is to be at peace with God and with yourself (consider Jn 14:1, 27).
- d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must not become comfortable with ourselves; then we will be comforted by Jesus.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

#### 4. Detailed study of Mt 5:5.

- a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.
  - 1) To be meek is to be gentle through exercising self control. It means you are able to be spit on and do not spit back. It is true strength that is characterized by a freedom from vengeance. This ability is the result of a true perspective of yourself. That is, that you have no rights to grasp or hold onto.
  - 2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

#### **Discussion Point**

Use Phil 2:6 to promote discussion about how Jesus responded to the challenge of laying down your rights.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-worth or esteem, which is thinking higher of yourself than you should (Rom 12:3; Gal 6:3).
  - 1) Privileges or rights are not held onto, but are given up.
  - 2) Those who live in the Kingdom must die to their sense of self-worth or worthiness.
- c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to inherit the earth is to prosper in God's Kingdom. Ultimately it is to inherit the new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21:1).
- d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must not perceive ourselves as worthy; then through Jesus we will be worth a lot.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

## 5. Detailed study of Mt 5:6.

- a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.
  - 1) To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to deny personal and carnal desires in order to desire obedience and social justice.
  - 2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

### Discussion Point

Use Jn 6:38 to promote discussion of how Jesus gave up his personal desire.

Notes

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# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

- b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-fulfillment and desires.
  - 1) Fleshly desires and forms of fulfillment must be let go of.
  - 2) Those who live in the Kingdom must die to the desires of the flesh and hunger for the desires of God.
- c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to be satisfied is to be fulfilled. It is to have your joy made full (see Jn 15:11).
- d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must trade fleshly desires and fulfillments for godly desires, then we shall be fulfilled.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

## 6. Detailed study of Mt 5:7.

- a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.
  - 1) To be merciful is to be able to forgive others and to have compassion for the suffering and the needy. It assumes a lack of self-righteousness that would inhibit someone from showing mercy.
  - 2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

**Discussion Point**

Use Heb 4:15 to discuss the mercy that Jesus demonstrates in our behalf.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-righteousness.

1) Judging and disgust toward others that is produced by self-righteousness must be let go of.

2) Those who live in the Kingdom must die to their sense of self-righteousness.

c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to receive mercy is to be given another chance.

d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must give others another chance, then God will give us another chance (see Lk 6:36 and Mt 6:14, 15). If we let go of our self-righteousness, then we will acquire true righteousness by the mercy of God.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

7. Detailed study of Mt 5:8.

a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.

1) To be pure in heart includes an inward moral purity and sincerity (see 1 Cor 6:18-20). It also includes an outward purity or dedication (holy, separate, of one mind, (see 1 Sam 1:28). It implies an acceptance that your body and life are not your own.

2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

**Discussion Point**

Use Jn 10:11 to promote discussion about how Jesus demonstrates purity of the heart.

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# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

- b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-ownership.
  - 1) The freedom to do whatever you want must be let go of.
  - 2) Those who live in the Kingdom must renounce ownership of themselves.
- c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to see God is to see your owner, creator, and administrator. It is to see clearly so that you will not “fade away” (the word “perish” found in the King James Version in Prov 29:18 could be translated as “fade away”).
- d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must renounce ownership of ourselves, in order to see our real owner.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

## 8. Detailed study of Mt 5:9.

- a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.
  - 1) To be a peacemaker is to avoid strife by relinquishing your own rights. Consider how Abram did this in Gen 13:7-9 (see 1 Cor 6:7). It is to promote harmony between men and between man and God.
  - 2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

### Discussion Point

Use Phil 2:7 to promote discussion about how Jesus relinquished his rights in our behalf.



# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- b. We must die to self by giving away or letting go of self-rights.
  - 1) Even though you have rights, you are willing to lay them down for the sake of promoting peace.
  - 2) Those who live in the Kingdom must lay down their rights for the sake of the gospel of peace (see 1 Cor 9:4-6, 18, 19).
- c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to be a son is to be like your father. To be a son of God is to be like Father God. It is to acquire the rights of a son.
- d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must lay down our rights, then we will be given the rights of a son.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

## 9. Detailed study of Mt 5:10-12.

- a. The Challenge, or obligation (cost) of the verse.
  - 1) To be persecuted for the sake of righteousness is to be insulted and accused falsely. It includes physical and emotional discrimination and slander. It includes sharing in the sufferings of Christ (see Phil 3:10; Jn 15:19-21). It is to lose your reputation or your glory for Christ's sake.
  - 2) Jesus responds to this challenge.

### **Discussion Point**

Use the following scriptures to promote discussion about how Jesus laid down his glory. Phil 2:7; Jn 17:5; and Mt 27:12.

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# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Notes

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- b. We must die to self by giving up or letting go of self-reputation.
  - 1) You must be willing to be put to shame in the eyes of the world for the cause of the gospel.
  - 2) Those who live in the Kingdom must die to their reputations.
- c. The Provision, or blessing (free gift) of the verse is that to be in the Kingdom of God is to receive the rewards of the Kingdom. It is to obtain the glory or reputation of Jesus (see 2 Thes 2:14).
- d. The Conclusion, or result of the verse is that we must give away our glory and reputation with men, then we will obtain glory and reputation with God.

## 10. Conclusions about Kingdom Character.

- a. The Dead Sea is dead because it does not give. Also, some countries are dying because they do not give. They are dying because they are not living by the divine laws that we see in the beatitudes.
  - 1) For example, it has been reported that the United States as a country gives eight times more money to the cosmetics industry than it gives to the work of missions.
  - 2) Like the Dead Sea, the United States is a country with great potential. Yet, it takes in much of the gospel, but gives out very little (see Lk 12:48).
    - a) There is no life without death (Mt 16:24, 25; Jn 12:24, 25).
    - b) There are no beatitudes (blessings) without also being a blessing.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- b. We are reminded of the principles of Gen 12:1-3.
  - 1) God told Abraham that he would be blessed.
  - 2) God then told Abraham that he would be a blessing.
  - 3) We can see in the tragic history of Israel, when we stop being a blessing to others, then God stops blessing us. That is the deal (covenant).
- c. Jesus is the only one who could have honestly preached the Sermon. He is the only one capable of living out the truths in this Sermon. He is the greatest giver ever. He died to Himself completely and gave all of Himself. He was a walking demonstration of the Beatitudes.

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## III. Kingdom Responsibility (A study of Mt 5:13-19).

### A. The Nature of Kingdom Responsibility.

- 1. Completeness-The responsibility of those who live in the Kingdom is exhaustive.
  - a. They are the salt of the **earth** (vs. 13).
  - b. They are the light of the **world** (vs. 14).
  - c. The light is for **all** who are in the house (vs. 15).
  - d. Not even the **smallest letter** (vs. 18) or the **least commandment** can be deleted.

#### Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion about Kindom Responsibility.

- 2. Separateness-Those who have the responsibility and those who are the recipients of the service are two distinct groups of people.
  - a. There are those who are in the **earth** and the **world**.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

- b. There are those (“you”) who are the **salt** and the **light** of the earth and the world.

## Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion about separateness.

### 3. Action and encouragement to act.

- a. Salt must act. It must preserve the meat. At the same time, it must promote or encourage others to eat the meat by making the meat tasty.
  - 1) As Christians we must act. We must try to be a preservative for a decaying, sinful world.
  - 2) At the same time, we must encourage others to act by making this life taste a little better.
- b. Light must act. It must shine and drown out the darkness. At the same time, it must provide light for others to walk in.
  - 1) As Christians, we must act. We must invade the darkness of the world with our own actions.
  - 2) At the same time, we must make things brighter and clearer for others and encourage them to act.
- c. We must act. We must **keep** all of the commands. At the same time, we must encourage others to act. That is, we must teach the commands.
  - 1) We must act and multiply our actions. Our talents must be used **and** multiplied. This is the message of the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30).
  - 2) This two part responsibility is also the message of Eph 4:11,12. Evangelists must evangelize. They must also equip others to evangelize. Teachers must teach. They must also equip others to teach.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

**Insert Your Illustration:**

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## **B. The Key Verse of Kingdom Responsibility - Mt 5:17.**

1. Christians live by grace. However, this in no way excuses them from the responsibilities of the Law (as represented by the 10 Commands of Exodus 20).
2. Jesus was not excused from the responsibilities of the Law. He did not destroy or ignore the Law. He did the Law. He lived the Law perfectly.
  - a. He fulfilled the requirements of the Law and now enables us to meet our responsibilities through living in us (see Gal 2:20 and Rom 8:4).
  - b. The fact that we now live above the Law does not mean that we are excused from our responsibilities within the Law. It means that we are enabled to do the Law, thus establishing it in our lives and fulfilling our responsibilities as Kingdom people (study Rom 3:31).

### **Discussion Point**

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about fulfilling the law.

## **IV. Kingdom Standards (A study of Mt 5:20-48).**

### **A. Standards based on Reality, not Appearance.**

1. The sermon has now established the character and the responsibility of those who live in the Kingdom of God. Now we come to the heart of the sermon. Jesus sets the standards for those who live in the Kingdom.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Notes —

2. The standards that existed within religiosity (outward religious appearance, see vs. Mt. 20) were not enough (in fact they were actually false standards). The Law is not by the letter or by appearance, but by reality and the Spirit. That is, the standards are based on the heart of the law (see Rom 2:29; 7:6).

### **B. The Organization of the New Standards.**

1. After the introduction in vs. Mt. 20, this section is divided into six parts:
  - a. The Standard for hatred (vs. Mt. 21-26).
  - b. The Standard for adultery (vs. Mt. 27-30).
  - c. The Standard for divorce (vs. Mt. 31-32).
  - d. The Standard for vows or integrity (vs. Mt. 33-37).
  - e. The Standard for retribution (vs. Mt. 38-42).
  - f. The Standard for love (vs. Mt. 43-48).
2. Each part is introduced by the words “**you have heard it said/but I say to you.**”
  - a. Jesus was not changing or destroying the Law (Mt. 5:17). He was going beyond the common, religious understanding of the Law in order to capture the heart of the Law.
  - b. Outward religion tends to make the doing of the Law an external show. Jesus was showing that the doing of the Law is not a show, but an internal reality. There is now a greater revelation of the Law, so in this sense there is a higher standard.

#### **Discussion Point**

Use Jer 31:31-33 to promote discussion about the law and the Christian.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## C. The Essence of the “New” Standards.

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1. Jesus knew the hypocritical and deceptive heart of man. Therefore, He avoided playing with terms or allowing any confusion about His message. He went right to the root of the matter (he exposed the underlying issues).
2. Instead of setting the standards according to an outward act, He set the standards according to the inward reality.
  - a. It is one thing to commit the act of adultery. That is an outward act. It is another thing to lust after a woman. That is the internal reality. Even if the act is not committed, if the **heart** is guilty, then the standard has been broken.
  - b. Jesus set each standard deep down inside a man’s soul and therefore does not allow for hypocrisy to pass as righteousness.
3. The action of the gospel sets the new standards.
  - a. The moment God laid down His rights to become man (Phil 2:7), the standards of living were radically changed. The children cannot claim a higher privilege than the parent. That is, children of God cannot cling to their rights when their God did not cling to His.
  - b. Especially with respect to the standard for retribution, we must understand that Jesus was talking about laying down our rights. He was speaking about dying to ourselves.
    - 1) However, He was not talking about allowing others, for example, to harm our family while we stand back and watch.
    - 2) Yet, He was talking about laying down our rights for the sake of others. He challenged us to surrender ourselves in order to show love, kindness, patience, and mercy.
      - a) Vs. 38, 39: Surrender your right to your reputation (a slap in the face symbolizes an insult).
      - b) Vs. 40: Surrender your basic rights (see Ex 22:26, where to have a “coat” was an inalienable right).

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

- c) Vs. 41: Surrender your right to fairness (see 1 Cor 6:1-8).
- d) Vs. 42: Surrender your right to say “no” to those in need and to gain profit from them (see Prov 11:15; 17:8; 22:26).

**Insert Your Illustration:**

## **D. Additional Observations.**

1. Consider how vs. 29, 30 can be applied to the New Testament teaching on Church discipline (remember the Church is often referred to as a body and its members are described as being parts of that body).
  - a. The idea is that one of the motives for Church discipline is to protect the reputation and purity of the whole body.
  - b. Thus, to excommunicate (cut off) an eye (member of the Church) may be necessary to insure the purity of the whole body (Church).
2. One of the themes of this list of standards is that of allowing grace, kindness, mercy and love to be a witness to others. Note how this standard is practiced by God Himself (vs. 45). (See Acts 17:27; Lk 6:35; and Rom 2:4).
3. Reward is based on sacrifice. It is based on dying to yourself or doing something at the expense of yourself. If there is no sacrifice, then there is no reward (vs. 46).

**Discussion Point**

Consider this concept in relation to Lk 21:1-4.



# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

4. The conclusion to this section about Kingdom standards is found in vs. 48. The conclusion is that we are to pursue perfection (be like Jesus).
  - a. In a more general context, we might refer back to our point that we made earlier about the first beatitude. As we allow Jesus (He who is perfect) into our lives, then we can live more perfected lives.
  - b. In the more immediate context (vs. 43-47), we should understand this verse to indicate that we should **love** all people (note the repetition of the idea of the heavenly Father in vs. 45, 48).

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## V. Kingdom Warnings (A study of Mt 6:1-24).

### A. The Greatest Danger for those who Live in the Kingdom is to Fall into the Trap of only Appearing to Live in the Kingdom.

1. The greatest enemy of Christianity is outward religion. The greatest enemy of that which is real is that which is false.
2. The greatest enemy of the eternal can often be the temporal. The greatest enemy of that which is profound is that which is superficial.
3. To summarize, we might say that those who live in the Kingdom must constantly **beware** of falling into hypocrisy.

#### Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about religious superficiality and hypocrisy.

### B. The Distinction between Testimony/Ministry (Mt 5:16) and Relationship/Righteousness (Mt 6:1).

1. In Mt 5:16, we are commanded to let our lights shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works.
2. In Mt 6:1, we are warned not to practice our righteousness in order to be noticed by men.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Notes —

3. Is this a contradiction? No! We must realize two things:

- a. When we let our light shine, we are not drawing attention to ourselves. We are testifying to the world about Jesus by letting Him shine. Remember, Jesus **is** the light (Jn 1:7; 8:12).
- b. There is a difference between ministry and private relationship with God. Our ministry should be seen by men for a witness. Our relationship with God, although it must also have a public aspect, should not be on display. It should not be used to demonstrate our righteousness, because then it would be just that...**our** righteousness (when our light shines it is God's righteousness that is being displayed).

## Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion.

### C. The Structure of the Warnings.

1. After the introduction in Mt 6:1, this section is divided into four parts:
  - a. Warnings about giving (vs. Mt 6:2-4).
  - b. Warnings about prayer (vs. Mt 6:5-15).
  - c. Warnings about fasting (vs. Mt 6:16-18).
  - d. Warnings about money and possessions (vs. Mt 6:19-24).
2. The first three parts (giving, praying, fasting) have identical structures.
  - a. **When you** do something, do not do it hypocritically.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- b. **But when you** do it, do it sincerely.
  - 1) The idea of secrecy is repeated in each instruction.
    - a) Secrecy is consistent with intimate relationships. It indicates pure motives.
    - b) Publicity is consistent with hypocrisy. It reveals ulterior motives.
  - 2) The idea of reward is also repeated in each instruction. Rewards are directly connected to doing things sincerely.
- 3. The final part (money and possessions) is similar in structure.
  - a. It instructs how not to do something (vs. 19).
  - b. Then it introduces the alternative with the contrasting word-**“but”** (vs. 20).
    - 1) In one sense, vs. 19-24 represent a separate part or warning about riches.
    - 2) In another sense, it represents a conclusion or summary to the preceding parts.
      - a) If we do things for man, then from man will come our reward (the real reward is stolen). If we do things for God, then from God will come our reward (which can not be stolen).
      - b) We can not serve two masters (vs. 24). We can not do things for God (sincere, authentic, worship) and for man (hypocritical, insincere worship).
      - c) Your treasure is how you are fulfilled or satisfied. Are you fulfilled by the rewards of men? Or, is your treasure the rewards that God gives? For whom do you do things?
      - d) Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (vs. 21). God is warning against giving your heart to men by making their rewards your treasures.

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# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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## VI. Kingdom Perspective (A study of Mt 6:25-34).

- A. The Kingdom life is a radical life. It is not a “nominal” (noncommitted) life.** There is no partial option. You can not serve God and something else. It is 100% commitment to God or there is no commitment to God (nothing).
1. **For this reason** (vs. 25), the perspective of those who live in the Kingdom should be one of complete trust in God.
  2. This **complete** trust comes from a **complete** dedication to God. There is nothing else that we can trust in. There is nothing else that we can dedicate ourselves to.
  3. In vs. 33, we find the translation “**seek first His Kingdom.**” A more direct translation from the Greek would be **constantly seek His Kingdom only.**
    - a. “First” implies that there are other options. However, the Greek term is actually a word that means “first” in the sense of “only.” The phrase could be translated **make the Kingdom of God your only desire.**
    - b. This does not mean that the person who lives in the Kingdom must negate other things. In fact, the other things **will be added to him.** The idea is that the perspective of the Kingdom dweller is one of complete and total trust and dedication to God.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## B. The Result of a Kingdom Perspective is the Absence of Worry.

1. Consider the number of times the idea of not being **anxious** is repeated (see vs. 25, 27, 28, 31, 37).
2. This is the perspective of the person who lives in the Kingdom. It is the perspective of trust that leads to peace. Kingdom people are not people who worry, because they have their eyes fixed on the King.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

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## VII. Kingdom Attitude (A study of Mt 7:1-12).

### A. Keep Your Eyes on God, not on Man.

1. This has been the message in the last two passages. At this point, the sermon builds a description of the Kingdom attitude. We see that the central message is the same. Keep your eyes on God, not on men.
2. To have a Kingdom attitude means that people who live in the Kingdom should have an attitude of prayer, instead of an attitude of judging others.
  - a. When we have a judgmental attitude, our minds are set on men and their problems.
  - b. When we have a prayerful attitude, our minds are set on God and His solutions.

**Discussion Point**

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about having a Kingdom attitude.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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## B. A Judgmental Attitude.

1. Another repetitive theme is seen here. A judgmental attitude is a hypocritical attitude. We see another way in which the Sermon contrasts that which is hypocritical against that which is sincere. It contrasts that which is fake against that which is real, it contrasts that which is worldly against that which is heavenly.
2. We must remember that this is the very essence of the sermon. It is the description of the “counter-culture” or the alternative lifestyle that was prescribed earlier. It is a lifestyle that is in contrast to the lifestyle of those in the world.
3. The Kingdom attitude is contrasted to the worldly attitude. It provides an alternative attitude. Instead of having a judgmental attitude, we should have a prayerful attitude.

### Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion about being judgemental.

## C. A Prayerful Attitude.

1. It has been said, **“If half of us spent half the time we spend talking about other people on praying to God on behalf of those people, then we would all live in a halfway better world.”**
2. This is the idea of vs. 7-11. Instead of wasting so much time talking about others, we should be talking to God on their behalf.
3. The point is that God will answer if you would only ask. What a contrast in effectiveness and efficiency! This should be no surprise, because the contrast is great between the attitude of the world and the attitude of the Kingdom of God.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Insert Your Illustration:

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## D. The Conclusion to Kingdom Attitudes (Mt 7:12).

1. “**Therefore**” introduces the conclusion that connects the two attitudes.
2. Instead of judging people, pray for them. Why? Because this is what you would want them to do for you. This is the Kingdom attitude.

### Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion about judgement and prayer.

## VIII. Kingdom Reality (A study of Mt 7:13-29).

### A. God is a Real God, not a False God.

1. The final section of the sermon serves as an effective summary of all that has been said previously. The emphasis has been on the contrast between that which is real, authentic, and profound (from the heart), and that which is fake, hypocritical, and superficial (merely a show).

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Notes

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2. The sermon ends with a whole section devoted to this contrast.
  - a. In vs.13, 14, we have the contrast between the two different gates.
  - b. In vs. 15-23, we see the contrast of those who are truly of God and those who are not.
    - 1) The false prophets and the true prophets (implied).
    - 2) The good fruit and the bad fruit.
    - 3) Those who never really knew God (although it **appeared** as they did) and those who do really know God (implied).
  - c. In vs. 24-27, we see the contrast between the two types of houses.
    - 1) One is built on the things that remain.
    - 2) One is built on the things that will disappear.

### Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about true Christianity and false Christianity.

## B. God Cannot be Fooled or Deceived.

1. The message is clear and direct throughout the whole section. God cannot be fooled or deceived. Although reality can be hidden temporarily, it will eventually reveal that which is false.
2. God is reality. His Kingdom is a real Kingdom. There is nothing fake about it and there can be nothing fake about those who live in it.

### Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion about the possibility of church going people who might not have eternal life.



# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## C. Conclusion to the Sermon.

1. In vs. 28, 29, we find the conclusion to the Sermon in the form of the people's response.
2. They are amazed because Jesus spoke not as the scribes (again we see the establishment of the two different options or lifestyles), but He spoke as one who had authority.
  - a. The hypocrisy of the scribes did not allow them to speak with authority. Authority is the result of a genuine living out of that which you are speaking about. Jesus spoke with authority because His Kingdom was real. He spoke with authority because His life was real. He spoke as God because He was really God.
  - b. The challenge of the Sermon is that if we want to speak with the authority of those who live in the Kingdom of God, then we must actually live in that Kingdom. There is no other way.

**Insert Your Illustration:**

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# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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## Sermon on the Mount: Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>James T. Fisher, A Few Buttons Missing: The Case Book of a Psychiatrist (N.Y.: Lippincott, 1951).

<sup>2</sup>John R.W. Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), p. 15.