

THE BEST ADVICE *Ever Given*

An eight-week study taking a unique look at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew chapters 5 through 7.

Scan the QR Code below to be taken to the corresponding YouTube playlist, containing 8 videos, one for each week/part of this series. Use these videos as the beginning place for each of the eight lessons in this study.



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THE BEST ADVICE EVER GIVEN

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“THE BEST ADVICE EVER GIVEN”

Introduction

Everyone is searching for guidance on how to live the best life possible. We want clarity, purpose, peace, and direction, especially in a world that often feels uncertain and overwhelming. Advice comes from everywhere, yet much of it leaves us anxious, distracted, or unsatisfied. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers something *radically* different.

Spoken early in His ministry, this sermon is not a collection of disconnected sayings. It is a vision for life in God’s kingdom. Jesus addresses the deepest questions of the human heart: *What does it mean to be blessed? Does my life matter? Who am I living for? What can I trust? How should I treat others? What kind of life will truly last?*

Rather than offering quick fixes or surface-level solutions, Jesus speaks to the heart. He challenges common assumptions, exposes false securities, and invites us into a life shaped by humility, trust, grace, prayer, and obedience. His words are both comforting and confronting; full of hope yet demanding a response.

This devotional is designed to walk alongside the 8-part video series “**The Best Advice Ever Given**,” guiding you through Jesus’ teaching one section and one question at a time. Each episode includes a main devotional reflection followed by five days of additional study to help you slow down, reflect, and apply what Jesus teaches.

This journey is not about perfection, but direction. As you engage with Jesus’ words from Matthew 5 through Matthew 7, allow them to examine your heart, shape your priorities, and invite you into deeper trust.

Jesus’ advice is not outdated. It is not abstract. It is an invitation to build a life that reflects God’s kingdom, and one that will stand.

How to Use This Study

Each section of this devotional study explores key elements of The Sermon on the Mount. Within these short passages of scripture in the book of Matthew lie incredible wisdom and some of the greatest advice ever given. There are 8 total parts in this series, each coinciding with a KYB video. Each lesson includes a main devotional, daily scriptures and reflection thoughts, journal prompts, prayer guides, and optional small group discussion questions. You can complete one part per week or move at your own pace. Take time to read, pray, and reflect deeply. If you’re studying with a group, allow space for discussion and shared insight.

Suggested Rhythm

- Tune in for the weekly video release each Sunday and read the Main Devotional for the week.
- Read and complete one journal entry each weekday.
- Use reflection questions and journal space to engage with Scripture personally.
- Spend the weekend reviewing your notes and praying, with the help of the weekly prayer prompt, about what God has taught you throughout the week.
- Don't rush—allow God's Word to speak to your heart at His pace.

Our prayer is that this study does more than inform you. We pray it *transforms* you; shapes you, draws you closer to Jesus, anchors you in His truth, and equips you to live life under His guidance and in closer relationship to Him.

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MATTHEW CHAPTERS 5, 6, AND 7

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the

kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵ “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Adultery

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

³¹ “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ ³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Eye for Eye

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Giving to the Needy

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Do Not Worry

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Others

⁷ “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³ “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

⁶ “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

True and False Prophets

¹⁵ “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

True and False Disciples

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

The Wise and Foolish Builders

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Before beginning Part 1, watch the **first** video in the “*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the KYB – Know Your Bible YouTube Channel.
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PART 1: THE BLESSED LIFE

How Can I Have “The Blessed Life?”

#BLESSED

Everyone wants a blessed life. This desire is universal; but the definition of “blessed” is not. Our world often defines blessed as happiness, comfort, success, money, or the freedom to do what you want when you want. Yet countless people who possess plenty of money and freedom still feel empty and miserable. They feel far from blessed. So what exactly does it mean to be blessed?

Jesus opens His most famous sermon – The Sermon on the Mount – by redefining what it means to have and live a blessed life, in what is often referred to as the “beatitudes.” Rather than pointing to the things this world calls “blessed” - comfort, success, or ease - He points to humility, dependence, mercy, and longing for righteousness. In this section of the sermon, Jesus uses the word “blessed” repeatedly, but He uses it with much deeper meaning. By simply replacing the word “blessed” with the word “happy,” we can quickly ascertain that the two words are not synonymous, and Jesus is not talking about how to have a “happy” life. The people Jesus calls blessed are not those who have it all together, but instead those who recognize their need for God.

The Beatitudes reveal that blessing is absolutely not about our external circumstances. Instead, these “be-attitudes” describe a life fully surrendered in relationship to Christ. To be “poor in spirit” is to acknowledge spiritual need. To mourn is to grieve the brokenness of the world and our own hearts. To be meek is not to be weak, but to entrust strength and power to God. These postures place us in a position to receive God’s grace. The blessed life is *not* a perfect life, or an easy life, but an anchored life. Jesus is showing us that God draws near to those who depend on Him. And the blessed life is marked by the presence of God within it.

Examine your assumptions. What do you think blessing looks like? Jesus gently, but firmly, invites you to see that the good life is not achieved through self-sufficiency, but received through trust in Him.

THE BLESSED LIFE

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: REDEFINING BLESSED

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:3

Jesus begins by blessing people the world often overlooks: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, and the meek. These descriptions are not about weakness or failure. They describe people who recognize their need for God. Poverty of spirit acknowledges that we cannot save or sustain ourselves. Mourning reflects a deep awareness of sin and brokenness. Meekness is strength that has been surrendered to God rather than used for self-promotion.

In God’s kingdom, blessing flows from dependence, not independence. Jesus overturns the idea that blessing is earned through achievement. Instead, it is received by those who trust God with open hands. These qualities create space for grace to work deeply in our lives.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 34:18
- Psalm 51:17
- James 4:6

Reflection Questions:

- Which description—poor in spirit, mourning, or meek—resonates most with you right now?
- Why do you think humility is essential to experiencing God’s blessing?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Where in your life have you been relying on yourself rather than depending on God?

Prayer Prompt:

God, help me to see blessing the way You do.

THE BLESSED LIFE

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: BLESSED IN NEED

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Matthew 5:4

Jesus promises comfort to those who mourn—not because loss is good, but because God meets us in our grief. Mourning acknowledges the pain of a broken world and the weight of personal sin. Rather than avoiding sorrow, Jesus assures us that God draws close to those who grieve.

This comfort is not shallow reassurance. It is the deep presence of God Himself. Throughout Scripture, God reveals His heart for the hurting. He is not distant from pain; He enters into it. Even Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, showing us that grief is not a lack of faith.

To mourn is to be honest with God. And honesty opens the door to healing, hope, and restoration.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 147:3
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- Revelation 21:4

Reflection Questions:

- What kinds of loss or brokenness are you currently carrying?
- How does knowing God is near change the way you approach grief?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about an area of sorrow where you need to invite God’s comfort.

Prayer Prompt:

Lord, meet me in my pain and remind me that I am not alone.

THE BLESSED LIFE

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: STRENGTH SURRENDERED

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Matthew 5:5

Meekness is often misunderstood as weakness, but Scripture presents it as *strength* under God’s control; *power submitted* to God. A meek person does not grasp for power or demand their own way. Instead, they trust God to bring justice, provision, and direction.

Jesus describes Himself as meek, and yet He lived with authority, courage, and purpose. Meekness is not passivity; it is confidence rooted in trust. When we surrender control to God, we are freed from the exhausting need to prove ourselves.

Jesus promises that the meek will inherit the earth, reminding us that lasting reward comes from trusting God’s timing and ways.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 37:11
- Proverbs 16:32
- Matthew 11:29

Reflection Questions:

- Where do you struggle most to relinquish control?
- How might meekness lead to greater peace in your life?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Identify an area where God may be asking you to trust Him rather than assert yourself.

Prayer Prompt:

Jesus, teach me to trust You with what I want to control.

THE BLESSED LIFE

JOURNAL ENTRY 4: HUNGER THAT SATISFIES

***“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.”***

Matthew 5:6

Jesus promises satisfaction to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. This hunger reflects a deep longing for God’s will, God’s ways, and God’s presence. It is a desire that goes beyond surface-level faith.

Righteousness is not something we manufacture—it is something God provides as we seek Him. When our deepest craving becomes alignment with God’s heart, He promises to fill us. Unlike worldly pursuits that leave us empty, God’s righteousness brings lasting fulfillment.

A blessed life is marked by continual dependence on God to shape us day by day.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 63:1
- John 6:35
- Galatians 5:16-25

Reflection Questions:

- What do you most hunger for in life right now?
- How might your desires need to be realigned with God’s priorities?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe what it would look like to seek God more intentionally in your daily life.

Prayer Prompt:

God, shape my desires so that I long for what truly satisfies.

THE BLESSED LIFE

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: BLESSED UNDER PRESSURE

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 5:10-12

Jesus acknowledges that following Him may lead to misunderstanding, opposition, or even persecution. Yet He still calls those who endure for righteousness blessed. This blessing is not rooted in comfort but in belonging to God’s kingdom.

When faith costs us something, it confirms that our hope is anchored beyond this world. Jesus reminds His followers that they stand in a long line of faithful people who trusted God even when it was difficult. Suffering for righteousness something God acknowledges and honors. He promises that faithfulness will never be wasted.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Romans 8:17-18
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- 1 Peter 4:13-16

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever felt pressure to compromise your faith to avoid discomfort?
- How does Jesus’ promise of the kingdom bring hope in difficulty?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a time when following Jesus required courage or sacrifice.

Prayer Prompt:

God, give me strength to remain faithful no matter the cost.

THE BLESSED LIFE

WEEK 1 RECAP

Over the course of this week, Jesus has reshaped our understanding of what it means to have and live a blessed life. Rather than pointing to comfort, success, or control, He has shown us that blessing flows from dependence on God. We've seen that humility opens the door to grace, that God draws near to those who grieve, that meekness is strength surrendered to Him, and that faithfulness—even in difficulty—matters deeply to God.

We've also been reminded that true satisfaction comes not from chasing what the world offers, but from hungering and thirsting for righteousness. The blessed life Jesus describes is not something we achieve through our own effort. It is something we receive as we trust Him and allow Him to shape our hearts.

As you move forward, carry this truth with you: God's blessing is found in relationship with Him, not in perfect circumstances.

WEEK 1 PRAYER

Father, thank You for showing me a better way to live. Help me to release false ideas of blessing and to trust You more fully. Shape my heart through humility, deepen my dependence on You, and lead me into the life You promise. I want to walk in Your ways and receive the blessing that comes from knowing You.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 2, watch the **second** video in the
“*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the
KYB – Know Your Bible YouTube Channel.
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PART 2: A LIFE THAT MATTERS

Can I Actually Make a Difference in This World?

DO I MATTER?

Many people wrestle with a quiet but persistent question: *Does my life matter? Can I actually make a difference in this world?* We long to know that our lives have purpose; that what we do, say, and believe actually counts for something beyond ourselves.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus answers this question directly. He tells His followers, “You are the salt of the earth” and “You are the light of the world.” Did you catch that? He didn’t command them to become something new; He said they (we) *are* salt and light. He made a declaration of identity. Jesus is saying that those who belong to Him already have a God-given purpose.

But, why salt? Why light? Because both make a difference! Salt preserves and enhances what it touches. Light reveals what would otherwise remain hidden. In the same way, followers of Jesus are meant to bring goodness, truth, and hope into the world around them. Jesus was acknowledging that we live in a dark, fallen world, and He chose two things that make a huge difference – salt and light. They influence whatever they contact. His followers make this world a better place.

Jesus also offers a warning. Salt can lose its usefulness, and light can be hidden. When faith is disconnected from action, its influence fades. But when our lives reflect God’s love and character, they point others toward Him. A Christian’s life is not simply “believing in Jesus.” It is living out that faith, in love and good works, that is noticeable to a dark and lost world, and that will make a difference in this world.

Jesus reminds us that our purpose is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to *reflect* God’s goodness. Our lives make a difference not because of who we are, or anything impressive about us, but because of God who is at work *within* us.

A LIFE THAT MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: MADE FOR MORE

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Matthew 5:13-14

Jesus does not say that His followers *should* be salt and light—He says they (we) *are* salt and light. This means purpose is not something we earn or discover later; it is given to us when we follow Him. Salt and light both exist for the benefit of others. Salt enhances what it touches, and light brings clarity and direction.

By using these examples, Jesus shows us that our lives are meant to have influence. Faithfulness can and should have a lasting impact. Purpose is not about recognition or platform—it is about presence. God uses His people in quiet, unseen ways to bring hope and truth into the world.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Colossians 4:5-6
- Philippians 2:14-15
- 1 Peter 2:9

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean to you that Jesus says you *are* salt and light?
- Where do you see opportunities to influence others through everyday faithfulness?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about an area where God may be calling you to live with greater purpose.

Prayer:

God, help me to trust that my life has meaning in Your plan.

A LIFE THAT MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: FAITH THAT SHOWS

“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”

Matthew 5:15

Jesus explains that light is not meant to be hidden. A lamp fulfills its purpose only when it shines. In the same way, faith is meant to be visible—not through self-promotion, but through genuine love and good works.

Living out our faith in a visible way does not mean seeking attention. It means allowing God’s work in us to show naturally through our actions, attitudes, and words. When our lives reflect kindness, integrity, and humility, people are drawn not to us, but to God.

Jesus reminds us that the goal of visible faith is God’s glory. Our lives become a signpost pointing beyond ourselves.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- John 13:34-35
- Ephesians 5:8
- Titus 2:7-8

Reflection Questions:

- What fears or hesitations keep you from living out your faith openly?
- How can your actions point others toward God rather than toward yourself?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe what it would look like to live your faith more openly and naturally.

Prayer:

Lord, let my life reflect Your goodness and truth.

A LIFE THAT MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: WHEN LIGHT FADES

“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.”

Luke 14:34-35

Jesus warns that salt can lose its usefulness. This happens when faith becomes disconnected from obedience and love. When beliefs are not lived out in daily life, influence weakens.

This warning is not meant to shame us, but rather to awaken us. God desires faith that is alive and active, shaping how we live and treat others. Influence is not about perfection, but about consistency and sincerity.

When we realign our lives with God’s purposes, He restores our ability to reflect His light.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Romans 12:1-2
- James 2:17
- James 2:26

Reflection Questions:

- Where might your faith have become passive or routine?
- What steps could help renew your spiritual influence?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on one area where God may be calling you back to active faith.

Prayer:

God, renew my heart and restore my passion for You.

A LIFE THAT MATTERS
JOURNAL ENTRY 4: SHINE FOR GOD

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

Jesus makes it clear that the purpose of good works is not self-glory but God’s glory. When people see lives shaped by grace, they are invited to consider the God behind the transformation.

This keeps our influence grounded in humility. We are not the source of light—we reflect it. God works through our obedience to reveal His character to the world.

Living for God’s glory frees us from comparison and pressure. Our role is simply to be faithful.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Psalm 115:1
- Matthew 6:1

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it important to remember that our influence is ultimately about God’s glory?
- How does humility protect the integrity of your witness?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a way you can redirect attention from yourself to God.

Prayer:

Father, may my life always point people to You.

A LIFE THAT MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: SHINE EVERY DAY

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:17

Being salt and light is not a one-time calling—it is a daily way of life. Small acts of faithfulness matter. Kind words, honest work, compassion, and patience all become ways God shines through us.

Jesus does not ask for dramatic gestures. He invites us to live with intentional faith in ordinary moments. Over time, these moments shape a life that truly makes a difference.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Micah 6:8
- Galatians 6:9-10
- Romans 11:36

Reflection Questions:

- What does faithfulness look like in your daily routine?
- How might God use small acts of obedience for a greater purpose?

Journal Prompt: *(Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)*

List practical ways you can live as salt and light this week.

Prayer:

Jesus, help me to live faithfully in the small things.

A LIFE THAT MATTERS

WEEK 2 RECAP

This week, Jesus reminded us that our lives matter more than we often realize. We are called salt and light—not because of our abilities, but because of God’s work in us. We’ve seen that faith is meant to be visible, active, and rooted in humility. Our influence grows as we live with integrity and obedience, pointing others not to ourselves, but to God.

A life that makes a difference is not built on recognition or success, but on faithful presence. When we allow God’s light to shine through us, even ordinary moments become meaningful.

WEEK 2 PRAYER

God, thank You for calling me to live with purpose. Help me to be salt and light in the places You’ve placed me. Use my words and actions to reflect Your love and truth, and let my life bring glory to You.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 3, watch the **third** video in the “*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the KYB – Know Your Bible YouTube Channel.
www.youtube.com/@KYB-Know-Your-Bible



PART 3: **RULES OR THE HEART**

How Can I Improve My Relationships?

FAITH THAT BEGINS IN THE HEART

In the next segment of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turns to the subject of how we relate to others. Today, a quick internet search might suggest that better relationships come from listening more carefully, being more patient, or simply trying harder. While those ideas may offer some helpful advice, Jesus points us somewhere deeper. As He often does in this passage, He directs our attention not just to our actions, but to our hearts.

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus refers to the Law. To the people listening that day, the Law represented the long list of commands given to God's people in the Old Testament. They were familiar with it and understood it primarily as a set of rules to follow. But Jesus challenges that understanding. He explains that He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. Then He does something surprising: He raises the standard. Obedience is not only about outward behavior; it is about the motives of the heart. Anger, lust, revenge, and love are all addressed at their source.

Why does Jesus go this deep? Because outward obedience without inward transformation does not last. We may try to be more patient, say the right things, or keep the peace in difficult relationships. But if our hearts are still driven by pride, selfishness, anger, or unresolved pain, those patterns will continue to surface.

Jesus desires followers whose obedience flows from love, trust, and a genuine relationship with God. True change begins with a transformed heart—and a changed heart produces a changed life. Jesus is not interested in appearances; He desires authenticity.

So rather than viewing faith as a list of rules or a system of behavior management, Jesus invites us into something far greater: a life-changing relationship with Him. As our hearts are transformed, our actions follow, and the way we relate to others begins to change as well.

RULES OR THE HEART

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: LAW FULFILLED

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus begins by clarifying His mission. He did not come to discard God’s law, but to fulfill it. The law reveals God’s character and His desire for justice, holiness, and love. Jesus fulfills the Law by perfectly living it and by bringing to completion what the Law had been pointing toward all along—His own life and mission.

When Jesus speaks of righteousness exceeding that of the religious leaders, He is not calling for more rule-keeping. He is calling for a deeper kind of righteousness—one rooted in relationship with God. True righteousness begins with trust and obedience that flow from the heart.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Romans 8:1-4
- Romans 10:3-4
- Galatians 3:23-25

Reflection Questions:

- How do you typically view God’s commands—as burdensome or as a gift?
- Why is it important to understand Jesus as the fulfillment of the law?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

How does Jesus fulfilling the law change the pressure you feel to “get it right?”

Prayer:

Jesus, help me to trust You as the fulfillment of God’s will.

RULES OF THE HEART

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: THE HEART MATTERS

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 5:21-24

Jesus again moves beyond external actions to address anger and broken relationships. He looks at the root of these issues and teaches that unresolved anger damages not only others but our relationship with God. Reconciliation matters deeply to Him.

By focusing on the heart, Jesus shows that sin begins long before outward behavior or actions. God desires wholeness within us, not just compliance. Healing and obedience often begin with honest self-examination and humility.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 37:8
- Ephesians 4:26-27
- James 1:19-20

Reflection Questions:

- When does anger tend to take hold in your life? What usually triggers it?
- Are there relationships where God is inviting you toward reconciliation?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on a situation where addressing the heart matters more than correcting behavior.

Prayer:

God, search my heart and lead me toward healing and peace.

RULES OR THE HEART JOURNAL ENTRY 3: FAITH LIVED OUT

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Matthew 5:27-30

Jesus addresses lust next to again illustrate how sin often begins internally before becoming visible. His words are not meant to shame, but to show the seriousness of allowing unchecked desires to take root and shape us.

Jesus invites us to guard our hearts carefully. When we address sin at its source, we experience greater freedom and integrity. Transformation begins when we allow God to reshape our desires.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 51:10
- Proverbs 4:23
- Galatians 5:16

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it sometimes easier to focus on behavior rather than heart change?
- What practices help you guard your heart and mind?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about an area where God may be inviting deeper inner transformation.

Prayer:

Lord, create in me a clean heart.

RULES OR THE HEART JOURNAL ENTRY 4: LOVE EXTENDED

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”

Matthew 5:38-44

Jesus challenges common ideas about justice and retaliation. Rather than responding with revenge, He calls His followers to love—even their *enemies*. This kind of love reflects God’s own mercy and grace.

Loving enemies does *not* ignore wrongdoing; it refuses to let hatred shape our hearts. This radical love reveals the transforming power of God at work within us.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Proverbs 20:22
- Romans 12:17-21
- Luke 6:27-36

Reflection Questions:

- Why is loving enemies one of Jesus’ most challenging teachings?
- How does grace make this kind of love possible?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Consider someone difficult in your life. Write about what loving them well might look like.

Prayer:

God, help me to love as You love.

RULES OR THE HEART

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: WHOLEHEARTED OBEDIENCE

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5:48

Jesus concludes this section by calling His followers to wholeness. This is not a demand for flawlessness, but an invitation to mature, wholehearted devotion. God desires integrity; lives aligned with His character.

Perfection here points to completeness, a life increasingly shaped by God’s love and truth. As we surrender our hearts, obedience becomes a response of trust rather than obligation.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Philippians 1:6
- Colossians 2:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Reflection Questions:

- How does understanding “perfection” as wholeness change your response to this verse?
- What area of your life needs greater alignment with God’s heart?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about what wholehearted obedience looks like for you right now.

Prayer:

Father, continue shaping my heart to reflect Yours.

RULES OR THE HEART

WEEK 3 RECAP

This week, Jesus taught us that following Him goes far deeper than rule-keeping. God is not satisfied with outward obedience alone—He desires transformed hearts. We've seen that Jesus fulfills the law, addresses sin at its source, and invites us into a life shaped by love, grace, and integrity.

True obedience flows from relationship with Him. As God shapes our hearts, our actions begin to reflect *His* character. Following Jesus is not about perfection, but about continual surrender to Him and the growth that brings as we become more Christ-like.

WEEK 3 PRAYER

God, thank You for caring about my heart, not just my actions. Continue to transform me from the inside out. Help my obedience flow from love, trust, and gratitude for Your grace. Shape my life to reflect Your character more fully each day.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 4, watch the **fourth** video in the
“*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the
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PART 4: MOTIVATION MATTERS

How Can My Life Feel More Meaningful?

A FULLY SURRENDERED LIFE

In the next section of the sermon, Jesus provides simple advice for giving true meaning to our lives. And, as with much of His teaching in this passage of scripture, it once again comes down to a matter of the heart. More specifically, the motivation behind our actions. Jesus warns against living life for superficial reasons.

Jesus illustrates His point by looking at three good, God-honoring practices – giving, prayer, and fasting – and shows how it is possible to appear deeply religious while living for the wrong audience. All three of these practices, if done for the wrong reason, will garner the wrong results. It is imperative to live life out of devotion to God, seeking His approval, not the approval of man. If our hearts are not aligned with God, we cannot experience the true change of life that comes from a heart surrendered to Him. A life fully surrendered to Him is ultimately where meaning is found.

Jesus presses the warning even further. He speaks of narrow and wide paths, of fruit that reveals what is real, and of people who call Him “Lord” without truly submitting their lives to Him. When things are done out of the wrong motivation, genuineness is replaced by performance. We live our life for applause, which ultimately fades. Living life in such a superficial manner, seeking the approval of men rather than of God, leads us down a dangerous path. These words are not meant to frighten sincere believers, but to expose false assurance. Again, Jesus is not impressed by religious language or activity performed for the praise of others. He is looking for surrendered hearts.

At the center of this teaching is a simple but searching question: *Who or what are you really living for?* Approval from others? Comfort? Control? Or obedience to God? Authentic faith is not about perfection. It is about direction. It is about choosing the narrow way—not because it is easy, but because it leads to life. Jesus invites us to examine our motivations, our practices, and our obedience, not to condemn us, but to lead us into freedom.

True faith may not always be visible to others, but it is always visible to God. And God honors lives that are lived for Him. And in a God-honoring life, you will find ultimate meaning.

MOTIVATION MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: LIVING FOR GOD

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:1-4

Jesus begins this section by warning against practicing righteousness to be seen by others. Giving, prayer, and fasting are meant to draw us closer to God, not to earn recognition. When our motivation shifts toward approval, the reward shifts as well.

Jesus reminds us that God sees what others do not. Faith practiced in secret forms the foundation of genuine devotion. When we live for God’s approval rather than human applause, our faith becomes both freeing and sincere.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Colossians 3:23-24
- 1 Thessalonians 2:4

Reflection Questions:

- Why can it sometimes be tempting to seek recognition for spiritual activity?
- How does remembering that God sees everything change your motivation?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about an area where you may be seeking human approval instead of God’s pleasure.

Prayer:

God, help me to live for Your approval alone.

MOTIVATION MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: RELATIONSHIP, NOT PERFORMANCE

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Matthew 6:5-8

Jesus teaches that prayer is not a performance but a relationship. God is not impressed by eloquent words or public displays. He desires honest conversation rooted in trust.

By reminding us that God already knows our needs, Jesus shifts prayer from performance to dependence. Prayer becomes less about impressing others, or even ourselves, and more about trusting our loving Father.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 62:8
- Hebrews 4:14-16
- 1 John 5:14-15

Reflection Questions:

- How does Jesus' teaching reshape your view of prayer?
- What makes it difficult to come to God honestly in prayer?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe what a more honest, relational prayer life could look like for you.

Prayer:

Father, teach me to come to You with trust and honesty.

MOTIVATION MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: THE NARROW WAY

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14

Jesus describes two paths: one wide and easy, the other narrow and difficult. The wide path requires little thought or commitment, but it does not lead to life. The narrow path requires intentional trust, obedience, and self-sacrifice.

Following Jesus is not a casual decision. It is a daily choice to align our lives with His teaching, even when it costs us comfort or approval. The narrow way may feel restrictive, but it ultimately leads to true freedom.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Deuteronomy 30:19-20
- Luke 9:23
- Luke 13:24

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think the narrow way feels challenging or intimidating?
- Where might God be inviting you to greater intentional obedience?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on an area where choosing the narrow way feels difficult right now.

Prayer:

Jesus, give me courage to choose the path that leads to life.

MOTIVATION MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 4: TRUE FRUIT

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Matthew 7:15-20

Jesus teaches that fruit reveals the health of a tree. In the same way, the fruit of our lives reveals the reality of our faith. Words, intentions, and appearances can be misleading, but fruit tells the truth.

This teaching is not about perfection, but rather about direction. Over time, a surrendered life produces evidence of transformation. When our hearts are aligned with God, our actions begin to reflect His character.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Galatians 5:22-23
- Colossians 1:10
- John 15:5

Reflection Questions:

- What kind of fruit do you see growing in your life?
- Why is fruit a better indicator of faith than words alone?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about one area where you desire to see God produce more fruit in your life.

Prayer:

God, shape my life so it reflects Your work within me.

MOTIVATION MATTERS

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: LORD IN TRUTH

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Matthew 7:21-23

Jesus delivers one of His most sobering warnings here: not everyone who calls Him “Lord” *truly* follows Him. These words are not aimed at imperfect Christ followers, but at those who substitute religious activity for true obedience.

Jesus reminds us that true faith is marked by submission to God’s will and to the obedience that comes from faith. Obedience is evidence of surrender to Him. Knowing Jesus means trusting Him enough to truly follow Him.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Luke 6:46
- James 1:22
- John 14:15

Reflection Questions:

- When can faith begin to feel more like routine than relationship?
- Where is one place in your daily life where obedience to Jesus could become more intentional?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe a situation where living out your faith feels challenging. What might obedience look like there?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to follow You with my whole life, not just my words.

MOTIVATION MATTERS

WEEK 4 RECAP

This week, Jesus challenged us to examine who we are really living for. We saw that faith can become performance if our motivation shifts toward approval rather than devotion. Jesus called us away from surface-level belief and toward genuine obedience rooted in relationship with God.

We were reminded that the narrow way leads to life, that fruit reveals what is real, and that calling Jesus “Lord” must be reflected in how we live. Authentic faith is not about appearance—it is about allegiance.

WEEK 4 PRAYER PROMPT

Father, search my heart and reveal where my faith has become performance-based rather than fully surrendered to you. Help me to choose the narrow way, to bear fruit that honors You, and to follow Jesus not only in word, but in deed and in truth. I want my life to belong fully to You.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 5, watch the **fifth** video in the “*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the KYB – Know Your Bible YouTube Channel.
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PART 5: **TREASURE & WORRY**

How Can I Have More Peace In My Life?

LIVING ANXIETY FREE

Peace is one of the great longings of the human heart. People will seek it through money, career, relationships, and even entertainment. Yet true lasting peace seems elusive. How can we have true peace? You guessed it...Jesus gives us the answer in the Sermon on the Mount.

Much of our anxiety comes from what we are chasing. We spend our lives pursuing security, success, comfort, and control, hoping these things will give us peace. When we fret over these “earthly treasures,” it keeps our hearts anchored to a world that is passing away. While these things are not *evil* in themselves, they are unstable foundations. Earthly treasures can be stolen, break down, or fade away in a market correction. When we build our peace on them, we are building on shifting sand. Jesus teaches that what we treasure most will ultimately shape our hearts—and our worries. Jesus does not shame us for worrying; He reveals its source. Anxiety often exposes misplaced trust.

But let's contrast that with heavenly treasure. Heavenly treasure is different. It is everlasting. Its value never fades or fails. Jesus is our greatest treasure! And when Jesus is our treasure, we will commit ourselves to Him and to His kingdom. Jesus' point is simple: True peace isn't found in the things of this world, but in Him.

Jesus makes a statement in this section that shocks and concerns many: we cannot serve both God and money. We've all heard that quoted before. But here again, this is not just about wealth (earthly treasure)—it is about allegiance. Whatever we trust most will shape our decisions, priorities, and sense of security.

Jesus invites us into a different way of living. He reminds us that our Father knows our needs and cares for us deeply. Rather than chasing what cannot last, we are invited to seek God first and foremost. True Peace comes from right priorities. Seek and serve God first and you'll discover a peace and freedom that worry can never provide.

TREASURE & WORRY

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: TREASURE REVEALED

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:19-21

Jesus teaches that our hearts naturally follow what we value most. Treasure is not limited to money—it includes anything we depend on for security, identity, or peace. Earthly treasures are temporary and unstable, but heavenly treasure lasts.

By calling us to store up treasure in heaven, Jesus invites us to invest our lives in what matters eternally. When our priorities align with God’s kingdom, our hearts find greater peace and purpose.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Colossians 3:1-3
- Luke 12:33-34
- 1 Peter 1:3-4

Reflection Questions:

- What do you tend to value most when you feel stressed or afraid?
- How do your priorities reveal where your heart is anchored?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about something you may be treasuring more than God right now.

Prayer:

God, help me to treasure what truly lasts.

TREASURE & WORRY

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: LOYALTY TESTED

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Matthew 6:22-24

Jesus explains that divided loyalty clouds our spiritual vision. When our focus is split between God and other pursuits, clarity fades. Serving two masters leads to inner conflict, instability, and, ultimately, a loss of peace.

This teaching challenges us to consider what truly has our allegiance. God does not want partial devotion—He invites wholehearted trust. Choosing God as our master leads to freedom, not loss.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 119:105
- Joshua 24:14-15
- Romans 6:16

Reflection Questions:

- Where do you feel pulled between competing priorities?
- What helps you keep your focus on God?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on what it would look like to give God your full allegiance.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to choose You above all else.

TREASURE & WORRY

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: WORRY EXPOSED

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Matthew 6:25-27

Jesus addresses worry with compassion and truth. He does not dismiss our concerns, but He asks us to consider whether worry has ever truly helped us. Worry cannot add to our lives. it only drains us.

By pointing to God’s care for creation, Jesus reminds us that we matter deeply to our Father. Worry often reveals where trust is lacking. When we place our trust in God’s provision, anxiety begins to lose its grip.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 55:22
- Philippians 4:6-7
- 1 Peter 5:7

Reflection Questions:

- What worries tend to consume your thoughts right now?
- How does Jesus’ teaching challenge your response to anxiety?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a worry you need to surrender to God.

Prayer:

God, help me to trust You with what concerns me most.

TREASURE & WORRY

JOURNAL ENTRY 4: THE FATHER'S CARE

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”

Matthew 6:28-32

Jesus points to the natural world to remind us of God’s faithful provision. If God cares for the birds and flowers, how much more does He care for His children, whom He loves?

Worry often assumes that we are alone in providing for ourselves. Jesus reassures us that our Father not only knows but cares about our needs. Trust grows when we remember God’s character. He is attentive, generous, and faithful.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 145:15-16
- Romans 8:32
- Matthew 10:29

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it sometimes hard to trust that God knows your needs?
- How does remembering God as a loving Father change your perspective?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe an area where you need to rest in God’s provision?

Prayer:

Father, help me to trust in Your care.

TREASURE & WORRY

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: RIGHT PRIORITIES

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 6:33-34

Jesus brings this teaching to a clear conclusion: seek God’s kingdom *first*. This does not mean ignoring responsibilities; it means placing God at the center of everything. When God is first, priorities realign and worry loses its power.

Seeking God daily anchors us in what truly matters. Each day has enough concerns of its own, but God’s grace meets us one day at a time.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 37:1-8
- Lamentations 3:22-25
- Proverbs 3:5-6

Reflection Questions:

- What does it look like for you to seek God first each day?
- How can daily trust help reduce anxiety?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

List practical ways you can seek God first in your daily routine.

Prayer:

God, help me to seek You above all else.

TREASURE & WORRY

WEEK 5 RECAP

This week, Jesus invited us to examine what we are chasing. We learned that our treasure shapes our hearts, that divided loyalty clouds our focus, and that worry often reveals misplaced trust. Jesus reminded us that our Father knows our needs and invites us to live with confidence in His care and provision

When we seek God first, our priorities shift and peace grows. A life centered on God is not free from challenges, but it is free from the burden of carrying them alone.

WEEK 5 PRAYER

Father, I confess how easily I chase security in things that cannot last. Help me to trust You with my needs and to seek Your kingdom first. Free my heart from anxiety and teach me to rest in Your faithful care. I place my trust in You.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 6, watch the **sixth** video in the “*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the KYB – Know Your Bible YouTube Channel.
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PART 6:

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

Is It Wrong To Judge Others?

LIVING WITH HUMILITY & GRACE

Judgment often comes more naturally than grace. We notice flaws in others quickly, and excuse our own just as easily. Jesus addresses this tendency directly—not to silence truth, but to reshape how we see ourselves and others.

In the next section we are studying in the Sermon on the Mount, we come to a verse that is possibly one of the most well-known and quoted verses in the Bible. But unfortunately, it is often taken completely out of context. In chapter 7, verse 1, we read: “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” Many quote this verse to silence any criticism. Here again, though, Jesus is trying to make us go deeper into the heart of the issue.

Jesus’ warning here is against a judgmental spirit that elevates self and diminishes others. He is not forbidding discernment or accountability; the Bible is filled with admonitions to “judge” and to “discern” lots of things. We are told to discern between right and wrong, good and evil, true and false.

Jesus is not forbidding all judging – He’s warning against judging in a “wrong” way. Jesus is exposing hypocrisy. When we judge without examining our own hearts, we distort truth and damage relationships.

Jesus uses a vivid image to illustrate the point: a person trying to remove a speck from someone else’s eye while ignoring a huge plank in their own. His point is clear: self-righteousness blinds us. Grace, on the other hand, restores vision.

When we become aware of our own need for mercy, we grow more patient and compassionate toward others. Truth spoken without grace wounds. Grace offered without truth misleads. Jesus calls us to hold both together, beginning with humility. Christ followers are always to speak the truth – to “judge” or discern right from wrong and even point it out to others - but always lovingly and humbly, never harshly or hypocritically or self-righteously.

A heart shaped by grace does not rush to condemn. It seeks restoration, understanding, and love.

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: HEART EXAMINED

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Matthew 7:1-2

Jesus begins by warning that the measure we use to judge others will be used for us. This is not meant as a threat, but a reminder that judgment reflects the condition of our heart. When we are harsh with others, we often reveal unresolved pride or insecurity within ourselves. Jesus invites us to pause before criticizing and to consider our own need for grace.

Humility opens the door to compassion. When we remember how much mercy we’ve received, we become slower to judge and quicker to love.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Romans 2:1-4
- James 2:12-13
- Ephesians 4:32

Reflection Questions:

- What kinds of situations seem to trigger judgmental thoughts for you?
- How does remembering God’s mercy change how you see others?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a time when extending grace helped you see someone differently.

Prayer:

God, soften my heart and help me to lead with grace.

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: HYPOCRISY EXPOSED

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?”

Matthew 7:3-4

Jesus’ imagery of a plank and a speck highlights how easily we minimize our own faults while magnifying those of others. Hypocrisy doesn’t mean we struggle—it means we refuse to acknowledge our own need for growth.

When we ignore our own sin, judgment becomes distorted. Self-examination is not about shame; it is about honesty. God’s grace meets us most powerfully when we are willing to see ourselves clearly.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 139:23-24
- Lamentations 3:40
- 2 Corinthians 13:5

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it often easier to see faults in others than in ourselves?
- How can self-examination protect us from hypocrisy?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about an area where growing in self-awareness could strengthen your relationships.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to evaluate and see myself honestly before judging others.

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: GRACE EXTENDED

“You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Matthew 7:5

Jesus does not say we should never help others see their blind spots. Instead, He teaches that correction must begin with humility. When we deal with our own sin first, we are better equipped to help others with grace and wisdom.

Correction without love wounds. Love without truth misleads. Jesus calls us to approach others with gentleness, not superiority. Grace prepares the ground where truth can take root.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Galatians 6:1-4
- Ephesians 4:15
- Colossians 4:5-6

Reflection Questions:

- How does humility change the way correction looks and is received?
- What role does love play in speaking truth?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on how you respond when someone corrects you. Does that affect how you correct others?

Prayer:

God, help me to speak truth with love and humility.

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

JOURNAL ENTRY 4: WISDOM APPLIED

“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Matthew 7:6

Jesus closes this teaching by reminding us that discernment matters greatly. Not every situation calls for the same response. Wisdom helps us know when to speak, when to listen, and when to step back.

Discernment is not judgmental; it is thoughtful and prayerful. It seeks God’s guidance rather than reacting impulsively. As we grow in wisdom, we learn to navigate relationships with both truth and grace.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- James 1:5
- Proverbs 2:1-6
- Philippians 1:9-10

Reflection Questions:

- Why is discernment different from judgment?
- How can prayer guide your responses to difficult situations?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a situation you need to approach with wisdom rather than quick judgment.

Prayer:

Lord, grant me wisdom to respond with grace and truth.

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: PERSPECTIVE CHANGED

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Colossians 3:12-14

A heart shaped by grace views others through the lens of mercy. Jesus’ teaching invites us to replace judgment with humility and compassion. When grace shapes our perspective, relationships become places of growth rather than condemnation.

This does not mean ignoring sin—it means addressing it with patience, love, and self-awareness. As God continues to work in us, we become more reflective of His character.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Micah 6:8
- Luke 6:36
- Ephesians 4:2

Reflection Questions:

- How does grace change the way you approach others’ weaknesses?
- What practices help you remain humble and compassionate?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe how you want grace to shape your interactions moving forward?

Prayer:

God, shape my heart to reflect Your mercy.

HUMILITY BEFORE CRITICISM

WEEK 6 PRAYER

This week, Jesus challenged us to examine our tendency toward judgment. We learned that judgment often reveals what is happening in our own hearts and that humility is essential for healthy relationships. Jesus called us to self-examination, grace-filled correction, and prayerful discernment.

A life shaped by grace does not rush to condemn—it seeks restoration. As we remember how much mercy we've received, we become more patient, compassionate, and wise in how we relate to others.

WEEK 6 PRAYER

Father, thank You for the mercy You've shown me. Help me to extend that same grace to others. Remove pride and self-righteousness from my heart and teach me to walk humbly with You. May my words and actions always reflect Your love and truth.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 7, watch the **seventh** video in the
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PART 7: **ASK, SEEK, KNOCK**

Is Anyone Listening?

LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

Millions of prayers are said each day and each week; prayers for healing, wisdom, strength, comfort, etc. Behind many of those prayers are some questions we don't always like to say out loud: Does God really hear me? Can I really trust Him with my problems? Is anyone really listening?

Prayer can sometimes feel confusing. We are told to pray, encouraged to pray, and reminded of prayer's importance throughout the Bible. Yet many people quietly wonder whether prayer truly makes a difference. What happens when prayers *seem* unanswered, delayed, or are answered in a way that is contrary to what we expected?

In this part of Jesus' sermon, He offers one of His most reassuring invitations: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened." Now, this does not mean God is a genie in a bottle, set to grant your heart's desires at the snap of a finger. Prayer isn't a transaction. It's a relationship. Jesus' assurance here is not that God will give us everything we want, but a promise that God is attentive, present, and good.

Prayer is not about trying to force God's hand or say the perfect magic words. It's about humbly coming to God knowing that He is a good Father who loves us, listens, and cares, and that He will give us what He knows is truly good. This shifts prayer away from performance or persuasion and toward trust. We do not pray to convince God to care—He already does.

Prayer becomes an expression of dependence. When we ask, seek, and knock, we acknowledge our need for God and our confidence in His character. Trust grows as we learn that God's answers flow from wisdom and love, even when we don't fully understand them.

Jesus invites us to approach God boldly. When we trust in God and believe His will is good, perfect, and pleasing, we realize that the best place for us is within His will and His plan. So, ask, seek, knock. And *trust* that your Father hears you.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

JOURNAL ENTRY 1: THE FATHER INVITES

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Matthew 7:7-8

Jesus uses simple, active language to describe our prayer life: ask, seek, knock. These words imply persistence, not perfection. Prayer is not about saying the right words, but about continually turning toward God in trust.

By inviting us to ask, Jesus affirms that our needs matter. Seeking reflects desire and pursuit, while knocking shows expectation. Together, these actions describe a posture of dependence rooted in confidence that God hears us.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Jeremiah 33:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- Hebrews 11:6

Reflection Questions:

- Which part of Jesus’ invitation—asking, seeking, or knocking—do you struggle with most?
- How does persistence in prayer strengthen trust?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about something you have hesitated to bring to God in prayer.

Prayer:

God, help me to come to You with confidence and trust.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

JOURNAL ENTRY 2: THE FATHER LISTENS

“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?”

Matthew 7:9-10

Jesus compares God’s care to that of a loving parent. Even imperfect human parents know how to provide for their children. If that is true, how much more can we trust our heavenly Father to care for us?

This teaching reminds us that prayer is relational. God listens not because we pray perfectly, but because we are His children. Understanding God as a Father reshapes how we approach Him—with honesty, confidence, and hope.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 103:13
- Romans 8:15-16
- 1 John 5:14-15

Reflection Questions:

- How does viewing God as a Father affect your approach to prayer?
- What past experiences have shaped your expectations of your prayers being heard?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on how your view of God influences the way you pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for listening when I come to You in prayer.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: TRUSTING THE FATHER

“If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

Matthew 7:11

Jesus emphasizes that God gives good gifts to His children. This does not mean God grants every request exactly as we imagine. Instead, it means His answers are shaped by wisdom, love, and perfect understanding.

Sometimes God’s “no” or “wait” protects us. Trust grows when we believe that God sees what we cannot. Prayer becomes less about control and more about surrender.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- James 1:17
- Romans 8:28
- Isaiah 55:8-9

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it difficult to trust God when answers are delayed or unexpected?
- How does God’s wisdom offer comfort in uncertainty?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a prayer where you need to trust God’s timing or answer.

Prayer:

God, help me to trust Your wisdom above my own.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

JOURNAL ENTRY 4: BOLDLY APPROACHING THE FATHER

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16

Scripture invites us to approach God’s throne with confidence, not fear. Because of Jesus, we are welcomed into God’s presence. Prayer is not reserved for the spiritually elite—it is available to all who trust Him.

Bold prayer does not demand; it trusts. Confidence grows when we remember that grace meets us in our weakness. God invites us to come honestly, just as we are.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Ephesians 3:12
- Psalm 34:17
- Hebrews 10:19-22

Reflection Questions:

- What fears keep you from praying boldly?
- How does grace remove any presumed barriers to prayer?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe what it would look like to pray with greater confidence.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to approach You with courage and trust.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

JOURNAL ENTRY 5: RESTING IN THE FATHER

***“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him.”***

Jeremiah 17:7

Prayer shapes us as much as, if not more than, it changes our circumstances. As we consistently bring our needs to God, trust deepens. Prayer reminds us that we are not alone and that God is actively involved in our lives.

Over time, prayer becomes less about outcomes and more about relationship. We learn to rest in God’s presence, confident that He hears and responds according to His perfect will and in His perfect timing.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 62:8
- Philippians 4:6-7
- Colossians 4:2

Reflection Questions:

- How has prayer shaped your faith over time?
- What habits could help strengthen your prayer life?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about how you want prayer to shape your relationship with God moving forward.

Prayer:

God, draw me ever closer to You through prayer.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

WEEK 7 RECAP

This week, Jesus invited us to approach God with confidence and trust. We learned that prayer is an expression of relationship, not a performance. God listens as a loving Father and responds with wisdom and care. Even when answers differ from our expectations, we can trust that God gives good gifts.

Prayer deepens trust, strengthens faith, and reminds us that God is near. As we ask, seek, and knock, we learn to rest in His goodness.

WEEK 7 PRAYER

Father, thank You for welcoming me into Your presence. Teach me to trust You more deeply as I pray. Help me to rely on Your wisdom, rest in Your love, and approach You with confidence as Your child. I place my trust in You.

Amen.

Before beginning Part 8, watch the **eighth** video in the
“*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series playlist on the
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PART 8: A FIRM FOUNDATION

What Do I Do When Everything Is Falling Apart?

BUILDING A SOLID LIFE

Every life is being built on something. We all make daily choices about what we value, what we trust, what we obey. Over time, those choices form a foundation. Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount by reminding us that foundations matter, especially when life becomes difficult.

Jesus tells a simple story of two builders. Both hear His words. Both build houses. Both experience storms. The difference is not exposure to hardship, but the foundation beneath them. One builds on rock, the other on sand.

Jesus makes a striking claim: hearing His teaching is not enough. True discipleship is revealed in obedience. The storms of life which will undoubtedly come - loss, suffering, uncertainty - do not determine whether a life will stand; they reveal what it has been built upon. If you wait to prepare your house and your foundation until the storms arrive, you will likely be too late.

This teaching is not meant to instill fear, but clarity. Jesus is inviting us to build wisely. What is the foundation that we can reliably build upon? According to Jesus, it is to take what he has taught us in this sermon and put it into practice. If the sermon only remains a theory, your life will not be prepared to survive the inevitable storms. However, if you have taken Jesus' teaching to heart and implemented them in your life, you will be like the house that is built upon a strong foundation. When the storms come, your "house" may be battered, but it will not be swept away.

Obedience is not about earning God's love—it is about trusting Him enough to follow His ways. When our lives are anchored in Jesus' teaching, we discover resilience, stability, and hope that endure beyond circumstances.

Do not leave your life up to chance. Storms will come. The question is, will you be ready for them? The Sermon on the Mount ends with a question that lingers: *What are you building your life on?* Jesus invites us to choose a foundation that will last...Him!

A FIRM FOUNDATION JOURNAL ENTRY 1: BUILDING ON THE ROCK

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Matthew 7:24

Jesus describes the wise builder as someone who builds on rock—a solid, secure foundation. In Scripture, rock often represents God’s faithfulness and truth. Building on Jesus’ teaching means trusting His wisdom above our own.

This foundation is formed over time through daily obedience. Small, consistent choices shape a life that stands firm. Building on the rock is not dramatic—it is faithful.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 18:2
- Psalm 62:1-2
- Isaiah 26:4

Reflection Questions:

- What does building on Jesus’ teaching look like in everyday life?
- How do small acts of obedience strengthen your foundation?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about a habit or decision that helps anchor your life in Christ.

Prayer:

God, help me build my life on what is firm and true.

A FIRM FOUNDATION JOURNAL ENTRY 2: WHEN STORMS COME

“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Matthew 7:25-27

Jesus makes it clear that storms come to everyone. Faith does not prevent hardship, but it determines how we endure it. Storms reveal what is beneath the surface.

When life is shaken, foundations are tested. Those who have built on Jesus’ words remain steady—not because life is easy, but because trust runs deep. God’s faithfulness sustains us even when circumstances feel overwhelming.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Psalm 46:1-2
- Isaiah 43:2
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Reflection Questions:

- How have past storms revealed the foundation of your faith?
- What helps you remain steady during difficult seasons?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on a storm that strengthened your trust in God?

Prayer:

Lord, be my strength when life feels uncertain.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

JOURNAL ENTRY 3: HEARING ISN'T ENOUGH

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

James 1:22-25

Jesus contrasts two responses to His teaching: hearing and doing. Both builders in Matthew 7 listen, but only one puts His words into practice. Knowledge alone does not produce stability, or solid footing. Obedience transforms belief into action.

Following Jesus means allowing His words to shape how we live, not just what we believe. When faith moves from the mind to the heart and hands, it becomes a foundation that can support us through life’s challenges.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Luke 6:46-49
- Luke 11:28
- John 13:17

Reflection Questions:

- Where do you find yourself hearing God’s Word but finding it difficult to put into practice?
- What helps move faith from understanding to action?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Reflect on one teaching of Jesus that has recently challenged you. What would it look like to live it out more fully?

Prayer:

Jesus, help me to put Your words into practice.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

JOURNAL ENTRY 4: OBEDIENCE THAT ENDURES

“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

John 14:21

Jesus connects obedience with love and relationship. Obedience is not driven by fear, but by trust. When we obey Jesus, we align our lives with His truth and experience deeper intimacy with Him.

Obedience shapes character, clarifies direction, and nurtures spiritual growth. It is not perfection, but persistence...choosing to follow Jesus day by day.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Ecclesiastes 12:13
- John 14:15
- 1 John 5:3

Reflection Questions:

- How does understanding obedience as love change your perspective?
- Where might God be inviting you to trust Him more fully?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Write about an area where obedience could deepen your relationship with God.

Prayer:

Jesus, help me to follow You with love and trust.

A FIRM FOUNDATION JOURNAL ENTRY 5: A LIFE THAT LASTS

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”

John 5:24

Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount demand more than admiration—they invite commitment. A life built on obedience may not always appear impressive, but it will endure.

Building a life that lasts means choosing faithfulness over convenience and trust over control. As we live out Jesus’ teaching, our lives reflect the stability and hope found in Him alone.

Additional Study Scriptures:

- Hebrews 12:11
- Colossians 2:6-7
- 2 Timothy 3:14-15

Reflection Questions:

- What kind of legacy do you want your life to reflect?
- How does obedience shape a life that lasts?

Journal Prompt: (Journal about a reflection question or the following idea...)

Describe what it means for you to build your life on Jesus’ teaching.

Prayer:

God, help me build a life that honors You.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

WEEK 8 RECAP

This week, Jesus brought His sermon to a clear and challenging conclusion. We learned that hearing His words is not enough. Living them is what builds a firm foundation. Storms *will* come, but a life anchored in obedience and trust will stand.

Throughout this series, Jesus has invited us into a life shaped by humility, purpose, surrender, trust, grace, prayer, and obedience. The choice is now before us: to merely admire His teaching, or to build our lives upon it.

WEEK 8 PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your Word which guides and sustains me. Help me to build my life on the truth of Jesus' teaching. When storms come, keep me grounded in faith and obedience. I want my life to reflect trust in You and to stand firm in every season.

Amen.

Closing Reflection

Building on the Words of Jesus

As Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount, He leaves His listeners with a simple but striking image: two builders, two foundations, and one inevitable reality—storms will come. The difference is not who *listens* to His words, but who *lives* them.

Throughout this series, Jesus has invited us to approach life differently. He has:

- redefined blessing
- reminded us that our lives matter
- called us to authentic faith
- challenged our priorities
- reshaped how we treat others
- invited us to trust God through prayer
- asked us what we are building our lives on.

These teachings are not meant to be admired from a distance. They are meant to be lived. Following Jesus does not mean life will be easy, but it does mean life will be anchored. Obedience is not about earning God's love, but about trusting Him enough to follow His ways. When we build our lives on Jesus' teaching, we discover a foundation that holds steady through uncertainty, hardship, and change.

The Sermon on the Mount leaves us with a choice. We can hear Jesus' words and move on unchanged, or we can allow them to shape how we live each day. The invitation remains open.

As you finish this study, consider what God may be asking you to carry forward. Which teaching challenged you most? Where is He inviting deeper trust or obedience? What step might He be calling you to take next?

The best advice ever given is not simply to be remembered—it is to be lived. And as we build our lives on the words of Jesus, we discover a meaningful life that truly lasts.

Key Takeaways

- Dependence is the doorway to a good life.
A truly good life begins with dependence on God, not control of circumstances.
- Ordinary faithfulness makes an eternal difference.
Your life has purpose when it reflects God's goodness in everyday ways.
- The heart is where real change begins.
Real change doesn't start with behavior—it starts with the heart.

- Wholeness comes from wholehearted allegiance.
Peace comes when your life is centered on one, true allegiance.
- Peace follows trust.
You find peace when you trust God more than what you're chasing.
- Self-awareness leads to grace.
Grace grows when we examine ourselves before judging others.
- You are heard.
God wants to hear from you and He responds with wisdom and care.
- Build on what lasts.
A life built on Jesus' words will stand when everything else falls.

Final Encouragement

Wherever you are in your walk with God—just beginning, returning after a season away, or continuing to grow—never move on from the words of Jesus. Let His teachings continue to shape how you think, how you love, how you respond to others, and how you trust God in every circumstance. The Sermon on the Mount is not simply wise advice for better living; it is an invitation into a transformed life. As you continue to hear His words and put them into practice, you will find that your life is being built on a foundation that can stand through every storm.

KYB Invitation

Keep your momentum in God's word going! We'd love to continue studying with you. You can request an in-depth Bible study, supported by a KYB Study Helper, by completing the form at www.knowyourbible.com/biblestudyrequest. Studies are available online or can be sent to you via USPS mail, whichever you prefer. We look forward to continuing to meet you in the pages of God's word.

About KYB – Know Your Bible

Know Your Bible exists to teach God's word to truth-seekers worldwide, empowering them to understand scripture and live confidently for Christ.

KYB – Know Your Bible is an online ministry of the churches of Christ. While supported by many congregations of the Lord's body, the primary host congregation for KYB is:

Northside Church of Christ | 4545 N Meridian Ave | Wichita, KS 67204

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How to Study the Bible – Small Group Discussion Guide

How to Use This Discussion Guide

This guide is designed to help you facilitate meaningful, Scripture-centered discussion using the “*The Best Advice Ever Given*” series as the basis. You do not need to be an expert teacher to lead well. Your role is to guide conversation, create space for reflection, and help participants engage honestly with Jesus’ teaching.

Each week corresponds with one video or main teaching session and is supported by devotional readings, discussion questions, and Dig Deeper Scriptures. Together, these tools help groups move beyond information into transformation.

Recommended 45–50 Minute Session Flow

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- Greet participants and create a relaxed environment.
 - Open with a short prayer asking God to guide your time together.
-

2. Video Viewing (5 minutes)

- Watch the week’s episode together.
 - Encourage participants to listen for what stands out or challenges them.
-

3. Initial Reflection (5 minutes)

Use one simple opening question, such as:

- “What stood out to you from the video?”
- “Was there a phrase or idea that stayed with you?”

This helps ease people into discussion.

4. Small Group Discussion (20-25 minutes)

- Refer to the **main devotional** and **selected daily questions** from the week.
- Choose **2–3 discussion questions**—you do not need to cover everything.

Helpful tips:

- Allow silence. Reflection takes time.
- Encourage participation, but don’t force it.
- Affirm honesty and vulnerability.

If discussion slows, you can ask:

- “How does this teaching challenge the way we usually think?”
 - “What might obedience look like in everyday life?”
-

5. Application & Prayer (10–12 minutes)

- Invite participants to share one takeaway or next step.
- Read the **weekly recap** together or summarize it briefly.
- Close with the **weekly reflection prayer**, or invite group members to pray aloud if comfortable.

Leader Reminders

- **You are facilitating, not fixing.** Let Scripture do the heavy lifting.
- **Avoid debates.** Focus on understanding and application, not winning arguments.
- **Model humility.** Share honestly when appropriate.
- **Keep grace central.** Obedience flows from relationship, not pressure.

How to Use the Discussion Questions Effectively

The discussion questions are intentionally designed to:

- Draw participants into **personal reflection**
- Encourage **biblical engagement**
- Foster **honest conversation**
- Lead toward **life application**

Creating a Healthy Discussion Environment

For the best experience, leaders should aim to create a space that is:

- **Grace-filled** - no one is judged for where they are in their faith
- **Scripture-centered** - God’s Word is the final authority
- **Safe and welcoming** - honesty is encouraged
- **Gospel-focused** - every conversation returns to Jesus and His work

Growth happens best where people feel safe enough to be honest and supported enough to take steps of faith.

Helpful Tips for Leaders

- You don’t need to answer every question. Choose the ones that best fit your group.
- Allow silence - it often means people are thinking deeply.

- Affirm all honest contributions, even when they are still forming.
- Gently redirect if conversations drift away from the gospel.
- Keep the focus on **what God is doing**, not on debating secondary issues.

Final Encouragement

Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is both challenging and life-giving. As a leader, your willingness to listen, learn, and grow alongside your group is more important than having all the answers. Trust that God will use this time to shape lives—including your own.

You do not need to be an expert. The Holy Spirit is the true teacher. Your role is simply to:

- Open God’s Word
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Encourage participation
- Pray faithfully
- Point people to Jesus

If you do that, God will do the rest.

WEEK 1: HOW CAN I HAVE “THE BLESSED LIFE?”

Purpose:

Help the group release cultural definitions of blessing and embrace Jesus’ upside-down vision.

Key Emphasis:

- Blessing is about **dependence**, not circumstances
- The Beatitudes describe **postures of the heart**, not achievements

Watch For:

- Comparing blessings (“I don’t feel blessed”)
- Assuming Jesus glorifies suffering

Leader Tip:

Reinforce that Jesus is not glorifying pain—He is promising **God’s nearness**.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week invites participants to rethink what a “good life” truly is. Encourage honesty about expectations of blessing and gently guide the group toward trust, humility, and dependence on God.

Study Scriptures

- Psalm 1:1-3
- Isaiah 55:8-9
- Luke 6:20-23
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Additional Discussion Prompts

- Which Beatitude feels most *countercultural* today? Why?
- How might our culture unintentionally disciple us to define blessing wrongly?
- What would change if we measured blessing by God’s nearness rather than comfort?

WEEK 2: CAN I ACTUALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD?

Purpose:

Affirm purpose – not what we should be, but what Jesus says we *are*.

Key Emphasis:

- “You are” salt and light (identity, not assignment)
- Influence flows from **faithfulness**

Watch For:

- Guilt-driven “doing more” responses
- Comparing impact

Leader Tip:

Encourage participants to recognize that their everyday lives can influence others. Jesus calls His followers to be “salt” and “light,” meaning their character, actions, and faith can quietly point people toward God.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week reminds the group that followers of Jesus are meant to have a meaningful influence in the world. Jesus describes His people as salt and light—preserving what is good and shining truth into dark places. Encourage participants to see that even ordinary moments of faithfulness can reflect God’s goodness and help others see Him more clearly.

Study Scriptures

- Ephesians 5:8-9
- 1 Peter 2:12
- Colossians 3:17
- Colossians 4:5-6

Additional Discussion Prompts

- Where do people feel pressure to ‘make a difference’ instead of simply being faithful?

- What are examples of influence that don't look impressive but matter deeply?
- What does it look like for someone to be "salt" or "light" in today's world?

WEEK 3: HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY RELATIONSHIPS?

Purpose:

Show that lasting relationship change begins with a transformed heart, not just improved behavior.

Key Emphasis:

- Jesus fulfills the law and reveals its deeper intent
- True obedience grows from a heart changed by God
- Heart changes bring about changes in relationships

Watch For:

- Discouragement ("I could never live like this.")
- Turning Jesus' words into a new checklist
- Focusing only on outward behavior

Leader Tip:

Remind the group that Jesus is not simply raising the standard—He is revealing the kind of heart that leads to healthier relationships. Transformation begins inside before it shows up in how we treat others.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week invites the group to look beneath surface behavior and consider the heart-attitudes that shape our relationships. Jesus addresses issues like anger, honesty, forgiveness, and love for others, showing that true change begins within. Encourage participants to see that when God transforms our hearts, the way we respond to people begins to change as well.

Study Scriptures

- Proverbs 4:23
- Ezekiel 36:26-27
- Romans 12:1-2
- Philippians 2:3-5

Additional Discussion Prompts

- Why do we often prefer clear rules or guidelines over heart change?
- How would a changed heart lead to healthier relationships with others?
- Which part of Jesus' teaching in this section feels most challenging?

WEEK 4: HOW CAN MY LIFE FEEL MORE MEANINGFUL?

Purpose:

Help participants discover that a meaningful life comes from living for God rather than for approval or performance.

Key Emphasis:

- Living for God rather than approval
- Authentic faith vs. religious performance
- Obedience as evidence of surrender

Watch For:

- Fear-based responses
- Confusing obedience with earning acceptance or salvation
- Overly harsh self-evaluation

Leader Tip:

Remind the group that Jesus is not exposing empty religion to discourage us, but to redirect us toward a life rooted in genuine relationship with God.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week invites the group to examine the motives behind their faith and their actions. Jesus warns against living for appearances or seeking approval from others. Instead, He calls His followers to a deeper allegiance—one that flows from a genuine relationship with God.

Study Scriptures

- Micah 6:8
- Titus 1:16
- John 10:10
- Colossians 3:23-24

Additional Discussion Prompts

- How can living for the approval of others make life feel exhausting or empty?
- What changes when we live primarily for God rather than for appearances?
- How does aligning our lives with God's purposes give everyday actions deeper meaning?

WEEK 5: HOW CAN I HAVE MORE PEACE IN MY LIFE?

Purpose:

Help participants connect worry to misplaced trust without shaming.

Key Emphasis:

- Treasure shapes the heart
- Seeking God first brings clarity and peace

Watch For:

- Minimization of real anxieties
- Turning the discussion into a financial focus or financial advice

Leader Tip:

Keep the focus on **trust and priorities**, not problem-solving.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week helps participants identify what drives their anxiety and invites them to re-center their lives on God's kingdom. Encourage grace-filled reflection, not self-criticism.

Study Scriptures

- Ecclesiastes 2:10-11
- Psalm 20:7
- Matthew 13:44-46
- 1 Timothy 6:6-9

Additional Discussion Prompts

- What do people tend to chase when life feels uncertain or out of control?
- How does anxiety reveal what we trust most?
- What does seeking God first look like in a busy, modern life?

WEEK 6: IS IT WRONG TO JUDGE OTHERS?**Purpose:**

Cultivate humility and grace in relationships and encourage self-evaluation before criticism.

Key Emphasis:

- Self-examination before correction
- Grace and truth held together
- Wise discernment is required

Watch For:

- Justifying harshness as "being honest"
- Condemnation of all judgment

Leader Tip:

Model humility. Your tone will shape the conversation more than your words.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week challenges judgmental tendencies and calls the group toward compassion and self-evaluation. Emphasize restoration over criticism and mercy over superiority.

Leader-Only Study Scriptures

- John 8:1-11
- Romans 12:3
- Romans 14:1-21
- Matthew 18:15-17

Additional Discussion Prompts

- Why does judgment sometimes feel justified?
- How do we speak truth without sounding superior?
- What role does empathy play in correction?

WEEK 7: IS ANYONE LISTENING?

Purpose:

Build confidence in God's character, not prayer formulas.

Key Emphasis:

- God as Father
- Prayer as relational, not transactional

Watch For:

- Discouragement from past unanswered prayers
- Overexplaining God's will

Leader Tip:

Allow space for mystery. You don't need to resolve every tension.

Weekly Leader Summary

This week encourages the group to trust God's heart even when answers are unclear. Emphasize that prayer deepens relationship, not just outcomes.

Study Scriptures

- Jeremiah 29:13
- Luke 18:1-8
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- 1 John 3:21-22

Additional Discussion Prompts

- How do unanswered prayers shape faith—for better or worse?
- What's the difference between trusting God's power and trusting His character?

- How has prayer changed *you*, even when circumstances didn't change?

WEEK 8: WHAT DO I DO WHEN EVERYTHING IS FALLING APART?

Purpose:

Encourage participants to move from hearing Jesus' words to building their lives upon them.

Key Emphasis:

- Hearing vs. doing
- Obedience as trust

Watch For:

- Overwhelm from the standard set by Jesus
- Overemphasizing effort instead of grace

Leader Tip:

Invite reflection on **next steps**, not dramatic commitments.

Weekly Leader Summary

This final week brings the series to a close by calling participants to build wisely. Encourage the group to consider how Jesus' teaching will shape their lives beyond this study.

Study Scriptures

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Psalm 127:1
- Hebrews 3:12-14
- Revelation 2:2-5

Additional Discussion Prompts

- What foundations do people commonly build on besides Jesus?
- How do storms reveal—not create—our foundation?
- What small step of obedience might God be inviting you to right now?

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