



The Best Life

A SERIES THROUGH THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LIFE
GROUPS
WEEK 12 • JUN 7

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

What does it feel like when someone you love makes a secret plan to honor an occasion in your life?

BACKGROUND

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus continually moves from outward expressions to inward realities. Jesus challenges his listeners to be aware of the underlying condition of their souls when they relate to the people all around them. For example, when the law tells the people not to murder, Jesus addresses the anger that motivates such violence. While the law forbids adultery, Jesus calls his followers to address the lust within that leads to such destruction. In today's message, we see Jesus once again addressing the issue of what is happening in the soul when one is expressing one's religious practice. He warns us to avoid the trap of outward religiosity.

Dallas Willard wrote, "Desire for religious respect or reputation will immediately drag us into the rightness of scribes and Pharisees because that desire always focuses entirely upon visible action, not on the source of action in the heart." (Willard, *Divine Conspiracy*, pg 188, cited by Akin, *Exalting Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount*, pg 83). Jesus warns that the scribes and Pharisees do everything they do with the aim of being noticed by others. (Matt 23:5-7). Instead, in Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus is pressing his followers to seek God in the secret place where true generosity, open-hearted prayer and self-sacrifice flow out of intimacy with the Father.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Matthew 6:4, 6, 18

“And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

READ: Matthew 6:1-18



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. What does Jesus warn his followers about? Why is this an issue for those who engage in religious practice?
2. What three spiritual practices does Jesus say should best be done in secret?
3. What does Jesus promise that the Father will do in response?




HEART LEVEL: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*


1. Which of the three spiritual disciplines do you practice regularly? What does it feel like to know that the Father notices when you do?
2. Take a moment to repeat the following:
 - My Father sees me when I give...or don't give.
 - My Father sees me when I pray...or don't pray
 - My Father sees me when I fast...or don't fast.
 - How does this reality affect your life of faith?
3. An elderly man was asked about his communion with the Lord. He said, “He looks at me, and I look at Him.” What did his connection to the Lord mean to this man?

DEEPER DISCOVERY

- What does it mean to the following people to be seen by the Lord?
- Hagar: Genesis 16:7-17
- David: Psalm 34:15; 139:16
- Nathaniel: John 1:43-51
- The Crowds: Matthew 9:35-38

 **HANDS LEVEL:** *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. Take a moment to pray the Lord's prayer (vv. 8-13). What part of the prayer is most life-giving for you? Why?
2. Which of the three spiritual disciplines would you like to increase in your regular practice?
3. How will you do it?

 **MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 6:6
"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And Your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)