



# *The* **Sermon** *on the* **Mount**

**A Journey Through  
The Book of Matthew**



OCTOBER 2019

Crossroads Christian Church



# Start here.

Hello friend! Thank you so much for picking up the October version of this resource! Our hope is that over the coming weeks, this will be a tool to help you move closer to God and people. We will begin each week with the passage from The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 through 7) that goes along with our weekend message at Crossroads. But each weekday, we will read a short passage from the rest of the book of Matthew. And then on the weekend, we'll jump back into The Sermon on the Mount. We know opening a Bible can feel overwhelming, so we'd like to give you a few tips to get the most out of your study time. Inside this resource, you will find several components to each day:

.....

>> **READ** - Each day you will be reading from the Gospel of Matthew. Find a quiet place where there aren't many distractions. Focus on listening to God through what you read.

.....

>> **REFLECT** - After you read through the passage, take a few minutes and think about what you just read. Ask God to help you hear his voice clearly. Write down your reflections.

.....

>> **RESPOND** - This is the time to obey God and follow Jesus' example. Ask God to give you the courage to immediately put into practice that which you have learned.

.....

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - God is our Heavenly Father who wants to hear from you. We can do this through prayer, as we talk and listen to God. But he also wants us to share what we have learned with others. This part of your experience is about talking with God and with others.

.....

>> **REAL LIFE** - Several times a week, you'll hear from a real-life friend from the Crossroads family. They are people just like you, learning to listen to and obey Jesus. We are on this journey together!

# Weekend

September 28/29

>> **READ** Matthew 5:27-30

---

>> **REAL LIFE**

*By Logan Miller*

It's fascinating that so much of who we are is built on the examples set before us by those who raised us. Ever since I can remember, I was shown that beauty was something to be complimented on, & even marveled at. I grew up with 2 older brothers & a father, who was a smooth-talking man, that naturally attracted the attention of other women. Growing up, I remember my parents' marriage constantly hanging by a thread as they struggled with being unfaithful to each other. They did their best to hide it from us kids, but we knew exactly what was going on behind their closed doors.

When I was in my teens, I quickly realized the same attraction from girls that my dad & brothers received. My older brother was known for being smooth-talking as well, & I found myself wanting to be just like him. As I followed the same pattern as my brother, I began priding myself on my ability to get girls to fall for me. It gave me identity. I would judge girls based off of their looks & their value was limited to a scale of 1-10. Eventually I found a relationship that I wasn't prepared for. Though I was "happily" dating one girl, I still had the habit of eyeing & flirting with other girls, which eventually led to unfaithfulness.

When I became a follower of Christ, I knew that those same habits still existed in me. Studying the word of God, I eventually came across Matthew 5, specifically verses 27-30. When I read the words "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." I felt immediate conviction. The example I always saw growing up was "look, don't touch." Jesus was saying something completely different here. He was telling me

that not only will touching, or action, bring punishment upon me, but looking with lustful intent is just the same as performing the action. He continues by saying that it is better to cut your hand off than to have your entire body thrown into the “fire”, or hell.

Knowing that those habits & temptations were still at war with the spirit inside of me, I made it a practice to use self-control with my eyes. Anytime I saw a woman who gave an opportunity for my eyes to wonder, I would take control of my thoughts & remind myself that Jesus has given me the power to look away. I was raised to have wandering eyes, but now God has taught me how to see people the way he sees them. It’s better to cut one thing off than to have everything destroyed by the fire. Jesus has shown me that there is freedom in letting the things of my old life, that were once a part of who I am, go, & in doing that, I am free from the trap that the devil sets before me.

.....

**ABOUT LOGAN MILLER**

*Logan Miller, also known as Kriss, was raised in a broken family, and wasn’t taught the basics of faith. It wasn’t until he reached an all-time low, at just 20 years old, that he found God; or as Logan would say, “He found me!”*



.....

**>> REFLECT** – Just like Jesus said anger is at the root of murder, here he compares lust to adultery. What is your gut reaction to this passage?

---

Jesus is not advocating literal surgery to deal with lust or any other sin. He is saying that we should take drastic measures to deal with it. What are some habits or practices you have found that help you keep your thought life under control?

---





>> **READ** Matthew 11:1-15

.....

>> **REFLECT** - What does Jesus' response to John say about how he treats honest questions about who he is?

---

---

---

Verse 11 kind of sounds like a put-down of John. But what Jesus means that even the least person in the kingdom of heaven will know more about Jesus than John did, because they live on the other side of the cross. They fully experience the blessings that John only saw from a distance. If someone were to ask you, "What's the best part about knowing Jesus?" how would you answer?

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - What is one honest question you have about your relationship with Jesus?

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - Thank Jesus that he meets people where they are. Do you have a friend who is asking spiritual questions? Write down their name and a prayer that they would find Jesus to be the Answer they are searching for.

---

---



>> **READ** Matthew 11:16-24

.....

>> **REFLECT** - This passage begins with the words of a children’s song. Kids of every age have probably wondered the same question: Why don’t people do what we want? We play a flute, but nobody dances. We sing a sad song, but nobody mourns. In the same way, John the Baptist, and then later Jesus, didn’t fit into the expectations of the people.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Why did people reject Jesus because he hung out with outcasts?

---

---

---

---

---

So far in our reading through Matthew, what have you seen from the way Jesus lived that has caused you to say, “I wouldn’t have done it that way”?

---

---

---

---

---





# Wednesday

October 2

>> **READ** Matthew 11:25-30

---

>> **REAL LIFE**

*By Connie Hiss*

Yes, there is another diet out there and this diet has been around for a couple of years. It's called the Keto diet and part of the program is that eggs are acceptable for you to eat. The best part of the diet is that you don't have to forgo the yolk! In Jesus' very own Keto plan in Matthew, we don't have to forgo the yoke! (LOL) Matthew 11:28-30 says "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

No matter what we are going through, Jesus is there for us. Whether it's a downturn in finances, a decline in health, the loss of a loved one, employment stress or no employment, unruly children, marital discord, relationship issues, or just an answer we didn't wish to receive, Jesus is there for us. Pride alienates us from Jesus, but humility opens the door to Him. Jesus loves it when we humbly depend on Him. It's just pure sweet and simple heavenly living here on earth. Jesus gives us the option to live joyfully through all of life's circumstances by placing our burdens on Him.

Recently I lost my husband, Mike, of 42 years. I know this sounds like I misplaced him, but I really didn't lose him. He entered eternal life in heaven because he knew Jesus as his personal savior. For the last 10 years of his life he was riddled with pain. Mike's bones were compromised because of a bone marrow transplant in the 90's. His cancer was gone but his bones became brittle. During a span of 20 years, Mike had 3 surgeries on his back and 5 surgeries on his hips. He remained faithful to

Jesus and he was one of the kindest men I know. He could not have handled the pain if he did not place his burdens on Jesus.

Jesus gives us the grace and strength to live above our daily circumstances in life. Jesus helps us navigate the ups and downs of everyday living. If you haven't already accepted Jesus' invitation to follow him, now is the time to do so. As you do, Jesus will give you daily that sweet, sweet Godly rest where He fills your soul with His peace.



**ABOUT CONNIE HISS**

*Connie has been on staff at Crossroads for 16 months. Besides loving the Lord, she loves her family, neighborhood and church family.*



**>> REFLECT** - Jesus' ministry is taking a major turn in this chapter. From here on, he will face increasing opposition. Those who are "wise and intelligent" (in their own eyes) will stand against him, while those who are weak and dependent, like infants, will find rest in him. List some ways that you tend to be self-reliant rather than Jesus-reliant.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





>> **READ** Matthew 12:1-14

---

>> **REFLECT** - The Sabbath was a day of rest and worship. It was a day to trust that God would provide, even if you didn't go to work and the to-list was set aside. It was a gift! But some ripped the heart out of it and made it all about rules. Jesus' response: If practicing the Sabbath doesn't get you closer to God's heart for people, you're doing it wrong.

Think about your own spiritual practices (prayer, church attendance, small group, etc.). How do they help you love people the way Jesus loved people?

---

---

---

---

Can you think of a way you have put rules over relationships?

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Practice Sabbath rest one day, or part of a day, this week. Put it in your calendar. Use that time for rest, worship and spending time with others.





# Friday

October 4

>> **READ** Matthew 12:15-37

---

>> **REFLECT** - In this passage, Matthew is showing us that many people rejected Jesus and his message. What are some of the main reasons people in our culture reject the message of Jesus?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Have you ever faced deep rejection? Or have a close friend who has? How does it feel knowing that Jesus also faced rejection?

---

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Write down the name of one person who has either walked away from Jesus or rejected him altogether. Over the next week, set a time each day to pray for them. Set a daily alarm on your phone - or do whatever will help you remember this daily prayer appointment.

---

---



# Weekend

October 5-6

>> **READ** Matthew 5:31-37

---

>> **REAL LIFE**

*By Paul Linge*

When a young couple has been dating for a while, the inevitable topic of “commitment” is bound to come up. The way a person approaches significant commitments in life is influenced by what they had modeled for them, personal maturity level, and what they really want.

In Matthew 5:31-37, Jesus addresses 2 major forms of commitment: 1) marriage (& divorce) and 2) the vows we make with our words. As with the other laws in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus approaches the topic of divorce not with an aim to abolish the law but to fulfill or complete it. At the time, Jewish men were finding it far too easy to abandon their marriage commitment and dispose of their brides via a certificate of divorce. This would happen due to minor offenses and arguments, leaving many women alone and destitute. When Jesus identified the sole reason for divorce as marital unfaithfulness, he was elevating both the value of marriage and also the value of women in that culture. We see Jesus raising the standard that the Jewish leaders had compromised.

Similarly, in Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus is addressing the commitments we make with our spoken words. How many times have you heard it said, “I swear!” when someone was trying to convince you of their sincerity? While Jesus takes commitments very seriously, he urges us not to add on any “extras” to our words of commitment. No need to say, “I swear to God,” or “I swear on my mother’s grave.” Just a simple, “Yes, I’ll do it” or “No, I won’t” will do. How transformational would be it be if we ceased to make vows and simply kept our words with a simple “yes” or “no”?



So whether it be fulfilling the promises of marriage or fulfilling our spoken words, may our lives be marked by keeping our word, to the glory of God. This passage reminds me just how important it is to have close friends who love Jesus. Whether blood relatives or brothers and sisters in Christ, we provide ourselves a strong support when we link arms and live daily with others who follow Jesus. When frustrated and apt to make an unwise decision, it is much easier to cast off a worldly gut reaction when a 'sister' reminds me Who I follow. In turn, when I am faced with a new opportunity that seems scary at first glance, I am always less hesitant when another Christian is walking with me.

Do you have a close friend guiding you in Godly wisdom? Someone you trust to help you navigate daily life and point you towards Jesus? If not, I challenge you to seek out a small group, Bible study or simply one Christian friend who can be your fellow fisherman.

.....

**ABOUT PAUL LINGE**

*Paul Linge serves as Counseling Pastor and Director of the Crossroads Counseling Center. Paul is an ordained pastor and his areas of pastoral counseling include working with men and married couples. He and his wife, Emily, have been married 23 years, and have 3 children. With 23 years of pastoral and missionary experience, Paul has a heart to see people walk in the freedom that Christ provides.*



.....

**>> REFLECT** - Our promises, no matter the context, have a most sacred importance. What influences you to minimize the promises you make to others?

---

---

---

---

Generally speaking, when someone has to say “I swear” it is considered an empty promise. Often the person swearing has a history of not telling the truth or following through on their commitment. Who are some of the most dependable people in your life?

---

---

---

Write down the name of the trusted person or the handful of people God is especially using in to help you say “Yes” to Jesus when he asks you to follow him in some way.

---

---

**>> RESPOND** – Think of a specific area in your past week or so where you told an untruth or made a commitment but did not follow through. Name it and write it down.

---

---

---

**>> RELATIONSHIP** – Thank the Lord that he keeps his promises no matter what. When we fall down, part of making things right is to ask for forgiveness. Regarding the above, go to the person you let down and ask their forgiveness. Ask God for His forgiveness with an area where you have not keep your commitment (example: bible reading, prayer, sharing). Be specific.

---

---

---



>> **READ** Matthew 12:38-50

.....

>> **REFLECT** Jesus is speaking very frank and straight forward in this passage. Is there anything in your life that frustrates Jesus? A habit? An attitude? An indifferent spirit? A lazy posture? What would he say to you today if he were standing next to you?

---

---

---

---

Jesus clarified who was relationally apart of his family, "For whoever does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother." Are you asking the Father what HIS WILL IS: in your marriage, in your purchases, in your music, in your social media, in your consumption of entertainment, in your family, in your time commitments, in your workplace, in your school, in your life goals, in your relationships?

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Doing the will of the Father in Heaven is a matter of being deliberate and intentional. Jesus said, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33) Using a dry erase marker, write this verse out on every bathroom mirror at your home.





# Tuesday

October 8

>> **READ** Matthew 13:1-23

---

>> **REAL LIFE**

*By Missy Altman*

Apparently, I don't have much of a 'green thumb.' At least not for growing plants from seed. A few years ago, I picked up a 'grow your own herbs' package from the Target dollar aisle. I took it home, followed the instructions, and began to see the little seeds sprout into basil, parsley and thyme. Voila! At first the seedlings came up and seemed to be healthy. But they never really took off, and a few weeks later they were no longer growing. I'm not sure if it was my care, the quality of the dirt, the quality of the seeds, or some combination of all of these that caused their demise.

I love how Jesus so often used common elements of life to illustrate concepts He was teaching. Here, He uses seeds and soil to draw attention to our own hearts, the state of our heart-health, and the fruit being produced in our lives. As I reflect on this passage, I can look back on different times in my life and see where fruitfulness grew out of the richness of my heart's soil - I was turning to the Lord, seeking Him with eyes and ears watching and listening for His leading. I also remember times when I've allowed my stubbornness and the distractions of life to limit fruitfulness; relying on my own strength, rather than His.

Seeds are interesting little things. How is it that food that nurtures and sustains our bodies grows from something so small? It's true, though: tiny seeds produce huge plants and trees, providing nourishment much greater than what the seed started out as. What is the seed in this parable? The seed is the message of the Kingdom, the gospel that is the life, death, burial, resurrection and coming return of Jesus. This spiritual seed carries within it the possibility of a transformed life. And,

healthy seeds produce fruit which produces more seeds, and on and on!

This brings up a number of questions: What kind of soil am I today? Am I continuing to be transformed by Jesus? Am I being a fruitful carrier of the Gospel? Am I scattering the message of Jesus widely?

.....

**ABOUT MISSY ALTMAN**

*Missy has been married to Bill for 28 years and they have three grown kids together. She loves reading, spending time with friends and being out West. She is on staff at the Crossroads Counseling Center. Little known fact: Missy was a county spelling bee champ in her 6th and 7th grade years.*



.....

**>> REFLECT** - People were hungry to hear Jesus teach and so hundreds of people swarmed him. That’s when he taught them about a heavenly principle using a farming analogy. How’s your appetite for Jesus... are you hungry to listen to Jesus? What curves your appetite from being willing to hear him?

---

---

---

---

This parable was meant to hide the secrets of God’s Kingdom from those who are not genuinely seeking Jesus and obeying what he says. What habits could you create to improve your appetite for Jesus?

---

---

---

What's keeping you from immediately starting today?

---

---

---

---

**>> RESPOND** - Write below a habit you want to form in your daily pursuit of Jesus... like regular intake of the Bible through reading or listening, prayer journaling, sharing with a friend how you have experienced God this week, serving a neighbor, memorizing a scripture verse from any reading this week, etc.

---

---

---

---

**>> RELATIONSHIP** - Tell the Lord one of your weaknesses today that keeps you from listening to His voice. Be specific. It might be like this, *"Lord, reveal in me today a habit that hurts my relationship with you. Give me the desire to obey you and let go of this habit. Teach me how to fill the time I used with this old habit with spending time with you."*

---

---

---

---

---



# Wednesday

October 9

>> **READ** Matthew 13:24-43

.....

>> **REFLECT** - Jesus chose to share 3 parables of an earthly story with a heavenly meaning instead of explaining himself plainly. What is the lesson of these parables?

---

---

---

According to the mustard seed parable... our faith might start off small but has the potential to grow very large where it will benefit those around us. How have you seen God work through what seems like a small act of faith?

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Tell a close friend to offer you an honest assessment of your faith. Ask this person to evaluate the strength of your faith on a scale from 1-10. Have this person explain why they chose the number they did and have him/her offer advice on ways to improve.

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - Spend 10 minutes listening to God by remaining silent after you have read the daily reading. Write down any thoughts or impressions God reveals during this silent moment. If you have stray thoughts, just quietly turn back to God. Ask him to help you obey anything he reveals.





>> **READ** Matthew 13:44-58

---

>> **REFLECT** - In the pursuit of important things, we are often left with two choices... take CHOICE A which offers immediate and short-lived benefits or take CHOICE B which offers delayed satisfaction and lasting benefits. What are some of the most important "CHOICE A's" in your life?

---

---

---

Can you think of an area where someone has thought less of you because of your decision to be loyal to Jesus instead of the culture?

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - At your dinner table with family or over coffee with a friend, ask your family/friend to name three things they value most about being a Christ follower.

---

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - Ask God for boldness to share your story of why Jesus is the most important relationship in your life. Bonus: Read the prayer in Acts 4:19. Set an alarm for 4:19 PM tomorrow and pray the same prayer.



>> **READ** Matthew 14:1-12

.....

>> **REFLECT** - John the Baptist called out and rebuked the king for his wrong relationship with his brother's wife. This made the wife outraged. What is your default reaction when someone confronts you about a failure or shortcoming?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name a time you regretted doing something that caught the attention of others. Who brought your wrong-doing before you? What was your response? What did you learn from the experience?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - If someone has ever confronted you out of love for you, reach out to that person today and thank them for their courage and desire to help you grow.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Weekend

October 12-13

>> **READ** Matthew 5:38-48

---

>> **REAL LIFE**

*By Becca Patton*

In the Sermon on the Mount, it's not until I read Jesus' words in Matthew 5:38-48 that I experience a major punch in the gut. "Don't resist an evil person!" "I say love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you!" "If you are kind to only your friends, how are you different than anyone else?" Does your stomach twist when you read this passage like mine does? I fully believe that these words are true and are meant to be obeyed. But when I evaluate my life and think of the people I surround myself with regularly, they tend to think like me, act like me, look like me, and generally they like me. Loving my enemies isn't something I go out of my way to do in day to day life. It's uncomfortable, and it's risky.

I could keep playing it safe and not risk rejection, attack, or embarrassment, but the status quo isn't enough anymore. I want ALL people, especially my enemies, to know the transformational love of Jesus, and that means I have to step outside my comfort zone to love someone who might not return it. After all, isn't that what Jesus did for us?

If we don't live out Jesus' instructions to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, we risk robbing God of His glory and His gospel. It's costly to love our enemies, but it's even more costly if we don't. How will people know the radical, transformational, and generous love that Jesus offers if his image bearers refuse or are too scared to demonstrate it?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reinforces God's desire for his people to be a new community that is completely different than the world, because that's how others will know who God

himself is. Let's be a community who is quick to love people who we wouldn't normally choose as friends. Let's be like Jesus. Who is your enemy? What can you do in this next week to show him, her, or them the radical love of Jesus?

.....

**ABOUT BECCA PATTON**

*Becca is a Campus Minister with Student Christian Fellowship at the University of Evansville. She loves coming alongside college students as they seek to know Jesus for themselves, hear His voice, and share Him with others. She also is an artist who enjoys exploring new places, and can often be found with a cup of hot tea in her hand.*

.....



**>> REFLECT** - Read Matthew 5:38-48 again, this time pausing between every 4-5 words. This takes longer but we can also see or hear God highlight this passage differently. What is your gut reaction to this passage?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**>> RESPOND** - What is one specific way you can step outside your comfort zone and love someone who might not return it. Make a plan and follow through in the next 48 hours.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# Monday

October 14

>> **READ** Matthew 14:13-21

---

>> **REFLECT** - In order to understand "What Jesus heard..." in vs. 13, read Matthew 14:6-12 from last week's reading. And you think you've gotten strange birthday gifts! Jesus is grieving the passing of a very passionate man, his cousin, and the one who also baptized him - John the Baptist. As Jesus is recalling the impact John the Baptist had, the disciples approach Jesus to send the crowds away. But Jesus had a different plan.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Think of a time when you told Jesus what you want or what He should do, instead of coming to Him as your Miracle Worker.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**>> RESPOND** - "For we live by faith, not by sight."

2 Corinthians 5:7 When those who walked with Jesus still many times walked by sight. It is somewhat encouraging to know we are not alone. In order to live by faith, what area of my life needs to be surrendered to the miracle working Saviour? Father, teach me how to be content and to live by faith not by sight.

---

---

---

---

---

**>> RELATIONSHIP** - As Jesus demonstrated compassion for others (those He knew and the crowds), He still found time to withdraw to solitary places. Thank God for demonstrating compassion for individuals and the crowds. Thank God for illustrating the importance of withdrawing from needs and crowds just to be with you. If Jesus shows compassion for the one.... so will I. As Jesus showed concern for the crowds .... so will I. If even Jesus needed to remove himself from needs, crowds and to just be with You in total solitude... so will I

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# Tuesday

October 15

>> **READ** Matthew 14:22-36

---

>> **REFLECT** - Reread Matthew 14:22-36 this time pausing every 4-5 words. Allow His Word to marinate in your heart and in your mind. What part of this passage jumped out to you this time?

---

---

---

---

---

In these 15 verses the word fear or afraid was mentioned 3 different times:

"cried out in fear", "Do not be afraid." "...he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out..." As quickly as you can, write down any fear, great or small, that comes to mind.

---

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Now, go back through the list you wrote and choose one fear. Each time you sit down to eat and then this evening before you go to bed, pray: "Jesus, I will not fear \_\_\_\_\_ because I know you are with me."

---

---

---

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - Write down the name of one person you will share this passage with today.

---

---



# Wednesday

October 16

>> **READ** Matthew 15:1-20

---

>> **REFLECT** - Why is it easier to get the outward actions right than it is to deal with the more important matters of the heart?

---

---

---

---

Have you ever been surprised by your words or by an action - that they revealed something in your heart that you didn't even know was there? What did those words or your actions reveal?

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Take a few moments and reflect on this passage. What is one thing you can do in the next day or two to obey this passage?

---

---

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - Pray the bold prayer from Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.



# Thursday

October 17

>> **READ** Matthew 15:21-39

---

>> **REFLECT** - What do you find challenging in this passage? (hint: it's very challenging!)

---

---

---

---

It seems that Jesus is waiting to see how his followers respond to this woman. When they fail to show compassion, he goes along with them and shows them how messed up their views were. Regardless of how we interpret his words, he ultimately makes this woman the hero of the story. What do you think Jesus' followers learned from this? What did the woman learn?

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Can you relate to this woman? Is there something you are praying for, but until now, the answer hasn't come. Complete this thought: Jesus, I don't understand why I am experiencing \_\_\_\_\_, but here is what I believe about you:

---

---

---

---







# Weekend

October 19-20

>> **READ** Matthew 6:1-18

---

>> **REFLECT** Have you ever pretended to be something or pretended to do something in order to receive a special reward?

---

---

---

>> **REAL LIFE**

*By Andy Teare*

When I was a kid we lived in central Illinois. It was a rural area, and agriculture played a big role in the local economy. My little sister and I were once selected to ride on a float in a parade that celebrated the area's agricultural heritage. I don't remember exactly why we were asked. What I definitely remember, with amazing clarity, is that we were handed large containers of candy to throw to the parade crowd. I was 7 or 8 years old, and I remember asking what was going to happen to the candy that was left over at the end of the parade. A friendly farmer told me that I'd be allowed to take home any candy that was left over. I immediately saw an awesome opportunity! As the parade rolled through the town, I would stick my hand in the bucket, pull it out empty and pretend to throw candy to the kids along the route. Other people on the float were throwing out the candy as they had been instructed, so my subterfuge went unnoticed.

At the end of the route I had a huge container full of butterscotch that I was allowed to take home, as promised. I think my Mom may have recognized what I had done; she definitely knew me well enough to know that I would have no restraint when it came to the amount of candy I would consume



in one sitting—so she placed the bucket of candy on top of the fridge, where I couldn't reach it. The first chance I had, when she wasn't looking, I grabbed a small step stool and took off with the bucket of candy. I sat down and ate butterscotch until I was incredibly sick to my stomach. When my parents discovered the cause of my stomach pains, they let me know that I had received a just reward for my actions. To this day, I can't stand the taste (or even the smell) of butterscotch—I learned the hard way that a lifetime supply of butterscotch is really just a little under the amount that fits in a five gallon bucket.

In Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus addresses three righteous acts he expected his followers to practice. Each description he provides begins with the words "when you..." However, he follows up each "when you" with a "do not." As he lists each "do not" Jesus introduces the concept of "the hypocrite". A "hypokrites", of Greek origin, was a stage actor—a person that pretended to be something they weren't. As Jesus describes the ways an actor, or hypocrite, performs these three acts of righteousness, we see that he is critical of the INTENT with which the acts are performed.

People who were considered to be (or considered themselves to be) highly religious at the time worked hard to ensure that other people knew they were religious. They played a loud trumpet to gather people to them before they dispensed gifts to the poor. They arranged their schedule so that when they prayed, they would be seen by a large number of people.

Jesus is very clear that the acts of giving to the needy, prayer and fasting will all be rewarded. The hypocrite already has their reward—the adulation of other men. But, a person who follows the teachings of Jesus will receive a reward from their heavenly Father. The acts, at their core, are the same. The intent or the heart of the person performing the acts determines the reward.

.....

**ABOUT ANDY TEARE**

*Andy and his wife Wendy have three adult children. Their family has been part of Crossroads for a little over 12 years. Andy has been on staff at Crossroads for the last five of those years, and is currently Crossroads' Director of Online Ministries.*



.....

**>> REFLECT** - Have you ever found yourself doing something good or spiritual, primarily because you hoped other people would notice? How does that compare to acting quietly, behind the scenes, out of nothing but love for God?

---

---

---

**>> RESPOND** - This passage forces us to look at the “why” behind the actions we take. Confess any areas of hypocrisy you have observed in your own life.

---

---

---

---

**>> RELATIONSHIP** - Commit to fasting at least one meal this week. During the time you would normally eat that meal, get away to a quiet place and pray to God. Remember to leave space for him to respond—be silent for a portion of the time. Write down anything you feel he is saying to you, and then act on it.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



>> **READ** Matthew 16:13-28

.....

>> **REFLECT** - Think on Peter’s journey through these verses... In verse 17, he is the “Blessed...son of Jonah” and then in verse 23, Jesus calls him “Satan” and a “stumbling block.” What external forces were in play throughout these verses?

---

---

---

---

Can you think of one time you found yourself responding to the pressures of human concern versus relying on the word of God?

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Write down several statements that describe Jesus in your own words.

---

---

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - During your prayer time today, specifically thank God for each of the aspects of Jesus you listed above.



# Tuesday

October 22

>> **READ** Matthew 17:1-13

---

>> **REFLECT** - In this passage, we see Peter speaking up again. This time, he wants to build memorials to mark a momentous event. However, God steps in and tells Peter to listen to Jesus. How often are we tempted to do things that we think will honor God, versus being still, listening for what God is telling us to do, and then following through on his command?

---

---

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Practice staying silent and listening. In your prayer time today, set aside specific time to listen for what God is speaking to you. Write down what you feel God has said.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - Thank God for speaking to you through His Word and through His Spirit. Continue to practice a time of silence and listening to him during your prayer times.



# Wednesday

October 23

>> **READ** Matthew 17:14-27

---

>> **REFLECT** - This passage reminds us of the importance of our reliance on and our relationship with God. Jesus tells the disciples that they could not cast out the demon due to their lack of faith. The Message version of the Bible says it's because they failed to "take God seriously." What is a mountain-sized challenge in your life today?

---

---

Think carefully on where your faith is placed. Which is bigger: the problem or God?

---

---

>> **RESPOND** - Jesus reminds us in verse 25 that we are children of the King. Write out two or three things this identity means to you.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

>> **RELATIONSHIP** - During your prayer time today, speak to God as you would a good father. Remember that he loves and cares for you. Thank him for all he has done and the grace he has given you.



# Thursday

October 24

## >> REAL LIFE

*By Matt and Katie Whetstone*

It's 4:00 a.m. and a voice cries out in the dark. In his discomfort or hunger, our 6-month old son intuitively knows that if he merely vocalizes a need that we will be there immediately to comfort him. He knows. He trusts. He submits to our timeline. What other choice does he have?

Every night before she falls asleep, our 3-year-old daughter asks what she will be doing the next day. At least once a week, she gets to stay home when her grandparents come over to watch her. On the eve of those days when she asks what she is doing tomorrow, we tell her "You get to stay home and play with Grammy and Pappaw". When she wakes up the next morning, do you know the first thing that she asks? "Are Grammy and Pappaw here yet?" She trusts. She never doubts our authority or our word. She never worries about tomorrow, but instead believes that it will be as we say. And why would she doubt or worry?

Matthew 18: 1-9 is only one example of the many places in scripture where we see that the least on Earth become the greatest in Heaven. So why does Jesus say in this example that the greatest are the children? As someone who gets to now see life through the lens of young children, I think it is because children are the best representation of God's original design for His relationship with us (mankind). In the Garden of Eden, God was present with Adam and Eve. He walked among them. He provided for their every need. They had no worries. No doubt. No need that went unmet. They had complete trust. And why wouldn't they? God was always there. (Gen 2)

Until someone deceived them. After he deceived them, the serpent was cursed to live a life slithering/crawling on the ground. A life on his belly (Gen 3). Jesus says that any of us that deceive children, take away their faith, their innocence,

their trust, and cause them to stumble, would be better off to tie a millstone around our neck and drown in the sea. He's not messing around (Matt 18:6). The punishment for disrupting God's design for his relationship with us is severe. It is death.

As adults we often lose the trust, the innocence, and the humility that we once had as children. We become prideful. Overconfident. We try to cover up our inadequacies. We overcompensate for our weaknesses. We are deceived. We lose trust. We put up walls. We stress. We worry. We often put more faith in ourselves than we do God because we think that is a better choice in that moment.

If only as adults we would revert back to having faith like a child by choosing trust over doubt; humility over pride; submission over rebellion; we could better live the life for which we were created.

.....

**ABOUT MATT AND KATIE WHETSTONE**

*Matt and Katie Whetstone have been married for 10 years and are the happy parents of Harper (3) and Leo (6 mos). They love their Crossroads family and serve as small group leaders, on the worship team and in the cafe. They especially love time together as a family, with friends, and with their small group.*



.....

**>> READ** Matthew 18:1-9

.....

**>> REFLECT** - What do you think Jesus meant when he said we must "become like children" in order to enter the kingdom of heaven?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Jesus goes on to say that we must be humble like a child. Tim Keller said, "...the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less." What does this statement say to you?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**>> RESPOND** - Write down one way you could go and share the love of God with someone in your community. Write down a day and time you can go and do it (or place it in your calendar).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**>> RELATIONSHIP** - Pray specifically for God to help you keep the appointment you just made.









SEEK FIRST *His*  
**Kingdom**  
AND HIS *Righteousness*

MATTHEW 6:33

# bonus

If you read the entire Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, each weekend of this series, by Thanksgiving, will have read through it a dozen times.

You can also use the YouVersion Bible app on your phone! Press the small speaker symbol to listen to the audio version. It just takes 14 minutes!



**A Journey Through The Book of Matthew**

OCTOBER 2019

[cccgo.com/series](http://cccgo.com/series)