

FBC Small-Group Materials

Week of February 5th, 2006
Signs of Life

“The greatest need of modern Christianity is the rediscovery of the Sermon on the Mount as the only practical way to live.” E. Stanley Jones

For Small-Group Leaders

Dear Leaders,

This week's small group materials launch us into a new series on the Sermon on the Mount. We are calling the series, "Life on the Rock." Jesus is announcing in these three chapters (Matthew 5-7) a whole different reality and a way to live that is counter culture. Often misunderstood and misapplied, the Sermon on the Mount is considered by many to be the greatest of Jesus' messages. Our hope is that this study will be life-changing for all of us at FBC. Blessings to your home group/small group as you dig in.

Scott

Discussion Starters:

- Outside of religious sayings, what are some of the most radical or counter culture statements ever made? (Leaders Hint: Columbus' claim that the earth was round).
- What are some of the most controversial things being said in our day today?

Discussion Questions:

1. Read together Matthew 5:1-11. If we were to rewrite these beatitudes to fit contemporary thought, how might they read? (Leader's Hint: "Blessed are the rich for theirs is true happiness.")
2. Who does our culture consider blessed or fortunate? How does this group contrast with the group of people that Jesus calls "blessed"?
3. How do you think the first four beatitudes relate to each other? Is there a relationship?
4. The first beatitude tells us that God considers blessed the person who knows and embraces his spiritual poverty. Why does God value such an attitude?
5. Why is it often difficult for us to acknowledge our spiritual poverty and our daily need for help from Christ?
6. How does "poor in spirit" lead to "mourning"? In other words how are the two related?
7. What is the world's definition of meekness? Some have described biblical meekness as, "strength under control"? How do you think Jesus intended us to understand meekness? Can you name some people you consider "meek" in the sense that Jesus was using the word?
8. One day, historians will likely describe our generation as one that was ruled by unbridled passions and desires. What desires and passions seem to be propelling the direction of our culture today? What must a Christian do in order to break from the desires of our culture and instead hunger and thirst for righteousness? In other words, how do we cultivate Christ honoring desires?

Living it This Week – Ask your group to read Matthew 5:1-6 each day this week, making it a matter of prayer by asking God to build his beatitudes into your lives. Invite everyone as they go through the week, to keep their eyes open for attitudes that are contrary to Jesus' beatitudes (e.g. news stories, pop musicians, politicians). Ask them as well to keep their eyes open for attitudes that are "in- sync" with Jesus' beatitudes. Plan to share these observations at your next home group meeting.