

The *Holy Life* Bible Study Series

FOLLOWING
JESUS
THE SON

FRANK MOORE



THE FOUNDRY
PUBLISHING*

Copyright © 2021 by Frank Moore

The Foundry Publishing®
PO Box 419527
Kansas City, MO 64141
thefoundrypublishing.com

978-0-8341-4028-8

Printed in the
United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Cover design:

Interior design: Sharon Page

All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

The internet addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers in this book are accurate at the time of publication. They are provided as a resource. The Foundry Publishing does not endorse them or vouch for their content or permanence.

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|----|
| 1 | Looking In and Reaching Out | 5 |
| 2 | Salt, Light, and Yeast | 15 |
| 3 | Really Caring | 24 |
| 4 | Golden Rules for Holy Living | 35 |
| 5 | Three Sets of Two | 45 |
| 6 | Our Holiness Requires the Cross | 54 |

LOOKING IN AND REACHING OUT

MATTHEW 5:1–12

God created us in his image and longs for us to be holy just as he is holy. God's original dream for humanity included our daily relationship with him. Within that divine-human interaction, a holy heart and life emerges naturally. People tried to live holy lives throughout the Old Testament but failed to live up to God's original dream. Then Jesus came to our world, and everything changed. His life and ministry shifted the conversation about holy living in dramatic ways.

Jesus gave us some of his most profound insights into holy living in his message known as the Sermon on the Mount. The next five Bible studies will focus on key passages that call attention to various aspects of holiness.

Unfortunately, we do not have time to consider every insight of this sermon. We will view each of these five key passages through the lens of understanding holiness as we live in community with other believers and our world at large.

If you have not read the Sermon on the Mount in a while, take a few minutes to read Matthew 5–7 again. These words of Jesus have been especially meaningful to my spiritual life.

Mrs. Gertrude Taylor taught my college speech class. She wanted us to grasp the powerful insights of this sermon, so she required us to memorize this entire passage of Scripture. I found her expectations outlandish at the time but have appreciated her rigor a thousand times across the years. This is truly a life-changing message, and it offers new insights to our understanding of holiness.

READ MATTHEW 5:1–5

We refer to Matthew 5:3–9 as the Beatitudes. They all start with the word “blessed.” This word appears fifty times in the New Testament, indicating that the New Testament says a great deal about paths leading to God’s blessing. The word points to the joy that results from having our sins forgiven. The first three beatitudes point to our spiritual need and encourage us to look within. Number four focuses on the essence of holiness. The remaining three direct us to reach out to others after God fills our heart with his holy presence.

People who are poor in spirit realize their spiritual bankruptcy. They know they are sinners and hate their sins. They admit their total unworthiness in God’s sight. They realize they have nothing in their hands with which to purchase their salvation. They feel completely empty of merit toward God. Jesus promises the kingdom of heaven to those who reach this point of spiritual bankruptcy.

People who mourn represent those who strip themselves of all self-righteousness. An overwhelming sadness fills them as they come to terms with the depth of their sinfulness. They mourn the fact that they have bottomed-out spiritually. They cannot break the power of sin in their lives regardless of how hard they might try. They find themselves in a hopeless cycle of sinning. Jesus promises comfort to such people because such mourning can lead to repentance. Repentance opens the way for God to give his salvation. The word used here for comforted means “shared strength.” God shares his spiritual strength with such repentant mourners.

The meek are mild, gentle, and patient. Such people have come to terms with who they are in Christ. They have genuine Christian humility with the awareness that everything they have and are has come to them as gifts from God. Self-sufficient pride surrenders to God-given contentment. Jesus promises these people the earth as their inheritance. The rulers of the world may overrun them now, but in the end, they will share it all with Christ!

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Describe a person who has come to terms with his or her spiritual bankruptcy.

means we want to do what God wants us to do. We seek to tell the truth, to treat others justly, to speak words of comfort and encouragement, to have a good attitude, and to embrace every other act and attitude that point to Christlikeness.

Everything presented here describes holiness. Holy living involves seeking to think, act, and react like Jesus. He promises his presence to those who nurture such a strong drive to be like him.

Jesus promises that life in him is life abundant. He supplies our every need. He promises to satisfy our souls, and every longing of our hearts. When we are filled with God's presence, he brings us the greatest satisfaction life has to offer.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Think of the driving passion with which your body craves food and water.

1. How strong do the cravings get sometimes?

2. How do you respond to these cravings?

sion toward everyone. They do not display the upper hand of a superior position; they do not punish those who wrong them; they respond lovingly to their enemies. Merciful people respond like Christ. Jesus promises that God will measure mercy to them with the same measure they use toward others.

Purity of heart refers to singleness of purpose. It represents the opposite of the double-minded person of whom James spoke (James 1:8). This concept is important to our understanding of holiness. “Double-minded” or “double-souled” speaks of a person who vacillates in his or her choices between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit. Such people want God’s way in their lives, but they also want to do what they want to do. They hesitate in their purpose between God’s preferences and their own. Such people live with a divided loyalty, therefore, holiness means “to will one thing,” that is, God’s will. A pure heart desires only to please God. It lives without personal agendas or private plans for self-advancement. More than anything, a person with a pure heart wants to find and do God’s will. Jesus promises that such people will see God, both in the daily affairs of this life and in heaven for all eternity.

Peacemakers have already found peace with themselves and with their God. Therefore, they are in a good position to work toward making peace with others. They reach out to others with the olive branch that seeks to end strife, struggle, fighting, and war. As you look at the whole sweep of Scripture, you realize that of all the things God hopes for his world, peace floats to the top of the list. When we assist

in that venture, we earn special favor in his sight. He gladly calls us his children.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Give an illustration of a person showing mercy toward others.

2. How is a person who lives with singleness of purpose different from one who is divided into multiple directions and pursuits?

3. Why is peace making usually so hard to accomplish?

READ MATTHEW 5:10–12

You would think that people who looked inward and got their spiritual lives in order, then reached out to others with mercy, purity of heart, and peace would be the most honored

people in the world. Not so. Often, those who choose this path receive the reward of hardship and persecution. Christians must come to terms with the fact that they live in a world that does not always make a place for God. Therefore, their righteousness may be met with disdain. If that happens to you, rejoice and be glad. Remember, your true citizenship is in heaven.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Take sheets of paper and copy one of the two questions on each. Have enough copies for each class member to receive one of the two questions. Class members should sit in two groups. Give a question to each person. Have class participants write their answer to the question. Collect the sheets and read the responses aloud.

1. Why does our world often reward righteous living with persecution and hardship?

2. It's obvious: God's ways are the best ways. Why do people reject his ways even when they know they are the best?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. 1 Peter 1:5–8
2. Hebrews 11
3. Matthew 25:31–46

FURTHER QUESTIONS

At the end of the session, encourage class participants to place any unanswered questions on a note card, along with this session number. They should then place their cards in a box provided by the Bible study leader. Attention will be given to these questions in the last session of this study.