

## *SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS*

Jesus Restores the Heart of the Law    Matthew 5:21–6:18

*“You have heard that it was said....But I tell you....”* Matthew 5:38a, 39a

Days 1 and 2: Read Matthew 5:21–48.

1. This passage contrasts the meaning of the Law according to *religious tradition* and the Law according to *Jesus*. Fill in the chart to highlight the differences.

	<i>“You have heard that it was said....”</i>	<i>“But I tell you....”</i>
5:21-26		
5:27-30		
5:31-32		
5:33-37		
5:38-42		
5:43-48		

2. The Jewish religious leaders had taken the “heart” out of the Law by interpreting it in ways that were merely external.
- a. Why did they do this? (Rom. 9:31–10:4)
  
  
  
  - b. What are the ways you do this as well?
3. Jesus raises the bar by interpreting the Law in a way that penetrates to the innermost recesses of the heart. The resulting standard is impossible for his followers to achieve. (Consider verse 48.) Why does Jesus do this? (Rom. 3:19–24) What response do you think Jesus wants his followers (including you) to have to his lofty calling?
4. Look again at the chart. What does column two require of us that column one does not? (Is. 29:13)

Days 3 and 4: Read Matthew 6:1–18.

5. What three areas of religious devotion does Jesus focus on? What do you think are God’s intentions for these practices?

6. What title does Jesus give to people who perform their acts of righteousness before men, in order to be seen by them? (vv.2, 5, 16)

How do these people make sure they are noticed by others when they do the following:

Give (v.2):

Pray (v.5):

Fast (v.16):

7. What reward do those who practice their righteousness before others receive? What reward do they miss out on?
8. Consider your desire for the praise of men or the approval of others. What makes it so attractive? How does it feel when you don't get it? Why is an empty reward? What do you do to try and get it?
9. Christian teaching often exhorts believers to do things from "pure" motives. This is often understood to mean doing things with no thought of reward or personal gain. On the contrary what does Jesus hold out as motivation? (vv. 4, 6, 18)
10. Are doing things in "secret" and holding out for the Father's reward difficult for you? Why?

#### Day 5: Read Matthew 6:9-15.

11. This prayer of Jesus can be divided into two parts:

What is the focus of verses 9-10? \_\_\_\_\_ Verses 11-13? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What do you think is the importance of each of the elements in the model prayer of Jesus?
- a. Our Father in heaven:
  - b. Hallowed be your name:
  - c. Your kingdom come:
  - d. Your will be done:
  - e. Give us today our daily bread:
  - f. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors:
  - g. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one:
13. How does Jesus make clear the importance of forgiving one another? (vv. 14, 15)

What is the motive for forgiving others? (Eph. 4:32) \* (Mt.18:23-34)

14. Think about your prayer life. How does the model given by Jesus encourage or challenge you as you pray?

\* The  symbol identifies verses for further study.