



CAMPUS
MINISTRY
TODAY

A LINE IN **THE SAND**

Matthew 7 Bible Study

created by
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This Bible study has been created so that anyone might be able to interact with the teachings of Christ about the kingdom of God in the end of the Sermon on the Mount. At the end of Matthew 7, we see Jesus drawing a line in the sand separating those in the kingdom of God and those outside the kingdom of God. He does this by laying out; two paths, two trees, two confessions and two foundations. In this study, we will discuss in depth the purpose of Christ's teaching and how it affects each of us.

— Answers to the discussion questions are on the last two pages.

Week 1: The Two Paths

Discussion Question: If all of us are on a spiritual journey, do you think it's possible to know the destination?

Main Text: Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

1. Is the first statement from Jesus a command or a suggestion? What does this show us about His character?
2. Why do you think the wide path is easier to enter?

3. Why does it make sense that more people are on the wide path?

4. What do you think Jesus means by the two destinations in this passage?

5. In John 10 Jesus says “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep... Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved.” What connection does Jesus being “the gate” have with our passage in Matthew 7?

Personal Reflection: In verse 13 Jesus says “enter.” It is clear in the language that He uses that there is a point where we start “narrow path” living. Have you started down the narrow path?

Week 2: The Two Trees

Recap: During our last study we covered the the first of four different pictures Jesus gives us at the end of His famous sermon on the mount, the two paths. We said that Jesus commands that we enter the narrow gate which leads to life and that Jesus Himself is the gate by which we enter the path to eternal life. This week we turn our attention to the second section of our study, the two trees.

Discussion Question: Whether it's a purse, watch, an iPhone, or a \$100 bill, how can you know the difference between a counterfeit and the real deal?

Main Text: Matthew 7:15-20

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”

1. What is a false prophet? What are some words you might use to describe them?
2. How does the outward presentation of a false prophet differ from the inward reality?
3. What does Jesus mean by “You will recognize them by their fruits?”
4. Why does it make sense that a healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a diseased tree bear good fruit?

5. If “fruit” is our actions, why won’t changing our fruit get us to heaven?

6. In John 15 Jesus says, “I am the true vine... If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing.” What connection does Jesus being the true vine have to our passage about bearing fruit?

Personal Reflection: In verse 16 and verse 20 Jesus says, “You will know them by their fruits.” As you think about the fruits in your life, what does it reveal to you about your life?

Week 3: The Two Confessions

Recap: During our last study of the end of the Sermon on the Mount we looked at the “two trees” Jesus refers to and how the fruits in our life can help us diagnose where we stand with God. This week we turn our attention to the third section of our study, the two confessions.

Discussion Question: They say if you talk the talk, you better be able to walk the walk. Describe a time when someone talked the talk but couldn’t walk the walk.

Main Text: Matthew 7:21-23

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

1. What would you say to God if He asked you “why should I let you into the kingdom of heaven?” What do these people say?
2. Can a person get into the kingdom of heaven by their works? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think it’s so important that God claims to know us when we approach Him as opposed to our claim to know Him?

4. Describe the things these people put their hope in for acceptance before God. What are some common things you see people around you putting their hope in for acceptance before God?

5. Though it seems like these people are doing good works and bearing “good fruit” Jesus is able to perceive that their works are not works of righteousness and in line with the will of God. Considering this, how can we know if we’re doing the right things with a motive to please God?

Unlike us, Jesus did all of the right things with all of the right motives. In 1 Peter we learn “(Jesus) committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth... He himself bore our sin in his body on the tree.” While we are prone to putting our hope in things outside of Christ’s atoning death for us and even doing the right things with a selfish heart, Jesus “bore our sin,” even the “damnable good works” that we are prone to trusting in.

Personal Reflection: In Jeremiah 17:10 God says “I search the heart...” How does the reality that Jesus knows your heart encourage you to be honest with Him? Where is your heart?

Week 4: The Two Foundations

Recap: Last week we looked at the “two confessions” and learned that God can see not only what we say or do, but the motives that drive our words and actions. In our final week of this study in Matthew 7 we will look at the “two foundations.”

Discussion Question: In the hardest times of life, what do we run to for comfort, safety, and peace?

Main Text: Matthew 7:24-27

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

1. What do the two different foundations in the passage represent?
2. What is required to build your house on the rock and why is it so difficult for us to do?
3. Why is it so dangerous to know what God says and not do it?
4. What kind of storms do we go through in life and what does it reveal to us?

5. Why do so many people wait until the storms of life to learn to obey God?

6. Throughout the Psalms we learn God is a rock and a refuge, a stronghold and a fortress for us. At the end of this sermon what is Jesus saying to us about His words and His character and what does this mean for our life?

Personal Reflection: In Isaiah 28 and 29 God is depicted as a judge who will bring justice by visiting His people “with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.” If the greatest storm is enduring the judgment of God without Christ as a Savior, what would keep you from trusting Him now?

Answers

Week 1: The Two Paths

1. It's a command, showing us that Jesus has authority concerning eternal life.
2. The wide path is easier to enter because it's in our nature. It's popular and easy.
3. The wide path is far easier to stay on because it requires less sacrifice and again it's full of people.
4. By destruction Jesus means hell, the place of eternal torment receiving God's wrath for your sin. By life Jesus means heaven, the sinless, painless, glorious place God has prepared for those who put their faith in Him.
5. Share the bridge diagram here.

Week 2: The Two Trees

1. A person who claims to have a message from God Himself but they are only lying. Some words to describe them would be fake, fraud, impostor.
2. The false prophet presents himself as gentle, innocent, and harmless, but inside his motives are to bring destruction and harm. A sheep is a gentle, ignorant, needy animal, while a wolf is a harmful hunter and predator.
3. Jesus is giving us insight into the essence of proper judgment and it's quite simple: you will know the nature of person by the fruit they bear in their life.
4. Simply, the tree will produce fruit from its own nature. Therefore, a healthy tree will only bear good fruit and a diseased tree diseased fruit.
5. We may be able to change the appearance of certain things in our lives but we cannot change our nature. The tree's nature needs to change (its seed) not only its fruit. Our seed is our heart. With a heart change comes a nature change.
6. Unless we receive Christ and the new birth we will never have a new nature and therefore bear good fruit.

Week 3: The Two Confessions

1. These people remind God of all of their greatest works. Their spiritual stat sheet.
2. No we cannot get to heaven by our works because God is a perfect and just God with a perfect standard and even our best works are stained with sin.
3. It doesn't matter much if we say we know God, but it matters if He knows us, because His judgement determines our eternal fate.
4. These were religious, miraculous, powerful things. If they had actually done these things it would seem impossible that they were not right with God.

5. A heart that has been transformed by the gospel desires to please God, not only for what we receive from Him but the pattern of our life is to serve Him because He Himself is our greatest treasure.

Week 4: The Two Foundations

1. The foundation of rock represents one who has listened and obeyed the words of God, putting their trust in Him. The foundation of sand represents those who do not obey God and His word.
2. It is so difficult to obey God because often we think we know best and we aren't willing to trust in Him and walk by faith.
3. We can be deceived by what we know when we do not do it and it will lead to destruction.
4. The storms or trials in our life reveal to us the true hope and trust of our hearts.
5. It's when we realize that God is all we have that is constant, trustworthy, and unchanging that we see He is all we truly need.
6. He's helping us to see that obedience to His word & trust in His perfect character gives us the greatest security through the temporal and eternal storms of life.