

**BEFORE THE SESSION:**

- Pray for each of your group members by name
- Look over the questions on the right and choose the ones that are most appropriate for your small group. If you're really feeling motivated, you might even think of a few on your own.
- Think through how you might prompt your group a little if they have difficulty getting started in discussion.
- Take a look at the accountability question below. Lead members to gather one on one or in same sex clusters to discuss it over coffee this week.

**THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA**

Jesus taught us how a redeemed life should be lived.

**ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION**

Take some time to read through the Beatitudes in Matt. 5:3-12 very carefully. Which of the Beatitudes do you need to work on the most in your life?

**TO PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK:**

Read Matthew 10, 13-16; Mark 4-8; Luke 8-9; John 6

**AS YOU READ...**

...Think about what God's plan is for your life.

**CONNECT****(10 min.)**

Choose one or both of the following questions to begin your time together as a group.

1. **When you want to get away from people, where do you go and what do you do?**
2. **What's the best sermon you've ever heard? What made this sermon so memorable?**

**EXPLORE****(40 min.)**

Say something like, "Today we will be looking at some of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount." Then guide your group through these questions.

3. **If you were in worship this week, what statement or experience stood out to you? What stood out during last week's reading?**

**(Leader:** Take some time to discuss any questions that may have arisen as your members read through this week's assigned reading.)

4. **Read Matthew 5:1-12. How do the eight Beatitudes relate to the promises that follow them? How are the Beatitudes related to being salt and light (vv. 13-16)?**
5. **What did Jesus mean by saying he came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets in Matthew 5:17-18 (see Scripture Notes)?**
6. **Read Matthew 6:1-18. What does this passage tell you about the approach Jesus wants us to have towards giving, prayer, and fasting? How can we make sure we don't use certain religious disciplines to impress others?**
7. **What central truth about God does Jesus stress in Matthew 7:7-12? How have you experienced this in your life?**
8. **Read Matthew 7:13-14. In living your life, do you tend to walk more on the broad road or the narrow road? What makes the broad road most tempting for you? What makes the narrow road more difficult? Rewarding?**

**TRANSFORM****(10 min.)**

Wrap up your time by recalling a few things from your meeting that stood out to you. Then, ask the following question and pray together.

9. **Today we looked at some of the difficult things Jesus taught about in the Sermon on the Mount. Which one of these teachings do you need to work on this week so that you can be "light and salt" to those around you?**

Take some time now to pray for each other. End your prayer time today by praying the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) together as a group.

# This Week's Study Notes:

## Scripture Notes

**Matthew 5:13** Salt was a very valuable commodity in ancient times. Jesus was attesting to the value of His disciples in the world. The disciples are to flavor the world around them with God's love and direction; and they are to preserve that which is valuable in life from the spoilage of sin and hate.

**Matthew 5:14** Light is another basic element of life. The function of light is to illuminate the darkness. This is an image for the truth believers are to bring to the world. Israel was to be a light for the Gentiles or the nations. That function is now passed on to the followers of Jesus.

### Matthew 5:17

The Law referred to the first five books of the Old Testament, while the Prophets referred to the Major and Minor Prophets, as well as the Historical Books. By His teaching Jesus seeks to give expression to the intention of the Law. In contrast, for all their concern about the Law (and by their preoccupation with its details), the Pharisees and other religious leaders often overlooked its central purpose.

### Matthew 6:1

In general terms, Jesus makes it clear that His followers are not to seek to make themselves look good by making a public display of religious devotion.

**Matthew 7:7-8** When we seek the kingdom, God answers our requests for our needs. This is not to say God will grant requests made out of the greed of one who seeks self-enhancement, but initiative and perseverance play an important role.

**Matthew 7:13** This is the way of the secular world that stands in contrast to the values taught in the Sermon on the Mount. This is where the "natural" way of the secular world leads.

**Matthew 7:14** The narrower way is the way of life advocated by the Sermon. This way leads to an inner wholeness marked by the presence of God and fulfilling human relationships.

## Leader Tips

### AS YOU READ THIS WEEK...

- Think about and pray for each member of your small group.
- Think through the following questions:
  1. Whom does God bring to mind as I read these verses? Why?
  2. What needs to change in my own life as a result of what I'm reading?
  3. Whom do I need to tell about these verses?

### FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY WE RECOMMEND...

- Bible Commentary: [Bible.org](http://Bible.org)
- Bible Commentary: [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org)
- Pronouncing Biblical Words: [Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm](http://Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm)

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