

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 29, 2013

Passage: Matthew 5:13-16

Memory Passage: Matthew 5:13-16 (and review your memory of Matthew 5:1-12)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 5:1-12:** By way of review: What does it look like to be persecuted for righteousness' sake? Explain the blessing one receives when this happens.
- (b) Explain how believers are reviled, persecuted, and falsely accused of evil "on (Jesus') account." How can you, a believer, "rejoice & be glad" in times like these? What reward awaits you in heaven, and how does this affect your rejoicing?
- (c) Write at least 3 applications from last week (from your study, your Sunday school discussion, or the sermon) that you are going to be intentional about implementing in your life this week.
- (d) *Family:* Lead your family through a review of what you learned last week, and review ways that your family can apply what you learned. You may use (a) – (c) above if you need help structuring the review.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 5:13-16.** Jesus moves in these verses from the Beatitudes to the believers' influence on the world by using the metaphor of salt. Think about life in the first century and write down all the ways in which salt would have been used.
- (b) **Read Lev. 2:13; Numb. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:1-12.** What do you learn in these passages about salt? What did it represent with regard to God and His actions toward His people? What did it represent concerning the throne of David?
- (c) What does Jesus mean when He says that believers are the "salt of the earth?" Is this an indicative (statement of fact or being) or imperative (command)? What effects do believers have on the world around them that are captured with the metaphor of salt?
- (d) How does the metaphor of a believer being the salt of the earth relate to or flow from the Beatitudes?
- (e) *Family:* Lead your family through (a) – (d) above. Help them to understand that in the first century (as well as today, but it was much more important in the 1st century) salt was used to purify, season, and preserve. It could also be used to destroy (nothing would grow where salt was sown). Believers living out their faith in the midst of the lost world around them serve to preserve the world in which they live and season & purify it with their presence. This is so because they live out the beatitudes, which helps evil not to prosper, godly behavior to reign, and the character of Christ to be seen.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 5:13-15.** How does real salt lose its taste? What is the answer to the question, "How shall its saltiness be restored?" Is there any use at all for salt that has lost its saltiness?
- (b) How does this part of the metaphor translate into the real life of the believer? What does it mean for a believer to lose his/her saltiness in the world? What hope is there for a believer who is not functioning as salt in their world?
- (c) Write down at least 3 ways that you experience being salt in your world. Also think of 3 more ways that you could be a stronger influence in the world in which you daily live out your faith. Again, be specific so your testimony and desires can encourage others in your class, and that their testimonies and desires can encourage and motivate you!
- (d) *Family:* Lead your family through (a) – (c) above.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 5:13-16; John 8:12, 9:5.** How do you reconcile the teaching that Jesus is the light of the world and believers are also the light of the world? Can both be true, and if they are (of course they are; the Bible says both ☺!), how are they both true? Where do believers get the light that they are to let shine (5:15)? In what ways are believers the light of the world?
- (b) Explain the 2 images used in 5:14b-15. What ideas does Jesus intend us to understand by His use of these word pictures?
- (c) Explain how Jesus' phrase, "in the same way" connects vs. 15 & 16 (be specific, using the thoughts Jesus intends for us to understand by both word pictures).
- (d) What are some ways that you routinely put your light under a basket? Consider this: oftentimes when believers inhibit their light from shining we think of it as a passive act: "Well, I just did not witness/preach/serve/minister/love/bear/exercise patience/etc." However, considering that the statement "You are the light of the world" is an indicative (statement of being), it

requires us to take an active role in smothering our light. How will you take more of an initiative to “let your light shine” before others, specifically in the areas you listed where you routinely put your light under a basket?

(e) *Family*: Lead your family through (a) – (d) above. Help them understand that Jesus is THE Light of the world, and when we are saved we then possess His light, the light of the kingdom. We can only be the light of the world because He is the ultimate Light, but it is also believers, and only believers, who are the reflectors of His light in this world. What a joyful experience! Also help them understand that just as a city on a hill could never be hidden unless the lights were all turned off, believers manifest the light of Jesus everywhere they go. But there are times that we actively sin and refuse to act as Jesus would act (serving, ministering, loving, preaching, etc.), which is just as silly as turning on a lamp intended to light up a room and then putting it under a basket so that the light does not shine (which is its sole purpose!). Help them to see specific ways that they can let their light shine. Even though sometimes it might seem like their lives are unimportant because they are young or don’t get out into the world much, if they possess the light of Christ they ARE the light of the world!

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 5:13-16; Is. 42:5-9.** What are the “good works” that others around us will see, and from where do they come? Do the “others” include lost people? What will be the response of the others when they see these good works?

(b) What similarities do you see between the Isaiah passage (which is part of the first of four Suffering Servant passages in Isaiah which speak of the Messiah) and Matt. 5:14-16?

(c) Are you ever tempted to receive the glory for the good works that you do? Think carefully about this, because it is very easy to speak with our mouth, “All glory to God!” and sing with our heart, “All glory to me!” How do these passages help you combat this sin of pride?

(d) How do the recent changes in the religious, political, social, and moral fabrics of our society present believers with an even greater chance to let our light shine in the coming years? What temptations will we (and you specifically) need to overcome in order to embrace this wonderful opportunity?

(e) What experiences have you had in which you have let your light shine and others have given glory to God? Be ready to share these for the encouragement of your class, and to give testimony to the truth of the Scriptures in your life.

(f) *Family*: Lead your family through (a) – (e) above. Be ready with your own testimony of times in which you put your light under a basket and times in which you let it shine, and what resulted from each. Help them to not be discouraged about the recent turns of events in our society by reminding them that God has been in complete control of each one, and the role of a Christian in their society has not changed since Jesus pronounced these words.

DATE: September 29, 2013

PASSAGE: Matthew 5:13-16

You Are Salt & Light!

In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus makes 2 statements about the believer’s influence on the world.