

matthew experiencing the presence of the Kingdom

----> **connect...** In Matthew this week we are going to learn about the loving care of our Father and how to deal with worry. Psalm 139 is a great psalm to meditate on when we are tempted to worry. Use it this week to connect with your Father and praise Him for being so intimately aware of you. Start with Psalm 139:1-4.

----> **discover...** Quickly review your lesson from last week. What lesson are you applying to your own life?

1. Read Matthew 6:16-18. The Jewish leaders of that day made it very obvious to the people when they were fasting. They weren't obedient to the law out of devotion to God, but in order to be seen as righteous before men. Why do you think Jesus is so concerned about motives? _____
2. Matthew 6:19-24 touches us a little closer to home. "Kingdom living" radically changes our perspective on life. What are verses 19-21 saying? _____
 - a. What's the bottom line? (v. 21) _____
3. Verses 22-23 are a little confusing. Keeping them in context, how might these verses relate to where we "focus" our attention? (Note: the word translated as "good" is literally "single." "Bad eye" is a metaphor for "stinginess" and "jealousy"). _____
4. Carefully read verse 24. What principle does Jesus state? _____
 - a. Read Luke's account of this in Luke 16:13-15. Who also heard this teaching? What was their response? (v. 14) _____
 - b. What does Jesus say to them? _____
 - c. How does God feel about the things man values highly? _____
 - i. What does man value highly? _____
 - ii. What does God value highly? _____
 - iii. What are some of your thoughts about this? _____

----> **consider...** As we walk with Jesus, we will be conformed to His value system. It's His work in us, but we need to cooperate (surrender). He is a patient teacher. He leads just one step at a time. Will you ask Him these simple questions? "Lord, where is my focus" What do I highly value?" Be silent before Him and slowly re-read verses Matthew 6:19-24.

----> **apply...** In your journal respond to this statement: "It is not wrong for us to possess things, but it is wrong for things to possess us." What's the difference? Begin learning Matthew 6:21 by heart.

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----> **connect...** Psalm 139:5-6.

----> **discover...** Read Matthew 6:25-34 aloud. Listen carefully.

1. Notice the first word of verse 25: "Therefore." What is a *therefore* there for? Why would the principle found in verses 19-24 be the basis for a worry-free life? _____

2. Read verses 25-27 again. What three questions does Jesus ask in this short paragraph?

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____

a. What examples of His care does He give? _____

3. Read verses 28-34. Summarize what Jesus is saying: _____

4. Look at verse 30 again. If we worry and doubt, what are we lacking? _____

a. How is our faith increased according to Romans 10-17? _____

b. Why do you think knowing the Word increases our faith? _____

c. Who is the Word? (John 1:14) _____

d. So, what is a practical way to apply Matthew 6:33? _____

5. Read Matthew 6:34 again, aloud. What is Jesus commanding? _____

a. How does Philippians 4:6 say we should handle worry? _____

----> **consider...** Are you a worrier? Do the words of Jesus comfort you? Perhaps you don't worry about food and clothes, but how about your future (tomorrow)? Or your kids? Or a thousand other things? Do you think prayer (with thanksgiving) could eliminate worry? Read Matthew 6:25-34 again praying (talking to God) as you let His words penetrate and comfort your heart.

----> **apply...** In your journal, write down your top three worries. Thank God for them (opportunity to trust) and honestly share your heart with Him. Continue learning Matthew 6:21 by heart.

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----> **connect...** Psalm 139:7-10.

----> **discover...** Jesus is teaching us about “kingdom living.” He’s pointing us to the fact that He is “on the throne.” He is LORD—He is in control... whether we acknowledge it or not. As King of His kingdom, He is also judge.

1. Read Matthew 7:1-5 along with Romans 14:4; 10-12 and James 4:11-12. Who is the only one who can truly judge a person’s motives? _____
 - a. What are some ways we judge others? _____
 - b. Who do we need to examine first before we try to help our brother? Why? _____

2. Matthew 7:6 suggests that there is a time to use discernment. What does it say? (“Pearls” refers to the holy and valuable things of God). _____
 - a. What does Ecclesiastes 3:7 say? _____
 - b. Jesus himself was silent before some officials. He was exercising this truth. What does this tell you about the treasure we’ve been given? _____

3. Read Matthew 7:7-12. In Matthew 5:1–6:6 we have been instructed to exercise great wisdom and discipline. With those verses in mind, why do you think Jesus brings up prayer at this point? (Note: these are present tense imperative—keep asking, seeking, knocking). _____
 - a. What kinds of gifts does God give to His children? (Matt. 7:11) _____
 - b. Might His idea of “good” differ from ours? Share your thoughts. _____
 - c. What does verse 12 say? _____
 - d. How do you think this one principle can fulfill all the commandments of God? _____

----> **consider...** Our goal in studying God’s Word is to “internalize” it—make it ours; allowing it to penetrate past our minds and into our hearts which results in change. This takes TIME (remember we are cultivating a *relationship* not learning a religion). Please don’t rush. Don’t let Bible study become a check-off point on your to-do list.

Spend a few moments now asking God for what you need—seeking Him—knocking on His door—inviting Him to equip you to exercise “kingdom living.” What do you need?

----> **apply...** Journal your thoughts from your study today. Keep learning Matthew 6:21.

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----> **connect...** Psalm 139. Has worry ever clouded your vision and caused darkness to envelop you? Praise God with Psalm 139:11-12.

----> **discover...** Jesus knows that the road to His kingdom is not the popular one.

1. What does He say in Matthew 7:13-14? _____

- a. What does John 10:7-9 say about the gate? _____

- b. Where does the wide road lead to? _____
- c. How about the narrow road? _____
- d. Does Jesus make any apologies for this fact? _____

----> **consider...** Following Jesus will cost us. The narrow path is not an easy one. Has trusting Christ as your Savior and Lord cost you anything? Honestly discuss this with your Father.

----> **discover...** Jesus is illustrating the fact that following Him will change your life!

2. Read Matthew 7:15-23. How do we recognize true followers of Christ? (v. 16) _____

- a. Review verses 21-23. Do we enter the kingdom of heaven by having the right vocabulary? _____
- b. Do we enter the kingdom of heaven by being involved in religious activities? _____
- c. Who will enter? (v. 21) _____
 - i. Matthew 12:50 _____
 - ii. Romans 2:13 _____
 - iii. James 1:22 _____

3. Scripture is **clear** that we are not saved by our actions (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:24; 4:2; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4-5); however, our obedience is the "fruit" that proves we have been saved. Do you see the difference? Share your thoughts. _____

----> **consider...** Ask yourself: Is following Jesus changing my life? Do I see attitudes, priorities, response changing in me? Reflect back with your Father.

----> **apply...** Keep learning Matthew 6:21.

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----> **connect...** How long has God been lovingly handling you? Praise Him with Psalm 139:13-16. Let these truths sink in! You are in **good** hands.

----> **discover...** The *Two Ways* (v. 13-14) tell us to examine ourselves; the *Two Trees* (v. 15-23) tell us to evaluate our lives—have they really changed? And now the *Two Houses* remind us that true faith will stand.

1. Read Matthew 7:24-27 slowly, aloud.
 - a. What distinguishes the man who built his house on the rock from the one who built his house on the sand? _____
 - b. Why did the wise man’s house stand? _____
 - c. Why did the foolish man’s fall? _____
 - d. What is the sign of **true** faith? _____

2. If we compare our lives to building a house what should be our foundation? _____

3. The storm refers to trials in this life! How can this foundation help us when we face crises and trials?

4. The storm also refers to coming judgment by God. We have nothing to fear if we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (the Rock). He is our foundation of faith. How does James sum up the principle of obedience in James 1:22-25? _____

- a. How does this apply to us? _____

----> **consider...** Obedience is clearly optional; however, for the true believer it becomes inevitable, because true believers focus on loving the Lord. Jesus said clearly, “If you love Me, you will obey Me” (John 14:15). We’ve had a **full** week of lessons from the words of our Lord. We just need to “apply” one step at a time. Ask Him what “step of obedience” He wants you to take today.

----> **apply...** Write down your step in your journal. Would you be willing to share it with your small group? Recite Matthew 6:21.

