

Dear Leader,

I want you to know how grateful we are to God for your partnership as together we nurture and help the church grow. Paul told Timothy: “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1-3).

As we move through the study I want you to be asking yourself and your group the following questions:

- What does the Word of God say?
- What does this passage mean?
- What does this passage mean to me? How can I apply what Jesus is teaching to my life today?

If you have these three questions in mind and search for their answers, then this course will be truly fruitful and profitable in your life. I trust that as we study the Sermon on the Mount and then as you teach it, you will grow in your relationship with Christ Jesus. The thoughts and ideas given in this introduction are to help you be more effective in your study as well as your teaching. It is our prayer that the experience of this study will be a defining moment in your spiritual life and will lay a strong foundation for continued growth in your life and in the lives of those you will be leading.

Praying for His blessing upon you,

Dick Woodward
Pastor and author of the Mini Bible College

LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Mini Bible College has prepared this devotionally practical survey of the foundational books of the Bible. Your role as leader is to guide your group through the study sessions and exercises, helping them to understand the truth, discover the eternal principles, and, most importantly, apply them to their lives. This is a survey study that will take about four months and is designed to be more than just a course. This study is part of a strategic plan to provide you with the tools to nurture and grow personally and to help your church grow both spiritually and numerically.

To help you, we have provided the following tools:

- This Leader's Guide
- Report forms
- Audio of the Sermon on the Mount series (Audio Lessons Sermon on the Mount 1-30)
- A study booklet on the Sermon on the Mount
- A set of workbooks for the students

Before class

- Personally start inviting people to come to this spiritual banquet. "Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests" (Matthew 22:9-10).
- Prepare yourself in prayer for those who will attend. If possible, pray for them by name. Only God can change the hearts of people, and prayer is the most powerful tool. "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1).
- Ask for help. Do not try to do everything yourself. Invite one or two people to help with music, singing, greeting, and keeping records.
- Review the lesson and understand the lesson objective.
- Become familiar with the material; listen, read, and study each lesson and memorize the Bible verse before class time.
- Be sure all materials are ready for each class.
- Make sure the meeting area is adequate and comfortable for the class.

During Class

(Remember to try to keep the class time to one hour and a half.)

- Greet everyone as they arrive. Remember how nice it is when you are welcomed? Extend God's welcome to all. Have someone serve as the greeter and introduce people to one another if they are not already acquainted.
- Open with a time of worship and prayer, asking God to help you and each one understand and apply God's Word to your lives.
- Recite the memory verse.
- Listen to the audio lesson.

- Work through the workbook, inviting discussion with a focus on application. We trust the questions will raise interesting discussion and understanding that will lead to application. If the group is large (more than 10), consider dividing it into smaller groups of three or four people to encourage discussion. Be sure to monitor the time and be careful that the conversation does not detract from the focus of the lesson and the study of God's Word.
- Thank all for coming and encourage attendance at the next class.
- Challenge the students to invite others to join the Bible study.
- Encourage the students to memorize the biblical passages of the lessons each week.

After Each Class

- Gather up all materials.
- Restore the meeting room to the proper order. Leave things more orderly than you found them.
- Fill out and file report forms.
- If you are meeting in someone's home, be sure to thank them for their hospitality.

Special Instructions for Teaching Auditory Learners

It is important to remember that those who cannot read and write learn and retain information differently than those of us who are literate. The auditory learners learn from listening and telling what they have heard. Illiteracy was not an obstacle in Jesus' day. It is good to remember and even tell those in your class that most of the disciples and the majority of the people who first shared and spread the Gospel could not read or write.

In many ways, auditory learners have a greater capacity to learn what they hear than we who must write something down to remember it. Take the time, therefore, to allow your students to hear the Scripture and the lessons, pausing the message and even going back to listen again to a portion if it was not understood, and then allow them to respond to questions. When auditory learners can "story back"—tell in their own words what they have heard and learned—it indicates that they have properly grasped the principles. Therefore, use the study questions to guide the study time as it will help in the learning process. Ask the questions out loud and encourage all to participate. This will lead them into a deeper understanding of God's Word and a stronger relationship with His Son, Jesus the Christ.

The Context of the Sermon on the Mount

Chapter 1

Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 1



Objective: To understand the context of one of Jesus' greatest sermons, the Sermon on the Mount. (Text: Matthew 4:23–5:12)



Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

—Matthew 4:23-24

The Sermon on the Mount is considered to be one of Jesus' most important discourses and one of His most foundational teachings, considered to hold the essence of Jesus' teaching. Even many who are not Christians believe this sermon is one of the most important messages ever taught. There is perhaps no passage in the Bible that is quoted more and understood less than this teaching in Matthew 5-7.

Many people had followed Jesus because of His teaching, preaching, and healing. He preached the Sermon on the Mount when a crowd had gathered around Him near the Sea of Galilee. He went up on a mountain and invited some of His disciples to go with Him. This divided the multitude into two groups: those at the bottom of the mountain, who represented all the problems of humanity, and those at a higher level who wanted to be part of His solution to the problems. Jesus began to teach and train His followers so they could go into the world with His message and in His strength.



1. True or **false**? None of the other gospels mentions Jesus teaching on a mountain.
2. **True** or false? After preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples.
3. True or **false**? In Jesus' time, those with physical and mental problems were put away in institutions, hidden from everyday life.
4. **True** or false? The Sermon on the Mount can be considered "the first Christian retreat."

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus respond when He saw the multitudes?
 - a. He grew discouraged and depressed.
 - b. He grew proud because of His popularity.
 - c. He was bothered by so many asking for attention.
 - d. He began training followers to meet their needs.**
6. Who did Jesus preach to in the Sermon on the Mount?
 - a. The entire multitude
 - b. Only the hurting and hungry people at the bottom of the mountain
 - c. Only the disciples who came to a higher level**
 - d. Only to Matthew, who wrote all His words down
7. Why did Jesus teach a select group of followers?
 - a. So they could impress others with their knowledge
 - b. To train them to be a part of His answer for the world**
 - c. To test His message to see if it was popular
 - d. Because His message is not meant for everyone
8. Which of the following were important parts of Jesus' ministry?
 - a. Preaching
 - b. Healing
 - c. Training
 - d. All of the above**
9. What kinds of problems did Jesus address?
 - a. Mental
 - b. Physical
 - c. Spiritual
 - d. All of the above**



What kind of disciple or “deputy” of Jesus do you want to be? Would you rather be one of the many who hears Jesus or one of the few who joins with Him to be part of the solution?



Thank God for His Word and for the teaching of Jesus, and for His mission to meet the needs of all people. Ask Him to teach you how to be part of His solution for the world.



Going Deeper

1. Why were so many people following Jesus to this mountain? What were their needs/desires?

2. Why was Jesus seated teaching His disciples when there were so many other people there?

3. What was the strategy of Jesus when He taught the Sermon on the Mount? _____

4. What kinds of problems did Jesus address with this teaching? _____

5. What are the principle differences between those who are “part of the problem” and those who become “part of the solution”? _____

6. Summarize your personal application or “takeaway” from this lesson. _____

7. Considering your personal issues and relationships, how can you become one who really “hears” and becomes part of the solution? _____
