**BCM Bible Study: April 15/16, 2020**

**Matthew 6:1-18: True and False Devotion**

Check In: Follow up on last week’s challenges:

1. Spend time reflecting on the teaching about divorce. Perhaps you need to experience healing, re-assess your mindset about dating, or talk with a serious significant other.
2. Practice truthfulness. Journal about your experience and struggles you encounter.
3. Is there someone toward whom you need to sacrifice self-interest and go above and beyond in serving their interest? What would that look like for you?
4. Who are your enemies? Pray for them each day and do something to love them.

Private Righteousness: **Read Matthew 6:1**

* Jesus is now turning to discuss how to practice righteousness with regard to three areas of our spiritual lives: giving, prayer, and fasting. What is the principle Jesus sets out in verse 1?
	+ What is the heart issue/motive that Jesus is pointing out here?
	+ In what ways do you struggle to want to earn human approval?
	+ Jesus will continually say (v.2, 5, 16) that if you seek human approval that is your reward. What is the reward spoke of in v. 1? How does this differ from the reward of human approval?

Giving: **Read Matthew 6:2-4**

* What does verse 2 look like in real life? Have you seen this in action?
* What does it mean to be a hypocrite?
	+ The common definition of hypocrisy is to deceive someone. That is, you speak one way and act another, don’t walk the talk, or live different lives depending on your audience. R.T. France points out the tragic reality of being a hypocrite: “they are not so much deceivers as disastrously self-deceived.” These almsgivers actually gave money. The problem was that they were self-deceived, seeking favor from people. Moreover, they are completely out of touch with God’s understanding of righteousness. **Read Mark 12:41-44.**
	+ What made the widow’s offering pleasing to Jesus?
* In what ways are you tempted to be hypocritical in your giving? What kinds of giving appeal to your pride?
* How can you give in a way that is God-honoring and embodies the principle in verses 3-4?

Prayer: **Read Matthew 6:5-8**

* What does Jesus say is wrong with the prayers of the hypocrites?
* What do hypocritical prayers look like today?How and why is our praying to be different?
* What is wrong with the prayer of the babbler? What does this indicate about his/her faith?
* If Jesus knows what we need, why should we pray?
	+ Prayer is fundamentally an expression of the relationship of trust which follows from knowing God and “Father.” Prayer is not a method of getting things from God. Instead, we come to him, trusting that he will give us all that we need. Prayer, in this way, is an exercise of faith.
* What aspect of the hypocritical prayer is most convicting to you?

The Lord’s Prayer: Jesus breaks from the normal structure of the passage to give us a prayer model: **Read Matthew 6:9-15**

* This prayer models two important facets of prayer: worship and petition (requests). Where do you see each of these things in the Lord’sPrayer? (there are 3 of each)
* What does it mean to keep to “hallow” or “keep holy” God’s name?
* When we pray for God’s kingdom to come and will to be done, what are we praying for?
	+ Verses 9-10 express a fundamental trust in the plan of our Heavenly Father. We are submitting ourselves to his plan for our life even if that conflicts with our own desires. **Read 1 John 5:14-15.**
	+ Why is it hard for you to submit to God’s plan? What area of your life is hard to release control of?
	+ In what way do you have a burning desire to see God’s kingdom come? How might this indicate that *you* may be an answer to this prayer?
* Why are verses 9-10 essential to the requests in verses 11-13?
	+ Which of these three requests (vv.11-13) connect with you the most? Why?
	+ Why do you think Jesus reiterates his comments about forgiveness in verses 14-15?
* In what way do your prayers need to more closely resemble this prayer?

Fasting: **Read Matthew 6:16-18**

* What is fasting? What is its purpose?
	+ Simply put, fasting is a removal of something from everyday life in order to focus on God or seek him out in prayer. Time permitting, take a look at Daniel 10 or Isaiah 58.
* What was the problem with the hypocrites’ fasting?
* How do modern-day hypocrites abuse the discipline of fasting to receive glory for themselves rather than for God?
* Why do you think fasting is not widely practiced today?
* What are some ways modern Christians can fast?

Conclusion: **Read Matthew 5:16**.

* How can we live out both Matthew 5:16 and 6:1?
* What would change about your life if you were to focus on living with an audience of One?

Here are some challenges this week:

1. Give something to someone without telling anyone. Be as anonymous as possible. This could even be giving your time to someone in need without telling someone else about it.
2. Set scheduled prayer times with God this week. Use the Lord’s Prayer as a model for your own prayer. Don’t simply repeat it, but expound on each part of it in your own words as it relates to your life.
3. Fast from something for a set period of time. Do this carefully if you fast from food! Check out [Cru’s fasting guide](https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html).