



Matthew 6:1-18 • January 2022

Overview

How do you know if something is the real deal? Legit? Genuine? Things we buy might look good on the outside but over time, we find out what they are really made of. Matthew shows that a major theme in Jesus' teaching was hypocrisy. He called out people who looked the part but were really just acting. In this series, we take a look at some of the practices and motivations of Jesus-followers whose inner world matches their outer one. Followers who are genuine.

Outline

1. Giving (Matthew 6:1-4)
2. Praying (Matthew 6:5-15)
3. Fasting (Matthew 6:16-18)



Week 1 • 16 January 2022 • Matthew 6:1-4

1. What's the worst "fake" you've ever bought? How did you know it wasn't genuine?
2. What do the following verses tell us about giving and why it's important? (1 Chronicles 29:14; Proverbs 31:8-9; Acts 4:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8:7-9)
3. What are some other motivations for giving? Why might they need other people to know about it?
4. What are the ways in which growth in personal generosity could be beneficial to you even if no one else knows about it?
5. What could generosity look like for you as a group? Are there needs that you see about which you could help make a difference?



Week 2 • 23 January 2022 • Matthew 6:5-15

1. What is your favourite place to pray?

2. Have a look at verses 5-8.
 - a. What are the good and bad examples of prayer that Jesus is drawing out?

 - b. How does this affect the way you have viewed or practiced prayer?

 - c. Prayer with others is obviously important (Acts 2:42, 4:24). How does Jesus' caution us as we pray with others?

3. Verses 9-13 show us the things we can be praying about daily.
 - a. What are the things that we should prioritise in prayer according to Jesus' words here?

 - b. To what extent does your personal prayer life match Jesus' priorities. Why or why not? What is one thing you could change?

4. Jesus' words on forgiveness here are not about becoming a believer. We can see this because the prayer addresses God as Father demonstrating we've already been adopted into His family. Instead this is a daily rhythm of prayer associated with a continued walk with God where we acknowledge sin knowing that it affects our experience of relationship with God. It's also the place where we ask God to help us forgive those who have offended us so that we can continue to walk in relationship with them too.

- a. Why do you think unforgiveness is so damaging? How does it impact us and the people around us?
- b. How do you know when you've actually forgiven someone? What things do you think you'd notice in your heart?
- c. Are there people right now that you are struggling to forgive? Why not take the time to pray about that together right now.

A word of caution... Be careful about sharing names and details here. Jesus' heart for reconciliation means that sometimes no one else ever needs to know (see Matt 18:15). Praying together here could just be about acknowledging your struggle with unforgiveness and asking others to pray that God would help. It could also be about committing to pray for one another every day that God would help us forgive.





Week 3 • 30 January 2022 • Matthew 6:16-18

1. What is your favourite food?

This week we looked at the discipline of fasting. In Scripture it is going without food/drink for varying lengths of time as a sign of humility. In the Old Testament it was a sign of mourning whereas in the New Testament, it is often associated with prayer and discerning God's will.

2. Have a look at Isaiah 58:6-12.
 - a. What are the purposes or outcomes of fasting you see in this passage?
 - b. What is new or surprising for you here?
3. Have you ever fasted before? What was your experience?
4. What step could you take towards a habit of fasting? How can you encourage one another in this?