



# WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS

## DIGGING DEEPER

GOOD AND BAD FRUIT

NOVEMBER 26

If Jesus was serious, then you can't fake your way into the kingdom.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your most important achievement in your life? What did it cost to get there? Was it worth it and why?

2. Read **Matthew 7:13-29**.

Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say?):

- What do you notice and what are you curious about?

Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean?)

- What do you learn about God?
- What do you learn about humanity?

Now make some applications (what's my response?)

- How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
- What should be our response to this passage?

3. Read **Matt. 7:13-14**. In what ways have you experienced difficulty in your efforts to follow Jesus and His Kingdom in your life? In what ways are you being tempted to choose the broad, easy way in life? What is needed to stay on the narrow path and how are you incorporating those things in your life?

4. Read **Matt. 7:15-20**.

- Have you ever followed someone who claimed to follow Jesus but their life said otherwise? How did that impact you and the lives of others under this person's influence?
- What caution do you take in who you listen to and follow?
- If you lead others spiritually, what checks and balances do you have to ensure you are leading with integrity? If you don't have any, how can you begin to set that up now?

5. Read **Matt. 7:21-29**. Jesus is clear that we can't fake our way into the Kingdom. Believing Jesus is King and following Him in His Kingdom ethics go hand in hand.

- If you believe Jesus is King, how seriously do you take His words?
- In what ways are His words challenging you to love God and others more?
- What next step can you take to follow Jesus and bear witness to His Kingdom in greater measure?

**Matthew 7:13-29** “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

## PRAYER

Pray through the Lord’s Prayer using the following guide:

### **Our Father, who is in heaven**

*Remember who you are praying to. Jesus uniquely addressed God as, “Father”, and as His beloved son, Jesus reveals the very nature of this God who is generous, self-giving, loving, patient, just. He is inviting us to know God and address Him with the same intimacy He experienced with the Father.*

- *Pray for God to remind you who He is as opposed to the false ways He is portrayed in the world around us and maybe even you have come to believe.*

### **Hallowed be your name**

*We were created to be reflections of God’s image to the world, in other words, to bear (represent) His name, but that image has been damaged through sin.*

- *Pray for God’s name to be lifted up as holy, that is, set apart.*
- *Think of ways God’s name is mistreated and misrepresented in both our world and in our own hearts and lives, and ask that God’s name be honored in these areas.*

### **Your Kingdom come, Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.**

*Jesus’ arrival on earth is the inauguration of God’s Kingdom- He came to reverse the curse of sin and death that wreaked havoc on His good creation. We who have trusted Christ have experienced this reversal, and yet, we are waiting for the completion of that in our hearts and in the world when He returns.*

- *Pray for God’s Kingdom to permeate the world more and more and that He would begin with us.*

Now we turn to the things we need in order for us to live well in God’s Kingdom now:

Give us this day our daily bread.

*It’s easy to view what we have as coming from our own efforts, but we need to be reminded that ALL that we have is from God and belongs to Him. This petition for DAILY bread should train us to think of our daily needs (food, water, shelter, relationships, work) as gifts and privileges that we have not, nor could not, earn. And, since this prayer is communal, we are to consider the daily needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ and how we might be the answer to their prayer for “daily bread.”*

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- *Ask God for what you need today.*
  - *Pray that we might grow in deeper dependence on God for our daily needs and be generous.*

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

*Forgiveness is a distinct marker of the Kingdom of God. Jesus absorbed our sin on the cross so that we might be treated as if we were innocent. It was the ultimate act of forgiveness. He intended us to receive that forgiveness and then for this gift to flow out into the lives of others.*

- *Acknowledge where you need forgiveness. Then, acknowledge ways others have wronged or hurt you and pray for the ability to release the need to make them pay for it in the same way that Jesus released us from that payment.*
- *Ask for God to deepen our awareness of our sin so that we know how great His gift of grace is. Then pray for that grace to spill out in the various spheres of our lives.*

Side note: Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. You don't have to be in a relationship with the person to forgive them. And, this is not easy to do, which is why Jesus knew we needed to pray this daily!

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*As Jesus faced temptation in the wilderness, we can expect to face this test of our faith, too. And as Jesus confronted evil in the wilderness, we can expect to battle evil as well. Jesus resisted this temptation and gives us the power to do the same. Following Jesus is very hard and we are going to be tempted to throw in the towel when things get tough.*

- *If there is an area of testing you are currently in, pray for the strength to endure and remain faithful to Christ.*
- *Pray that God might spare us from this kind of testing, but that if it does come, we might stand firm in our faith, trusting that God is with us and will deliver us.*



## TAKE A NEXT STEP

1. Consider thoughtfully reading or listening through the whole Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) weekly throughout the series.
2. What has the Lord been stirring up in your heart as we have looked closely at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? What would it take to lean in and listen to what He is showing you, not stopping with just hearing His words, but doing something about them?




## FOR THE PARENTS

Hey, families! Here's a look at what we're covering with your kids so you can help them continue to grow at home during the week.

### THIS WEEK

All month long we are going to be talking about how Joseph had big dreams but God's plans for him were even bigger!

**THE BIBLE: Genesis 50:20** "You attended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:20)





**THE MESSAGE:** Sometimes forgiving others seems like the hard choice, but in the end, it makes our lives happier and sweeter. Joseph still remembered what his brothers had done, but he chose to forgive them so they could reunite as a family and be happy again. We can follow Joseph's example as we face situations every day where we must choose whether to forgive others.

**THE BIG IDEA: God sees the big picture!**

### **ASK THIS**

Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation-starter that isn't,  
"So . . . how was church?"

- **Do you understand what forgiveness is? Is there someone you need to forgive today?**

### **REMEMBER THIS**

We may have wonderful dreams for our life, but God's plans for us are so much better!! Joseph went through some pretty terrible things - being thrown in a pit, put in jail for something he didn't do, and was separated from his dad, whom he loved very much. But God took care of Joseph and reminded him that he had great things for him. God wants us to remember that He will do the same thing for us. Trust Him with His plan for your life and put all your dreams in God's hands!

### **NEXT WEEK**

Next week, we start our new series called "No Room At The Inn" - where we learn all about the birth of Jesus!

