



“Call To Action”

Matthew 21

Small Group Plan

“Actions speak louder than words.”

Of course, there isn’t one action that can completely define who a person is. But there is something powerful about what we DO. Actions do speak louder than words. And repeated actions will often shape our character.

Someone will SAY they want to get together, but what they DO is repeatedly fail to show up. Someone will SAY they can be trusted, but what they DO is repeatedly lie. Someone will SAY they want to change, but what they DO is repeatedly fail to make any effort.

Which message do we end up listening to — what they SAY or what they DO?

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What is actually lost when people procrastinate?
- Why is quiet service more powerful than loud promises?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

“I WILL NOT ... I WILL”

Matthew 21:28-30

²⁸ “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ²⁹ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.”

- Who is Jesus talking to (v. 23)?
- Given this audience, what is Jesus’ purpose in telling this story?
- What do you think of the parenting style of the father in the story?
- What does his treatment of his sons tell you about God?
- Imagine, speculate — What was the first son thinking about that moved him to eventually obey his father?
- Why did the second son quickly line-up with his father, only to delay so long that he got nothing done?

THE FIRST SON ... THE SECOND SON

Matthew 21:31-32

³¹ “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

- When Jesus says, “Which of two ...” how is he pointing at his audience?
- Why doesn’t religious knowledge guarantee that we will be godly?
- What does Jesus’ audience need, that the tax collectors and prostitutes already had?

LIPS ... HEART

Matthew 15:8

*These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.*

- Describe the difference between a person’s lips and their heart.
- How can a person’s lips cover or hide what is buried deep in their heart?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Why do some initially say “no” to God, but later follow him?
- Why do some initially say “yes” to God, but later give him up?
- What did the broken people in Jesus’ day already understand that helped them respond to God?
- How can our own failure become the beginning to an open heart?
- Pray for hearts to open wider to God and for actions to move past the barriers.