



## “LIFE: Looking For Relationship”

### MATTHEW 7 Small Group Plan

The Sermon on the Mount consistently presents a radical way of life. Jesus calls those of us who follow Him to be completely different from the world in which we live. Our morality is to be deeper because it reaches our hearts. Our love is to be larger because it covers even our enemies. The message of Jesus confronts us on every level, asking us to choose which way we will live. He places before us two kinds of riches, two sources of control, two ways to dream, and now, at the end of the sermon, two gates, two roads, two crowds and two destinations. Will we be persuaded by the majority or ruled by God alone?

#### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- Where did our taste for “options” come from?
- How has this taste effected or changed us?
- How do we feel when “options” are reduced or removed?

#### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

#### — PEOPLE —

#### GATES / ROADS / CROWDS / DESTINATIONS

#### Matthew 7:13-14

<sup>13</sup> “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

- Why is the road to life “narrow”?
- Does “narrow” mean “closed-minded” or “difficult”?
- How does “broad” accurately describe the way to destruction?
- When Jesus say a few will “find” the way to life, what does this say about the character of those searching?
- Why does Jesus say those traveling to destruction will “enter” rather than “find”?

## — RELIGIOUS PEOPLE —

### TREES / FRUIT

#### Matthew 7:15-20

<sup>15</sup> “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup> By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

- Where does bad religion draw its power?
- Jesus says, “false prophets” wear “sheep’s clothing.” What disguises does bad religion wear today?
- Why does Jesus use such a vicious description as “wolf”?
- Contrast the “fruit” of bad and good religion?

## — CHRISTIAN PEOPLE —

### SINCERITY / SUBMISSION

#### Matthew 7:21

<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

- How is it possible to think of Jesus as “Lord” without submission and obedience?
- What will grow in the life of the person who continues to be in God’s presence while resisting God’s power?

## — ACTIVE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE —

### WORDS / DEEDS / RELATIONSHIP

#### Matthew 7:22-23

<sup>22</sup> 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 perform many miracles?” <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

- What is missing when someone is very involved in Christian ministry without really knowing Jesus?
- If Jesus is not in the picture — “I never knew you” — why is ministry performed — “prophecy ... miracles”?

### ***USE IT / APPLY IT ...***

- What broad roads did you travel before you met Jesus?
- How did He narrow your road or bring focus to your life?
- What did you have to leave behind in order to travel His narrow way?
- Why do people today dislike the idea that there is only one gate or road to life?
- Which “fruit of the Spirit” is especially significant to you? Why?
- Why does God put relationship even above words and deeds?
- How can we really know Jesus?
- Close with a time of quiet, personal prayer.