

Friday

Read Matthew 7:24-27. It's so easy to build on the wrong foundation. Even Christians can appreciate Christ's teachings, yet actually base their lives on values imported from the culture. Which "false foundations" have appeal to you?

- ___ Pleasure
- ___ Comfort
- ___ Fame
- ___ Possessions/Money/Nice, comfortable house
- ___ What others say or think about me
- ___ Current cultural values (I like to be cool)
- ___ Teachings I have learned that are contrary to Christ's
- ___ Other:

How does a "false foundation" endanger your life, according to Jesus?

How can you build a good foundation, according to these verses?

What are some good ways to go about that?

What neglected command of Christ will you begin obeying this week?

Ask God to help you see the real motive, or foundational value, behind every one of your commitments: Are you committed, in every area, to following Christ's teachings, or are you more concerned about some other value?

Saturday

Skim back through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7). In Matthew 7:28-29, how did the crowd react to the Sermon on the Mount?

What is the most amazing thing to you about all that Jesus said?

Which part really changed your life during this study?

Please pray for this weekend's services. Thanks!

How to Have a Great Life

1. Take the right _____

"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." *Matthew 7:13-14* (NIV)

2. Follow the right _____

"**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... 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." *Matthew 7:15-20*

In Matthew 23, Jesus describes leaders with "bad fruit":

- *Overly authoritarian (vv. 1, 8-12)*
- *Issue burdensome commands (v. 4)*
- *Love attention, titles (vv. 5-7)*
- *Convert people to a system (vv. 13-15)*
- *Focus on precise rules, not big picture (vv. 23-24)*

3. Have the right _____

"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. 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?' Then I will tell them plainly, '**I never knew you**. Away from me, you evildoers!'" *Matthew 7:21-23*

God wants a _____ not mere _____

4. Build on the right _____

"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." *Matthew 7:24-27*

Questions to ask myself:

Where is my foundation _____ ?

Where do I need to _____ ?

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." *Matthew 7:7-8*

Review of Sermon on the Mount:

Rethink Happiness (Matthew 5:1-12)

Key Verse: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (5:3)

Rethink Christianity (Matthew 5:13-20)

Key Verse: "...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (5:16)

Rethink Relationships (Matthew 5:21-48)

Key Verse: "...Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (5:47)

Rethink Honesty (Matthew 5:33-37)

Key Verse: "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." (5:7)

Rethink Religion (Matthew 6:1-18)

Key Verse: "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them." (6:1)

Rethink Money (Matthew 6:19-24)

Key Verse: "...Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (6:20)

Rethink Worry (Matthew 6:25-34)

Key Verse: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry..." (6:33-34)

Rethinking Criticism (Matthew 7:1-6)

Key Verse: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." (7:1)

Rethink My Life (Matthew 7:13-29)

Key Verse: "...everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (5:24)

Daily Meditations

Take a few minutes every day to read Scripture, pray, and answer some thought-provoking questions pertaining to this week's topic.

Monday

Look back over the notes. Which point or points really struck home for you? Why?

How can you commit to changing that area of your life, starting this week?

Here's a little preview: This fall our church will begin a 7-week emphasis on HOPE, similar to 40-day studies we've done on LOVE and FAITH. This is a great way of building on a solid foundation! Be thinking about getting into a small group. Write down 5 names or couples that you will be praying for this week, with whom you would consider being in a home group.

Ask God to help you apply this week's message to your life! Pray for the people you've invited.

Tuesday

Read Matthew 7:13-14 and Matthew 18:1-4. The people of Jesus' day were expecting the "gate" to the kingdom of heaven to be huge and obvious and full of splendor, like the massive temples in ancient cities. Instead, Jesus keeps describing the kingdom of God with words like "small" and "narrow" and "like a child." Which misconceptions was Jesus correcting?

How is God's kingdom small?

How is God's kingdom narrow?

Why do we need to enter like a little child, instead of a big, important man?

Thank God today that He led you to the narrow path! Remember to go on in total humility before Him, because it is by His grace, not your efforts, that you are saved!

Wednesday

Read Matthew 7:15-20. Once someone has been enshrined as a leader, many people are reluctant to criticize or find fault. But Jesus says that, in fact, we should be more discerning about our leaders than anyone!

According to these verses, are false leaders obvious?

What will false leaders do to the sheep?

To avoid false leaders, what must we do?

This implies that we know the leaders well enough to see the fruit of their lives!

Pray for discernment about the leaders you are following — at church, in the culture, among your companions, in your company. Pray for the leaders at TLC, that we may be men and women of total integrity and love toward the congregation.

Thursday

Read Matthew 7:21-23. According to these verses, will everyone enter the kingdom of heaven?

What will Jesus say to those who do not enter?

What did these people quote to Jesus as evidence that they should be let in?

What are you basing your eternal security on: Your good deeds, or the fact that you know Jesus?

Settle the issue right here, today: Pray, God, let me know you. I want to be known by you as a committed Christ-follower. I believe Jesus is my leader, my Lord, my Savior.

Thank God that He promises to save us when we turn to Him in sincere understanding of our need and His provision!



"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." Matthew 7:24 (NIV)