

## TEACHER / FACILITATOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Sermon on the Mount – Session 4

#### *Who Are You Really Living For?*

Matthew 6:1–24

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### SESSION OVERVIEW (FOR THE TEACHER)

#### Big Idea

Jesus exposes the danger of a divided heart. In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, He repeatedly asks a penetrating question beneath the surface of religious behavior: **Who is your true audience?** Whether it is generosity, prayer, fasting, or money, Jesus teaches that our actions reveal who we are really living for — God or ourselves.

This lesson invites participants to move beyond outward spirituality and examine their **motives, loyalties, and treasures**.

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#### Teaching Goal

By the end of this session, participants should:

- Understand Jesus' warning against practicing righteousness for human approval
  - Recognize the connection between **treasure, focus, and devotion**
  - Identify areas where their hearts may be divided
  - Reflect honestly on who (or what) they are truly living for
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#### Time Guide (Suggested – 60–75 minutes)

- Opening & prayer: 10 minutes
  - Teaching & discussion (three movements): 40–50 minutes
  - Personal reflection & closing prayer: 10–15 minutes
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### OPENING (10 MINUTES)

#### Opening Question (Icebreaker)

“Have you ever done something good but secretly hoped someone would notice or praise you for it?”



## Teacher Notes

- Keep the tone **safe and light** — this question is meant to disarm, not shame.
  - Normalize the struggle. Most people will relate.
  - Do not moralize responses yet; allow honesty.
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## Opening Prayer

Ask God to search hearts gently, to remove defensiveness, and to help the group listen honestly to Jesus' words.

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## SCRIPTURE CONTEXT (FOR THE TEACHER)

Before reading, explain briefly:

“Jesus is addressing people who are serious about faith — not outsiders. His concern is not whether they practice righteousness, but **why** they do it.”

Emphasize:

- This section follows Jesus' teaching on deeper righteousness
- The issue is **motive**, not activity
- Jesus is exposing **hidden spiritual dangers**

Read **Matthew 6:1–24** aloud (or assign readers).

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## TEACHING MOVEMENT 1: WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

*(Matthew 6:1–18)*

### Key Teaching Point

Spiritual practices lose their value when they are performed for human approval instead of God.

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## Teacher Explanation

Jesus gives three examples — **giving, prayer, and fasting** — and repeats the same warning:

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness before others to be seen by them.”

Key observations:

- Jesus assumes His followers **will** give, pray, and fast



- The problem is not public action, but **performative faith**
- The phrase “they have received their reward” means human applause is all they get

Contrast:

- Public recognition vs. God’s quiet reward
  - Image management vs. genuine devotion
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## Discussion Questions

- Why is it so tempting to want others to notice our spirituality?
  - How can religious activity subtly become about image rather than intimacy with God?
  - What does it look like to practice faith “in secret” today?
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## Teacher Notes

- Avoid singling out social media, but allow it to surface naturally
  - Emphasize that Jesus is **inviting freedom**, not guilt
  - Reinforce that God sees — and that this is meant to comfort, not threaten
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## TEACHING MOVEMENT 2: WHAT HAS YOUR HEART?

*(Matthew 6:19–21)*

### Key Teaching Point

What we value most will inevitably shape how we live.

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### Teacher Explanation

Jesus shifts from religious behavior to **inner allegiance**.

Important contrasts:

- Earthly treasure: temporary, fragile, insecure
- Heavenly treasure: lasting, secure, eternal

Key insight:

“Your heart follows your treasure — not the other way around.”



Jesus is not condemning possessions, but **misplaced security**.

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### Discussion Questions

- How would you define “treasure” in everyday life?
  - What competes most strongly for people’s hearts today?
  - How can we tell where our treasure really is?
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### Teacher Notes

- This is not about wealth vs. poverty
  - Gently redirect away from comparison with others
  - Encourage personal reflection rather than defensive answers
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## TEACHING MOVEMENT 3: A DIVIDED LIFE CANNOT STAND

*(Matthew 6:22–24)*

### Key Teaching Point

A divided heart leads to a disoriented life.

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### Teacher Explanation

Jesus uses two strong images:

#### The Eye (Focus)

- A healthy eye represents clear spiritual focus
- A damaged eye represents distorted priorities

#### Two Masters (Loyalty)

- Jesus states this plainly: no one can serve two masters
- Divided allegiance always leads to compromised devotion

Important clarification:

- This is not about balance
- It is about **ultimate loyalty**



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## Discussion Questions

- What does a “divided heart” look like in real life?
  - Why is it uncomfortable to think in terms of exclusive loyalty?
  - How does serving two masters affect peace, clarity, and faith?
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## Teacher Notes

- Avoid framing this as legalism
  - Emphasize that Jesus names this out of love
  - God desires **whole-hearted trust**, not partial compliance
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## PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

Invite quiet reflection. You may read this aloud:

“Jesus does not ask what we claim to believe, but who we are actually living for.”

### Reflection Prompts

- Who is my primary audience when I make decisions?
- What competes most for my loyalty or security?
- Where might my heart be divided right now?
- What would it look like to live more fully for God this week?

*(Allow silence. Do not rush this moment.)*

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## CLOSING (PRAYER & CHALLENGE)

### Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Undivided hearts
  - Freedom from performance-based faith
  - Deeper trust in God’s care and approval
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## Optional Take-Home Challenge

Encourage participants to:

- Practice one spiritual discipline this week **in secret**
  - Notice what captures their attention, worry, or excitement
  - Ask daily: *“Who am I living for right now?”*
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## FINAL TEACHER REMINDER

This lesson is not about trying harder — it is about **seeing more clearly**.

Jesus’ invitation is not condemnation, but alignment:

**“Live for the Father who sees — and rest in His reward.”**

