

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

Session 3 – Why Does God Care About Our Motives?

Matthew 6:1–15

SESSION PURPOSE

This session helps participants understand why God cares not only about *what* we do, but *why* we do it. Jesus teaches that life in God’s Kingdom flows from the heart—especially in the areas of spiritual practices and forgiveness. Participants will be invited to reflect on their motives, experience God’s mercy, and consider how that mercy shapes the way they treat others.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize how hurt and conflict reveal the condition of the heart
 - Understand Jesus’ teaching on motives behind giving, prayer, and forgiveness
 - Explain the connection between receiving God’s mercy and extending mercy to others
 - Reflect on why forgiveness is difficult and why it matters in the Kingdom of God
 - Identify practical ways to entrust justice to God and live as people of mercy
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KEY PASSAGE

Matthew 6:1–15

SESSION LENGTH

60–75 minutes (adaptable for personal study or group settings)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible (print or digital)
- Participant notes or journal
- Pen
- Quiet space for reflection and prayer



SESSION FLOW

1. WELCOME & OPENING (5 minutes)

Facilitator Guidance:

Welcome participants and briefly introduce the theme of the session. Set a tone of honesty and grace.

Opening Thought:

Everyone has been hurt by others at some point. Our responses to that hurt often reveal what is happening beneath the surface of our hearts.

Opening Question (optional):

- When you've been hurt in the past, what emotions usually rise to the surface first?
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2. A COMMON STRUGGLE: HURT AND RESPONSE (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

Jesus understands the reality of human pain—betrayal, rejection, dishonesty, and wounded words. These experiences expose the heart and raise an important question for followers of Jesus.

Key Question for the Group:

- How should followers of Jesus respond when they have been hurt?

Facilitator Notes:

Allow space for participants to name how people *naturally* respond to hurt (anger, withdrawal, bitterness, desire for revenge). Avoid correcting too quickly—this sets up the contrast Jesus will make.

3. JESUS AND THE HEART (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

Jesus begins by addressing motives, not just behaviors. He warns against practicing faith for the approval of others and calls His followers to live their lives before God.

Key Truth:

Faith can become something we perform—but life in the Kingdom is lived before God.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think it's tempting to seek recognition for "good" spiritual actions?
- How can spiritual practices slowly turn into performances?



4. SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AND MOTIVES (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

Jesus highlights three spiritual practices—giving, prayer, and fasting—and contrasts two motives:

- Doing them to impress others
- Doing them sincerely before God

God is deeply concerned with the *heart* behind our actions.

Facilitator Insight:

Emphasize that Jesus is not condemning these practices. He is reclaiming their purpose.

5. PRAYER AS RELATIONSHIP, NOT PERFORMANCE (10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

Jesus teaches that prayer is not about visibility or eloquence but about relationship. Prayer is meant to be personal, honest conversation with the Father.

Key Statement to Emphasize:

Prayer is not a performance. It is a relationship.

Reflection Prompt:

- What might change in your prayer life if you fully believed God already sees and knows you?
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6. FORGIVENESS: MERCY RECEIVED → MERCY GIVEN (15 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

In the prayer Jesus teaches, forgiveness is central. Jesus directly connects:

- Receiving forgiveness from God
- Extending forgiveness to others

People who have truly experienced God's mercy begin to reflect that mercy.

Important Clarification for Facilitators:

Forgiveness does not minimize harm or ignore justice. It means releasing revenge and entrusting justice to God.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is forgiveness often so difficult, especially when the hurt is deep?
- How does remembering our own need for mercy change how we see others?



- What does it mean to place justice in God's hands?
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7. WHAT FORGIVENESS PRODUCES (5–10 minutes)

Teaching Focus:

When forgiveness begins to shape our lives:

- Bitterness gives way to healing
- Anger softens into compassion
- Broken relationships have the possibility of restoration

Forgiveness reflects the character of God—merciful, patient, slow to anger, and rich in love.

Facilitator Tip:

Acknowledge that forgiveness is often a process, not a one-time moment.

8. KEY INSIGHT & TAKEAWAY (5 minutes)

Key Insight to Emphasize:

In the Kingdom of God, mercy received becomes mercy given.

Key Takeaway:

When we have been hurt, the natural instinct is to hold onto anger or seek revenge. Jesus invites His followers into a different way. Because we have received mercy from God, we are called to live as people of mercy. Forgiveness becomes part of the transformed heart.

9. CLOSING REFLECTION & PRAYER (5 minutes)

Silent Reflection (optional):

Invite participants to quietly reflect:

- Is there someone I am struggling to forgive?
- What would it look like to entrust this situation to God?

Closing Prayer (Facilitator-Led):

Pray for softened hearts, gratitude for God's mercy, and the courage to extend that mercy to others.

PREVIEW OF NEXT SESSION

Jesus continues by addressing another heart-shaping issue: our relationship with money, security, and anxiety (Matthew 6:19–34).



Facilitator Reminder:

Create a safe environment. Forgiveness can surface deep wounds. Encourage grace, patience, and confidentiality within the group.

