



How much do you need God? Your answer might depend on how full your life currently is. If many or most of your basic physical needs are met, you might limit your need for God to the work of securing your desires those things that take life up a notch or two. If you have friends and/or a family, your need of a relationship with God might be secondary a fill-in when others aren't you comfort. If you have a job or hobbies or people to take care of, you might not sense a need to engage in God's admiration, you might not need the possible headaches that would inevitably come from making God your own. If you have *your* sense of justice, you probably don't know of what is just and what is not.

However, if you are desperate for God. Desperation has a way of doing that. When there is absence of *stuff* people, things, connections then God can look pretty good.

Jesus calls us to live the impossible by the One who alone can make it possible in our lives. It is in the stomach, intended to take our breath away. In agony over our own inability to live up to Jesus we must realize our desperation. *God, we can't* But God can.

If we don't wise up. Our need for God has never been greater. It's not a view our relationship with God as simply an investment for the future, a kind of IRA for when we retire from life. God wants to invade our lives. He doesn't want to go to heaven; he wants to rule our lives on earth. He wants to capture us completely, and he demands that we surrender fully. It's the expected response from people aware of their own desperation.

**Personal Reflection and Application**

*Keep a journal to address the following questions and topics.*

**Q** Observe your own sense of desperation. How great is your actual, day to day need for God? To what degree do you depend on him? What level of trust do you place in his perspective on who you are, what you should become, and what you ought to be doing?

**AC** Read Matthew 5 - 7 four times this week.

**AC** The Beatitudes confront our common understandings of who is blessed and who is not. Observe who you choose to bless and how you choose to bless them this week. In what ways do your choices align with God's perspectives in the Beatitudes?

**Q** Which of Jesus' commandments do you find the easiest to follow? What makes them easier for you? Which are the hardest for you to apply? Why are they so difficult? What role do you ask God to play?

**P** *Your will be done in my life as it is in heaven.*



**Small Groups**

Opening Question: Describe a time when you felt particularly confident and a time when you felt severely desperate.

**AC** For each section of the

identify and list the statement or command that challenges you the most. To what degree does each of these statements present a challenge to (1) your identity, (2) your understanding, (3) your ability, and (4) your current lifestyle?

**AC** Examine the following passages, noting their contribution to the understanding of anxiety: Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:4-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Psalm 23; Psalm 139; Romans 8:28-39; Luke 12:4-7. How realistic are these understandings? What, if anything, seems to be the common thread(s) between them? What level of community is necessary for your small group to be able to help each other effectively fight tendencies toward anxiety?

**AC** How would you articulate the relationship between the whole of the Mount \_\_\_\_\_ -12? To Matthew 5:13-16? To Matthew 6:9-13?

**P** *Your will be done in our lives as it is in heaven.*

**One on One Relationships**

Read Matthew 5 - 7. One of the most powerful aspects of the \_\_\_\_\_ is how Jesus describes the grace of God and God \_\_\_\_\_ of holiness. Total grace and total commitment are two primary themes of Jesus message. Take time with your disciple to explore both of these concepts, not only in the Bible, but also in your lives.

**Total Grace** Jesus revolutionizes the concept of who wins in this world. The *blessed* are aimed at the very people who from the world perspective are nothing but losers. The *poor* (see Luke 6:20), the *meek*, the *pure in heart*, and the *persecuted* are on Jesus VIP list. These are the people who get beat up in high school and are often run over in business. Yet they are also the people most desperate for God. Examine with your disciple your sense of desperation for God in your lives.

**Total Call** Jesus didn't punch any punches. God demands all. It is not in the capability of followers of Jesus but in faith in the faithfulness of God. Work with your disciple on which commands come easy and which ones present sizeable challenges. Realize together the need to remain dependent on God.

**Families**

*Pick and tweak items below to fit your own family*

**AC** Purchase some modeling clay and as a family make the scene described in Matthew 5:1-2. Play act the very things Jesus taught, using some of his actual phrases (e.g. *You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. Let your be \_\_\_\_\_ . This is how you should pray* etc.)

**AC** Take the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) apart and pray one line each night at dinner. Spend time during the meal talking about what the words and the prayer mean.

**AC** Divvy up the Mount \_\_\_\_\_ the member has a number of passages. (Depending on the attention span of your family you might want to do only one chapter at a time.) The assignment is for every one to draw a picture that represents what Jesus taught in that portion of his sermon (one picture per page). As you complete the drawings, tape them in order on a wall, so that eventually you will have a *storyboard* representing the whole message. Review the entire storyboard each time you add a new picture.

**P** *Your will be done in our home as it is in heaven.*