

MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY



HAVE MERCY!

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7, NIV).

The beatitudes show us how to live a life that is “blessed” by God. The distinct lifestyle of the Christian as described in Matthew 5 is foreign to worldly concepts of happiness and blessing. The world thinks the path to happiness is **more!** More money, power, beauty, authority, and stuff pave the pathway to happiness. With Jesus, what matters is faithful obedience from the heart. If you want to live for God, you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take; love when others hate; and help when others hurt. Choosing attitudes and actions that are pleasing to Jesus bring the blessing of God.

In Matthew 5:7-9, Jesus turns His attention from your vertical relationship with God, to your horizontal relationships with people. In fact, much of the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) deals with the disciple’s behavior. Remember this: discipleship is more than just what you know; it’s what you do with what you know.

Let’s attempt to answer the following questions from Matthew 5:7.

1. What is **MERCY**?
2. Who are disciples of Jesus expected to show mercy to?
3. Is mercy a reward for being merciful, or has the disciple received mercy to enable him/her to offer mercy to others?
4. Does mercy have past, present, and future implications for our lives and relationships?

Guilty defendants often beg the court for “Mercy” in sentencing. It is said that “mercy” is “not giving someone something negative they deserve.” Discuss various definitions of mercy among your members. Compare/contrast mercy and hatred or revenge. Consider together how mercy is both an attitude and an action.

Discuss God’s greatest act of mercy for mankind. Could the death of Jesus be seen as God recognizing and identifying with the need of mankind for redemption, and acting in compassion toward us? Is that a suitable definition of mercy for us today? “Mercy is recognizing and identifying with the needs of others and acting in compassion to meet those needs?”

Because we have received mercy from God through Jesus, our natural response is to show mercy towards others. We demonstrate our mercy by having forgiving spirits. We are willing to accept those whom others reject, in the name of Jesus, remembering that we are nothing more than saved sinners by the grace and mercy of God. Then we act in the name of Jesus to meet the needs and alleviate the suffering of those less fortunate around us.

Looking at the previous paragraph, discuss ways your chapter members are accomplishing their missions of mercy in their world. Share with other chapter members the feelings you had and the relationship results of a time you chose to show mercy to someone.

We receive God's blessing (favor) of mercy when we open our hearts to receive His gift of salvation through Jesus. As we then gladly show mercy to others, we are blessed with more mercy. We will be shown, obtain, or receive more mercy. That doesn't mean mercy is a reward for being merciful. We receive mercy from God; we show mercy to others; that gives us a greater capacity for mercy within ourselves, which in turn enables us to show even greater mercy to others. Discuss how that "mercy cycle" better prepares us for the blessings of Heaven.

If you've never experienced God's mercy of forgiveness and redemption, ask your fellow chapter members how to come to Jesus by faith right now.

Pray for mercy from God. Pray for the desire to be more merciful toward others. Then "put feet" to your prayers.