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*Hey leaders! We are in the final week of our series, “**Sermon on the Mount**”! In Matthew 5–7, Jesus describes what it means to be blessed, how to treat others, and where true security is found. We will walk through Jesus’ words with clarity and relevance, challenging us to build our lives on something unshakable—His Kingdom.*

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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“‘Thus says the Lord’ is typical of the Old Testament, but Jesus’ characteristic expression is ‘Truly, truly, I say to you.’ The difference is significant. Jesus appealed to no other authority as He spoke to men of the deep things of God.”
[Leon Morris]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - In these verses, we see a little into the people’s reaction to hearing the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus’ teaching is different from what everyone else says, and HOW He teaches is different, too.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.*

What made your favorite teacher so amazing?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note *Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!*

Jesus, all authority in heaven and on Earth has been given to You. Help us to see the difference between Your authority and the lesser things we have been disciplined in. Grip us with Your truth and hold us tight through whatever else may try to hold a candle to Your blazing fire.

*“My hand made all these things,
and so they all came into being.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
I will look favorably on this kind of person:
one who is humble, submissive in spirit,
and trembles at my word.”*
[Isaiah 66:2]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.*

The last two verses of the Sermon on the Mount tell us the crowd’s response to Jesus’ words. They give us an indication of how we should hear Jesus and how His words should impact us.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || **Leader Note** Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

1. In the sermon we heard, *"God works through His word, and His word does the work."* How is it different when you do the work versus when God's word does the work?

Have someone read aloud Matthew 7:28-9. Consider having someone else read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation to gain another perspective (i.e. CEB, the Message, Amplified).

2. Who do you teach? *Before we dive into evaluating who teaches us, it's important to also note that we live as examples to others. We don't need a classroom to be teachers. If we have children, nieces and nephews, grandchildren, or authority and a platform of any kind, we teach. Then, HOW we teach is very important.*
3. Who has disciplined you? *There are two roles discussed here: teacher and student. Disciple simply means student. So, anyone who teaches you is discipling you along their path, their way of thinking. In Jesus' time, a lot of discipleship was simply following the Rabbi around doing every little thing they do—learning their lifestyle, their way of approaching every little thing. Family, media of all kinds, books, teachers, friends, mentors, coaches, pastors, siblings—we are disciplined by so many.*
4. Some of the way Matt described Jesus' teaching was "calm and gentle, invites faith, and not argumentative." Have you heard people teach Jesus' words in ways Jesus would not have taught Himself? *This question invites people to share their experience, but it is also a valuable lead-in to discussing how we choose who we allow to teach us. Someone may realize that they've been letting a teacher disciple them who isn't representing Jesus well. James 3:1 may be good to reference here—not everyone should teach, because the standards are stricter for those who do.*
5. What voices speak into your life that you have to constantly decide not to follow? How do you combat the lies you're offered? *This one is also experience sharing and will have many possibilities for answers. There may be some situations where you can encourage each other to reduce the bad sources and instead increase time learning from Christ. In others, it may be impossible to remove, so it would be good to follow up with "How can we pray?"*
6. In the sermon, Matt mentioned that we sometimes feel a tension resisting deep inward change. Have you felt any tension points over the course of this series? *This may be a question where you'll need to "break the ice" by going first. There were many difficult teachings in this series, and it may also be worth scanning back through Matthew 6-7 to be able to list off a few.*
7. If the goal of discipleship is to live our lives the same way Jesus would live them, how is that going? Are you following Christ in ways this year that you weren't last year? *Here, it's important to emphasize progress over perfection. This isn't for us to beat ourselves up over how far there is to go, but to be honest about the progression—are we stagnant, dying, or growing in faith?*
8. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He said all authority has been given to Him in heaven and on Earth. Therefore, we should make disciples. What is your role in making disciples? *We aren't all gifted in evangelism, hospitality, teaching, etc. Each of us should have different abilities and roles that we're using for the Great Commission. If not, there's an opportunity to plug in at your local campus! The harvest is plentiful—it is the workers who are few.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Being a disciple of Jesus means watching Him, listening to Him, and imitating His actions. **It also means living by His power for His purposes.**

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) If we learn by the authority of Christ, we must also learn to live by the power of Christ. 2) What can we ask Jesus to produce in us this week as He teaches and we are His students? What do we need MORE of from Jesus?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Step of Faith Ideas

1. Together, memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:24 "He who calls you is faithful; he will do it."
2. Let's ask God to accomplish every impossible thing we come against this week, no matter how big and no matter how small.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another's personal requests!*

By His Authority

As we close this series, take some time to reflect about what God has taught us through His word.

- Look at who you are discipling and pray for wisdom on how to do that well.
- Evaluate who is discipling you and ask if they are teaching like Jesus.
- Spend time in God's word being disciplined by Jesus.
- Close your time by reading this prayer together:
 - *"Lord, be our teacher. Teach us to pray. Teach us to love. Teach us how to wake up and how to go to sleep. Teach us how to teach and how to learn. If there's anything we need to unlearn so we can walk differently, teach us how to grieve it and let it go and turn. Teach us the path to righteousness. Amen."*