



Community Group Study Guide



Date: May 20, 2007
Series: "Building a Kingdom Household", Pt 2 - The Frame: Righteousness
Scripture: Matthew 5:17-6:18
Speaker: Mark Van Valin

Questions for your consideration:

1. This morning, Pastor Mark continued his series on "Building a Kingdom Household". Last week he spoke about the "foundation", or the first step in building a household – i.e. trust in God's word and in his goodness and provision. This week, he spoke of the frame of the house, i.e. a righteousness of the heart. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) Read over Matthew 5:17-6:18. It is a large section that broadly covers Jesus' teaching on righteousness. Pay special attention to the introduction of this section (5:17-20) "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of heaven. The Pharisees' righteousness was limited to religious ritual and outward appearance. What different level of righteousness do you think Jesus was calling us to?
2. Starting with 5:21, Jesus gave several examples of behaviors. The first group are "sins". He began every example with "you have heard that is was said . . .", then takes the idea of righteousness to a whole new level with, "but I say to you . . ." How would you summarize what he was getting at?
3. Some sins are subtle. Some are obvious. Some righteous acts are subtle. Some are obvious. Jesus said that all of our right and wrong are rooted in the attitude of the heart. He raised the standard of righteousness to a "heart" thing. The heart is revealed in who you are, what you do when no one is looking. If you love God when your children are not looking, you will most certainly love Him when they are. Here's a serious question. Would your children describe you as a person who loves God? Here's another angle to the same question. As you children grow older – on to teen and adult years (whether they have already or have yet to), would they describe you even more as a person who loves God? Would they describe you as a person who readily loves others? Who loves them?
4. The heart of righteousness, the heart of the law, is – once again – to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength – and love your neighbor (your spouse, your children) as you love yourself. It is a self-sacrificing life that is rooted in the security and gratitude that comes with being created and called and loved and forgiven and cleansed and provided for by God. All of our behavior – whether it is positive or negative behavior – is rooted in this relationship! John Wesley's mother told him that any activity that deadened his love for God was, for him, sin. Any activity that cultivated a love for God and a love for each other was good. If this is true, then how does your household line up with the Kingdom of God? What things or pursuits or habits or patterns are you involving yourself in (even if your children do not participate in it or are even aware of it) that have the potential to deaden your childrens' love for God? What things or pursuits or habits or patterns should you practice that would cultivate your love for God and the love of your household for God? Do you have the courage to make a change?