

50 Commands of Christ ~ Lesson 4 ~ (Commands #18-21)

We are about one-third of the way through the 50 commands of Jesus, but still in the Sermon on the Mount. Let's consider the next 4 commands.

18. Ask, seek, and knock—*Matthew 7:7-8*. What did Jesus say would happen if we bring our requests to him? (*John 15:7-8*)

What do you tend to pray about? For what are you reluctant to pray?

How did Luke enlarge upon this command? (*Luke 11:5-13*)

19. Do unto others—*Matthew 7:12*. This is commonly called _____

Is this something new from Jesus? (*Leviticus 19:18*) This is probably the most repeated command in the entire Bible. What does that mean?

If we follow this command, will it get us to heaven? If we don't follow it, are we rejected from heaven? (*James 2:14, 2:26*)

Is this an easy command to follow? All the time? With *everyone*?

20. Choose the narrow way—*Matthew 7:13-14*. This is referred to both as a gate and a road; which seems to make more sense to you?

Jesus said two important things about the road that leads to destruction. They are:

How many people find the small gate and narrow road? Does that mean God is hiding it from us?

Is choosing the narrow gate a one-time choice? If we walk along the broad road, does that mean we are shut off from the narrow way?

Why is it difficult to stay on the narrow road? Do you really want to? What actions can you take *this week* to help you stay on the narrow way?

21. Beware of false prophets—*Matthew 7:15*.

What do false prophets look like on the outside? What are they like inwardly?

Is this a big deal today? Are there modern-day false prophets? Who might they be? What is their motive (fame, power, glory, or _____)? Might they be well-meaning?

50 Commands of Christ ~ Lesson 4 ~ (Commands #18-21) ~ Leader's Guide

We are about one-third of the way through the 50 commands of Jesus, but still in the Sermon on the Mount. Let's consider the next 4 commands.

18. Ask, seek, and knock

Matthew 7:7-8 – “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

This command emphasizes that we must be persistent in pursuing God: ask, seek, knock, don't give up after one or two tries. Knowing God takes faith, focus, and follow through, and Jesus tells us it will be rewarded. This idea is restated several places, but none more clearly than in John 15:7-8. However, it is important to pay attention to why our prayers are answered—to glorify God.

John 15:7-8 – “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Luke repeated the exact same command as in Matthew, but it followed Parable #25 about a friend in need in the middle of the night. Then, after the command, Jesus asks the rhetorical question, “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?” and concludes with, “how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

What do you tend to pray about? For what are you reluctant to pray?

19. Do unto others

Matthew 7:12 – So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

This is commonly called the Golden Rule

Is this something new from Jesus? (Leviticus 19:18 – “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”) This is probably the most repeated command in the entire Bible. What does that mean?

It means *pay attention!* The Golden Rule is the foundation of active goodness and mercy—the kind of love that God shows to us every day and that he expects us to show to others, even those who are not deserving or who will not return it.

If we follow this command, will it get us to heaven? If we don't follow it, are we rejected from heaven? (James 2:14, 2:26)

James 2:14 – What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

James 3:26 – As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Is this an easy command to follow? All the time? With *everyone*?

Also, when and if you follow this command, what motivates you? Self? Make you feel good. Selflessness? Thinking of someone else first. Fear? If I don't follow God's command, I'll be punished.

20. Choose the narrow way

Matthew 7:13-14 – “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

This is referred to both as a gate and a road; which seems to make more sense to you?

Jesus said two important things about the road that leads to destruction. They are:

1. It is a broad, wide road. If you're not looking, it's the road you will find yourself on. It's the road that most people are walking along.
2. It leads to destruction, which, in this case means separation from God in hell.

How many people find the small gate and narrow road? Does that mean God is hiding it from us?

Jesus says “only a few find it.” This does not mean it is hidden or that it is difficult to become a Christian, but that there is only *one way* to live eternally with God and only a few decide to walk that road. Believing in Jesus is the *only* way to heaven; it may not be popular but it is true and right and available to all.

Is choosing the narrow gate a one-time choice? If we walk along the broad road, does that mean we are shut off from the narrow way?

Believing in Jesus and being born again is a one-time decision. That doesn't mean that you won't give in to temptations and will always obey God's commands, but your faith in Jesus opens the gate (or door) to heaven forever.

Why is it difficult to stay on the narrow road? Do you really want to? What actions can you take *this week* to help you stay on the narrow way?

21. Beware of false prophets

Matthew 7:15-20 – ¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

What do false prophets look like on the outside? What are they like inwardly?

Jesus says they look like sheep, i.e., mild-mannered, gentle, and docile. They prophesied only what the king and the people wanted to hear, soothing and flattering, claiming it was God’s message. Inwardly, Jesus says they are like ferocious wolves, greedy and malevolent predators who are a threat to the innocent and have their own agenda and desires.

Matthew 7:22 seems to make clear that the false prophets are Christian, rather than Jewish. This would rule out other Jewish sects active in this period such as the Essenes and Zealots.

Is this a big deal today? Are there modern-day false prophets? Who might they be? What is their motive (fame, power, glory, or ___)? Might they be well-meaning?

False teachers are definitely common today. Jesus says to beware of those whose words sound religious but who are motivated by fame, power, glory, and riches. You can generally tell who they are because in their teaching they minimize Christ and glorify themselves.

By saying, “by their fruit you will recognize them,” it means that good teachers consistently exhibit good behavior and high moral character as the attempt to live out the truths of scripture. Paul wrote of the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (Galatians 5:22–23) when he lists love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as evidence of God’s work.

This is a practical command for us today. The world is awash with words and we need some way of knowing how to discern the true and good. Whether the speaker is a broadcaster or a bishop, a politician or a policeman, the only safe criterion is the Jesus gave us: you will know them by their fruits, by the way they live.