Quarter One (September through November)

- September: Matthew 5:1-16 (The beatitudes and persecution)

- October: Matthew 5:17-30 (The Law of Moses and personal ethics)

- November: Matthew 5:31-48 (Divorce and relationships)
Instructions for using this material:

1. The Digging Deep study material is designed to facilitate in-depth group Bible study, and not to merely dispense information from “teacher” to “student.” As you go through the study, you will want to have separate paper or a computer on which to record your thoughts. (We do not leave space in this document for your answers to discussion-oriented questions.)

2. There are many tools that will help in digging, such as Bible encyclopedias, Greek and Hebrew lexical books, commentaries, etc. Many are available for free on-line. If you need help accessing such materials, ask others in your group or ask Ben or Caleb.

3. The Facebook group is an interactive portion of the study. Find it at https://www.facebook.com/groups/1564776240335067/ (or search “Digging Deep Men’s Bible Study” on Facebook). If you don’t have Facebook, you can still contribute to the discussion by emailing your comments to calebcolley@gmail.com or ben@plainsimplefaith.com.

4. As we go through the study together, please provide questions and comments to the nationwide study group on Facebook. It will be great to have an ongoing discussion about the material.

5. A monthly video podcast will be posted on the Facebook page.

6. Glenn Colley will assist us by preaching a sermon each month on the topic for that month’s Digging Deep study. The sermons will be posted on the Facebook page and at calebcolley.com/diggingdeep.
Month One: The Beatitudes and Persecution (Matthew 5:1-16)

Introduction: “Blessed”

A. Begin this study by reading Matthew 5-7.

B. Acquire at least one book (commentary, study book, etc.), written by a member of the Lord’s church, that addresses the Sermon on the Mount, so that you will have another source to consult during this study. Perhaps your congregation’s library has such a book. Here are some examples of books that you might consider.

1. H.B. Frank, From Riches to Poverty to Glory: A Study of the Life of Christ
2. Wayne Jackson, Jesus Christ: The Master Teacher
3. Burton Coffman, Matthew
4. David Roper, The Life of Christ, 1
5. H. Leo Boles, Matthew
6. Eddie Whitten, ed., The Person and Life of Christ
7. Wendell Winkler, Tell Me the Story of Jesus

C. Do a search through the New Testament for the word “blessed.” Read each passage.

D. Find at least two word study aids to get a fuller sense of what the word “blessed” means. Now, give a succinct definition of the word “blessed”:

1. Definition for blessed:

2. Definition for blessed:

3. Definition for blessed:

E. Who are the blessed, according to Revelation 14:13? How does one get into the Lord?

I. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

A. To be poor in spirit is to recognize one’s own spiritual poverty before God, i.e., that one stands in constant need of what God has to offer. Find three other texts in the Bible that teach the need to be poor in spirit.

1. __________________________

2. __________________________
3. _______________________

B. After reviewing these passages, write a paragraph describing the character of someone you know who is poor in spirit. How has this person been blessed by his or her own recognition of spiritual poverty?

C. Can a person be arrogant while being poor in spirit? Why or why not?

II. Blessed are those who mourn.

A. The Bible elsewhere teaches that we will be blessed if we rejoice consistently (e.g., Philippians 3:1; 4:4). Under what circumstances should a Christian mourn?

B. List and briefly discuss at least three occasions when godly men or women of the Bible mourned. Give a Scripture reference for each.

C. It is ironic to say that a mourning person is blessed. How does this work? Use Ecclesiastes 7:2-3 in your answer.

III. Blessed are the meek.

A. The meekness that is taught here is not self-deprecation or physical weakness. Meekness is not the absence of conviction or anger. Do a word study of the word translated “meek,” and describe the meaning. Answer this question: Why do we need meekness in the church today?

B. Find three other passages that command meekness, even a different Greek word is used:
   1. _______________________
   2. _______________________
   3. _______________________

C. We read here that the meek will inherit the Earth. Jesus was quoting from Psalms 37:11: “But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.” What does this phrase mean?

   1. Some have said that this means that there will be a time when the meek people will rule the earth governmentally. But this is unlikely to happen before the Lord returns, because usually the people who rule are those who fight to rule and organize their lives around ruling (meek people, while certainly not incapable of ruling, often do not get the opportunity). It is certain that this will not occur after the Lord returns, because the Lord is not returning to Earth to set up an earthly kingdom in which the meek will rule (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
2. They are the ones who really will enjoy the things of God. Some people will never be satisfied because they seek satisfaction apart from God. They can never be satisfied trying to advance their own agenda, but they could be satisfied playing their role in the advancement of the kingdom of God.

3. Similarly, Paul said that he was strong when he was weak (2 Corinthians 12:10). Study 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, and explain how strength comes on the occasion of weakness.

IV. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

A. The same Greek word is used for “hunger” in this text and to describe Jesus’ “hunger” in his 40-day fast in the wilderness in the previous chapter (Matthew 4:2). Those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” are those who have come face to face with their spiritual malnourishment and are now searching for food that will truly be filling.

B. Read Psalms 63:1, and then answer this question: How will a person who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness behave? Write a paragraph in response to this question. Feel free to use the passages you find in IV.C (the next question).

C. Find a passage of Scripture describing each of the following: (1) the prayer habits, (2) Bible study habits, and (3) worship attendance habits of one who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

1. Prayer habits: __________________________

2. Bible study habits: __________________________

3. Worship attendance habits: __________________________

V. Blessed are the merciful.

A. Find at least three passages that describe the mercy that God has demonstrated toward us, and three passages that demonstrate how we are to show mercy to others. Make sure that one of your passages demonstrates the essentiality of showing mercy by teaching others the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

VI. Blessed are the pure in heart.

A. Our words and actions must be those that are authorized by Christ (Colossians 3:17), but our hearts must be right to consistently produce those actions. Summarize the teaching concerning our hearts in each of these passages:

1. Mark 12:30

2. James 4:8
3. Proverbs 4:23

4. Psalms 24:3-4

B. Read Wayne Jackson’s article here: https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/610-who-are-the-pure-in-heart. What are the two possible meanings of “seeing God” in this text? Give a passage that lends support to either of the two possible, Scriptural meanings.

VII. Blessed are the peacemakers.

A. We need to be peacemakers in the sense that we help in resolving disputes between various people, but even more, we need to bring people into a peaceful relationship with God (John 14:27). We do little ultimate good if we settle temporal arguments between various people, knowing they will still ultimately be lost for eternity? Our God is a God of peace (Romans 15:33) because He has gone to great lengths to tear down the “wall of hostility” between Himself and man (Ephesians 2:13-17). Thus, to be children of God, we must share His nature by also being at peace with Him (Romans 5:1) and bringing others into a peaceful relationship with God (Romans 12:18).

B. Memorize one passage that teaches each step of the plan of salvation, so that you will be better equipped to teach others how to be saved:

1. Believe in Jesus as the Son of God: _____________________________
2. Repent of sin: _____________________________
3. Confess that Jesus is the Son of God: _____________________________
4. Be baptized for the remission of sins: _____________________________

VIII. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

A. Many passages teach that the blessed will be the cursed among men. Summarize what is said in each of the following passages concerning the persecutions that Christians may or will face:

1. Matthew 10:34-39
2. 1 Peter 3:16
3. 1 Peter 4:12
4. 2 Timothy 3:12

B. Read the article here: http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&article=732. Summarize this material and give an answer to the alleged problem that Christ contradicted Himself.
C. Write a paragraph giving reasons why it is worth suffering any persecution in order to be a faithful Christian. Use at least three passages of Scripture in your discussion.

IX. Salt and light.

A. The Jews to whom Jesus spoke valued salt not only because it flavored and preserved food, but also because it was required in their sacrifices (Leviticus 2:13). We get our English word “salary” from the Latin word *salarium*, which referred the ancient Roman soldier’s pay that consisted, at least in part, of a “salt allotment.” Incidentally, a soldier’s salary was cut if he was “not worth his salt,” which is where we get that phrase today. So, salt is important because it adds flavor, preserves, and purifies. Likewise Christians serve all three functions. Give a Scripture reference in support of each of these ideas:

1. Flavor: ___________________________
2. Preservation: ___________________________
3. Purification: ___________________________

B. What happens when a Christian ceases to be “salt”? This means that he no longer fulfills the distinctive functions of a Christian. Such a person does not have a good seasoning effect on those around them. Jesus’ words “lost its taste” is translated from a word based on the Greek word *móros*, from which we get our English word “moron.” The word literally means “to make foolish or useless.” These self-professing Christians are “no longer good for anything.” Luke adds they are like salt that “is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile” (Luke 14:35).

Conclusion.

A. Pick one of the beatitudes in which you would consider yourself to be weaker, and write down one thing you can change this week in order to be better.

B. Pick one beatitude and write a devotional speech or Bible class outline about it, and plan to use it at the next opportunity.
Month Two: The Law of Moses and Personal Ethics (Matthew 5:17-30)

Introduction: “Righteousness”

A. Begin this study by re-reading Matthew 5-7.

B. Do a search through the New Testament for the word “righteous.” Read each passage. (Note: While a physical concordance will be helpful, a digital resource may prove to be more convenient for this exercise.)

C. Find at least two word study aids to get a fuller sense of what the word “righteous” means. Now, in your own words, give a succinct definition of the word “righteous”:

D. How are we made righteous, according to 2 Corinthians 5:21? How righteous was Christ? In Christ, to what degree are we made righteous?

I. Respect for the Scriptures (Matthew 5:17-20)

A. To what is Jesus referring when He speaks of “the Law and the Prophets”?

B. What is the dictionary definition of “fulfill”? What is the lexicon definition of \( \text{plēroō} \) (the Greek word translated “fulfill”)?

C. There are three ways in which Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. Find at least two passages that show how He fulfilled the law in each of these ways:

1. Kept the Old Testament perfectly and never sinned.

2. Fulfilled all Old Testament prophecy about Himself.

3. Brought the Old Testament to the end of its applicability.

D. In light of what Jesus said in His beatitudes and is about to say in the rest of His sermon, why do you think it was important for Jesus to clarify (in Matthew 5:17-18) that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets?

E. Jesus did not come to abolish or belittle Scripture, but to fulfill it to such a degree that even the smallest detail — down to the “iota” and “dot” — (NASB has “smallest letter” and “stroke”) would be accomplished.
1. Research the iota and the dot in the Hebrew alphabet.

2. Was Jesus concerned about the smallest details of Scripture? What was Jesus’ attitude toward inspired revelation? In your answer, critique this statement: “Jesus doesn’t want us to follow the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law.”

F. In Matthew 5:19, why is Jesus concerned that His Jewish audience start carefully keeping the law of Moses? Find at least two verses that teach that, when Jesus made these remarks, God’s law for the Israelites living at that time was the Law of Moses.

G. Who were the scribes? Who were the Pharisees? Use a Bible encyclopedia to find information and write a summary paragraph about each of these groups.

H. “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” This is the thesis statement for the rest of the chapter. Compare verse 20 to verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43. Reflecting on your reading of Matthew 5-7 and other passages, in what way were the scribes and Pharisees erring and causing the people to err? In what way must our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees? In your answer, use at least five Scripture references.

II. Jesus and murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

A. Is Jesus correcting the Law of Moses as it relates to murder?

1. What is the difference between what Jesus taught and what the religious leaders of Jesus’ day were teaching? Before answering, reflect on the material in one or both of the following articles:


b) http://www.apologeticspress.org/AllegedDiscrepancies.aspx?article=774&b=Matthew

2. Can you think of any examples today where people rationalize breaking God’s law against anger, hatred, and murder?


1. What does Jesus want us to do about fractured relationships? What protocol does Jesus say we must follow?
2. What does Jesus mean when He says, “sins against you”? Is this in reference to personal wrongdoing or public wrongdoing? Were Jesus and the apostles wrong for publicly rebuking false teaching?

C. When we have sinned against someone, the solution is not to increase our church attendance, sing louder, or contribute more money to the Lord (as much as many of us could stand to do better in these areas). Repentance and reconciliation have priority over worship. Read Psalm 51:16-17 and answer the following questions.

1. What does sin do to our worship?

2. Find three (3) apostolic commands to the early church to be unified and/or at peace with one another:
   a) __________________________
   b) __________________________
   c) __________________________

III. Jesus and adultery (Matthew 5:27-30)

A. Concerning adultery, is Jesus contradicting the Law of Moses?

   1. Where does the law of Moses prohibit adultery? List at least three Old Testament passages:
      a) __________________________
      b) __________________________
      c) __________________________

   2. Did God, in the Old Covenant, only prohibit the physical act of adultery? Cite relevant passages in your answer.

B. What were the scribes and Pharisees teaching about adultery? Consult a good commentary for help, and refer to Matthew 19:1-9.

C. What is the meaning of Jesus’ statement that we should pluck out your right eye or cut off your right hand? (Obviously, if we cut off one hand or pluck out one eye, we still could sin with the remaining hand or eye. So Jesus obviously is not advocating self-mutilation.) What are the implications concerning the use of pornography? Consider the following passages in your answer.

   1. Matthew 10:37-39
2. Matthew 16:26
3. Matthew 18:3-6
4. Matthew 19:11-12

Conclusion.

A. In this section of the Sermon on the Mount we have seen that God wants us to be sanctified (set apart for His holy purposes) in our hearts, and not just for us to refrain from doing some terrible actions. Do a personal inventory of your heard (2 Corinthians 13:5), asking yourself whether there is any part of your heart that you have been keeping from God (Romans 12:1-2). If an adjustment needs to be made, resolve to make that change.
Month Three: Divorce and Relationships (Matthew 5:31-48)

Introduction: “Love”

A. Begin this study by re-reading Matthew 5-7.

B. In this section of Matthew 5, we find Jesus’ command to love one’s enemies. Do a study of the Greek word translated “love.” Does this word mean that requires us to enjoy the company of our enemies as much as we enjoy the company of our friends? What is required by the command to love even our enemies?

I. Remarriage (Matthew 5:31-32).

A. What Old Testament passage on divorce does Jesus cite in this passage?

B. While it is difficult for us to know exactly what Moses’ law in this text allowed, Jesus’ law on remarriage is clear and is different from Moses’ requirement. What is Jesus’ law on remarriage? In other words, what are the circumstances under which a person may remarry with God’s approval, according to the law of Christ? Write a paragraph summary. Use the following passages in your answer (if it helps to use the definitions in I.B below, go ahead and use them):

1. Matthew 5:31-32
3. Mark 10:1-12
4. Romans 7:1-3

C. Let us carefully define two terms that appear in these verses:

1. Fornication (“porneia”) refers to “unsanctioned sexual intercourse.”

   It will not help in discussing the meaning of Jesus’ Greek word choice to cite any dictionaries (e.g., early 20th-century English dictionaries) other than those that reputedly providing meanings of New Testament Greek words.

2. Fornication is a broader term than (“moicheia”) or adultery (not all fornication is adultery, but all adultery is fornication). Whenever a married person commits

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adultery, fornication has occurred. Thus, the context of the discussion of marriage in Matthew 19:1-9 confines Jesus’ meaning in choosing the word fornication.

D. What does Jesus’ law on remarriage say about the seriousness of the marriage commitment? How does this seriousness contrast with the attitude toward marriage taken by many in our society today?

E. Some have suggested that when Jesus gave the exception in Matthew 19:9, he included not just the act of fornication, but also “adultery in the heart” (cf. Matthew 5:28), i.e., lust. Can a woman, for example, divorce her husband and remarry legitimately on the grounds that her husband lusted after another woman? Consider the following article in your response: https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1371-is-lust-fornication.

II. Vows (Matthew 5:33-37).

A. What does the word translated “oath” or “vow” mean? Consult a Greek lexical source.

B. Find the Old Testament passage(s) from which Jesus was quoting:

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

C. Jesus gives particular reasons for forbidding swearing by various particular objects, but then He gives a reason for condemning oaths or vows generally, in verse 37. What is that reason? What effect does the attachment of swearing to our assertions have on the believability of our assertions?

_____________________________________________________________________

D. Notice that it is presupposed in this passage that the follower of Christ will tell the truth. Does Christianity allow for lying? Are there any verses that authorize lying under any circumstances? What about cases such as Rahab, who lied in one circumstance, and was also praised by God? Consult this article as you answer: https://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=6&article=5438.

E. Does this passage teach that it is sinful to take an oath in court in a contemporary context? In your answer, cite examples of oath-taking from the Bible. Is there a verse where an inspired apostle does essentially the same thing that a Christian today might do in solemnly swearing to “tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth”? Consult the article here: https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/270-is-taking-an-oath-in-court-or-reciting-the-pledge-of-allegiance-forbidden.

III. Revenge (Matthew 5:38-42).
A. How does the Christian respond to someone who wrongs him? Write a paragraph about this, considering the following passages:

1. Romans 12:14-21
2. Matthew 18:15-35

B. When Jesus advocates that we turn the other cheek, He is not talking about allowing a minimal threat of mortal danger. Rather, he is talking about a maximum kind of insult. He is saying that we cannot reciprocate when someone insults us, even if they insult us highly. Our temptation is to take an action that will our enemy as much as the enemy hurt us. But Jesus forbids this. Find at least two other passages in the Bible where we read about a person responding appropriately to an enemy, and two passages where we read about a person responding inappropriately. What can we learn from both of these?

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________

C. When Jesus advocates that we go the second mile and give to those who ask, He does not mean that we must always give to anyone who asks us anything. (Otherwise, we would open ourselves up to total exploitation.) But Jesus clearly is advocating generosity and liberal giving. And although the particulars may have changed (i.e., people may not be asking us to go a mile with them), surely we still can obey Jesus’ principle. But how? Consult the following passages in your answer.

1. Matthew 25:31-46
3. Romans 15:25-27
4. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4

IV. Love for both neighbor and enemy (Matthew 5:43-48).

A. In this text we are to show love to an enemy and a persecutor. Do a word study on the Greek words translated “enemy” and “persecute.” How do these definitions highlight the challenge of following Jesus’ commands in this text?

B. Jesus specifically forbids loving only those who love us first. Rather, Jesus places on us the responsibility of initiative, and says that we can be complete as God is complete if we
will love our enemies. God has demonstrated love for enemies vividly. Summarize what each of the following passages teaches about God’s attitude toward those who have opposed Him:

1. Romans 5:6-8
2. 1 Timothy 1:12-15
3. Titus 3:5
4. 1 Peter 2:9-10

C. The primary way in which Jesus says that we are to express love for our enemies is through our words. Find three other New Testament passages that discuss how we should use our tongues in ways that help others, and list those passages below. What do we learn about stewardship of our speech?

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

Conclusion.

A. In reflecting on this passage, think through your relationships, and ask if there is anyone with whom my relationship is difficult because of an ungodly attitude I have shown toward him. Based upon the principles in this text, what would Jesus have me do about this problematic situation?