

Counter Rev Small Group Conversation based on Matthew 5:17-20

Keep this conversation no longer than 35-45 minutes. Do your best to draw out the contributions of everyone. Land the time in prayer, but remember to gently coach people who haven't prayed in a group before. There is no pressure to pray aloud. Encourage people to download the commentary of Matthew 5:17-20 off the website for personal study during their devotional times this week. Also remind people to bring their Bibles to group.

Getting to know each other

- Would you say you're a good listener? Can you think of someone who you feel really listened to you lately?

Hearing God's whispers together

- If we make the time to listen, God likes to speak to us through the Bible. So start by getting someone with a nice reading voice to slowly read Psalm 19 twice to the group. As the person reads, everyone needs to 1) listen, eyes closed, letting the words 'wash' over them, 2) listen out for just one phrase that seems to 'stick' to them, and 3) then, during two minutes of silence, ponder their phrase with an openness to anything God might want to show them. Then everyone shares their phrase, as well as any insights 'received'.

Understanding Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:17-20

- *If some of your group did not hear the Sunday message, then play the summary audio clip.*
- *Read verse 17.* When Jesus speaks about the 'law and the prophets' he speaks of the Old Testament. In what ways that you are aware of, is Jesus the 'fulfilment' of the Old Testament?
- *Read verse 18.* Jesus is saying that the entire Old Testament is God's Word. Why do you think it's important that Christians today hear this?
- *Read verse 19.* God honours the person who honours his Word. How can we best honour God's Word? This verse gives some answers, but think of your own too.
- *Read verse 20.* Two definitions are needed: 1) 'The righteousness that surpasses the Pharisees' means 'a deep internal transformation, not just external rule-keeping'. 2) 'Entering the kingdom' here means 'experiencing the kingdom' (and not 'getting saved'). In light of these definitions, what does this verse mean to you?

Applying Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:17-20 (get in groups of 3 or 4)

- When last did you spend time alone with God with a Bible open in front of you?
- What one obstacle keeps you from doing this more often, hopefully even daily? And what one practical thing can you do to overcome this obstacle?
- Have you experienced some progress in the last year in your desire and ability to regularly get into the Bible? If so, is there any advice you can share with the others?