

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Luke 6:12-31

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, January 12, 2014

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 12, 2014**, is from **Luke 6:12-31**. Some denominations are studying only **Luke 6:17-31**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

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Luke 6:12-31

(Luke 6:12) Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.

Jesus taught by word and example, and later in His ministry His disciples recognized the power of His prayer life and asked Him to teach them how to pray (see Luke 11:1). After a strenuous day of serving others, when most needed and wanted to sleep, Jesus climbed a mountain and looked for a hidden and quiet place for conversation with and guidance from His heavenly Father.

(Luke 6:13) And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:

After prayer for God the Father's guidance, Jesus called His disciples and named twelve of them apostles. Jesus chose the twelve that His Father and He decided to choose. As disciples, they learned from Him throughout each day as He prepared them to serve Him as apostles. As apostles, Jesus sent them out to represent Him and teach the truths He taught by word and example. To replace Judas Iscariot as an apostle, Peter and the other apostles said the new apostle had to be one "who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22). They began to accomplish His mission for them as apostles following His resurrection from the dead after He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell them on the day of Pentecost. These twelve effectively witnessed for Him when they preached and demonstrated the truth of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Luke 6:14) Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew,

All of the disciples who followed Jesus up to the day He called them to be His apostles knew of the opposition He faced from some of the religious leaders. They knew of the hardships He experienced in the service of others. They also knew Jesus' claims about himself and they saw Him prove the truths He taught with power from on high. Perhaps Jesus called His disciples from among those who showed their devotion to Him by following Him part way up the mountain when He left the crowds to pray, because He came down from the mountain with His twelve apostles. Perhaps the first three pairs of disciples that Jesus called were paired as brothers (if Philip and Bartholomew were brothers). The Bible says little about Bartholomew, but associates him with Philip.

(Luke 6:15) and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot,

The Bible teaches how Jesus called Matthew the tax collector to follow him. Thomas in Aramaic means "twin," and John's Gospel tells the most about him. He confessed of Jesus, "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28). James is sometimes identified as James the younger or James the little, son of Mary. Simon the Zealot was either a zealot politically or he was zealous for God spiritually.

(Luke 6:16) and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Judas, son of James, was also called Labbeaus and Thaddeus. Some think he wrote the Letter of Jude. Judas Iscariot always appears last in every list, because he betrayed Jesus. Jesus called these twelve after prayerful consultation with His Father and we know He made no mistakes; rather, the Scriptures must be fulfilled that one of His disciples would betray Him. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus said, "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me'" (John 13:18). The Scripture Jesus quoted was Psalm 41:9: "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me."

(Luke 6:17) He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

With this verse, Luke began to report what commentators call "The Sermon on the Plain." At the base of the mountain on the plain, both a great crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people gathered to Him. Both Jews and Gentiles traveled great distances to hear Him and to be healed by Him. Here on this plain, when the twelve disciples heard Jesus preach they began their official training as apostles. Soon, they would begin preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ "in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

(Luke 6:18) They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.

First, Luke said, “They had come to hear him.” Jesus spoke the truth with authority unlike anyone else, and the people came first and foremost to hear the truth He preached. He healed diseases and cured people with unclean spirits. Not every disease has a physical cause or cure; some diseases are from unclean spirits and spiritual causes. His apostles had much to learn from Him in the short time that He would be walking upon the earth.

(Luke 6:19) And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Jesus did not need to say or do anything for someone to be healed by Him. Jesus, the divine Son of God, lived close to His heavenly Father and remained filled with the Holy Spirit so He could be touched by those who were afflicted and divine power would come out from Him and heal them. No one has been or ever will be like Jesus.

(Luke 6:20) Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Jesus preached hundreds if not thousands of sermons in synagogues, in the mountains, on the plains, and even from boats to those standing by the sea (Luke 5:1-4). He preached many of the same truths often and in different ways for various crowds to understand; so, His disciples learned, remembered, and accurately repeated what He taught. Matthew reported the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and Luke reported the Sermon on the Plain. Jesus’ words in this Sermon on the Plain are directed primarily to His disciples (students from which He had selected His twelve apostles). “The poor” in this beatitude are not all poor people; rather, all poor people who follow Jesus Christ. Or, “the poor” may be all poor disciples of Jesus who truly place their trust in Him. These poor disciples can be happy because they are living now in the kingdom of God with Jesus. And when they die, Jesus will take them to the place He has prepared for them in His heavenly kingdom.

(Luke 6:21) “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

In these two beatitudes Jesus looked to the future. His followers might be poor and hungry and especially suffer persecution because they are His followers. But because they follow Him, someday they will be filled with good things. They can feel satisfaction in this life because they have Jesus’ assurance that even though they may weep now in this world they will laugh in the future He has promised to bring as Messiah and Savior. They may be physically hungry, but they can rejoice in their knowledge of Jesus and the fullness of the Holy Spirit within them.

(Luke 6:22) “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

Those who seek to live godly or good lives will be hated and excluded by some. Those who try to live according to the teachings of Jesus with sincere faith in Him will suffer hatred, exclusion, bullying, reviling, and defamation in this world. Jesus wanted all of His disciples to know what they could expect if they decided to faithfully follow Him. Later in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus told people to count the cost of discipleship before they decided to follow Him (Luke 14:27-30).

(Luke 6:23) Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

Jesus openly taught from the perspective that the religious leaders in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel had killed the prophets and they would persecute and kill Him too. He taught His disciples to expect a similar hostile response from political and religious leaders, even though they would not all be killed. After Judas betrayed Jesus, out of the remaining eleven disciples only John did not die as a martyr, but even he spent time in exile (where he wrote the Book of Revelation). Those who suffer because they follow Jesus can rejoice and leap for joy because His Father and He will reward them. John was rewarded in exile with a vision that enabled him to write a book of the Bible.

(Luke 6:24) “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Matthew did not include any woes in his list of beatitudes in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. In this woe, Jesus may have been speaking of rich disciples who turn away from following Him in order to pursue wealth and influence over others in this world. Those who zealously pursue temporary worldly riches apart from following Jesus Christ will have received the consolation or reward they have sought in worldly wealth and there will not be anything else for them later beyond what they have zealously sought in this world.

(Luke 6:25) “Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. “Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.

Worldly associations, power, and wealth are temporary, even though they can give a person a sense of fullness and something to laugh about in this world. Some are so shortsighted they use their mental and physical resources only for the acquisition of worldly benefits. They may be satisfied now with their worldly acquisitions, but there will come a time, either in this life or in the next life, when they will mourn and weep because of their wrong priorities and the consequences of pursuing wrong objectives.

(Luke 6:26) “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

If Jesus’ disciples begin to pursue peoples’ praise for what they do and say instead of following Jesus, who wants His disciples to teach the truth of the gospel (truths regarding sin, repentance, love, trust, and the gift of eternal life through faith in Him), they will most likely receive what they have pursued, but not commendation from God

for they will have become false prophets. Political and religious leaders and others may speak well of these false disciples; however, they will regret their unwise pursuits in the future. Claiming to be disciples of Jesus, they are actually false prophets, and Jesus and God will judge them as false prophets, and they will suffer for having misled others away from what is true, right, and wise. Those who listen to Jesus; that is, “follow Jesus,” will be blessed. Those who hear the good news of Jesus and His teachings, but who choose not to listen to or follow Him will suffer woe.

(Luke 6:27) “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

Jesus expects His disciples to listen to Him and do what He says. Those who follow Jesus will make a sincere effort to love their enemies and do good to those who hate them. Jesus loved His enemies at all times. He loved and died on the cross to do good to all those who hated Him or were the enemies of God. Jesus would have gathered all Jerusalem together under His loving care as a hen gathers her chicks, but the people would not listen and they crucified Him (Luke 13:34).

(Luke 6:28) bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

It may or may not make much difference in the life of someone who hates you because you are a true disciple of Jesus for you to bless them or wish them well when they curse you. However, it will make a beneficial spiritual difference in your own life when you bless and pray for others. Jesus says we should bless and pray for those who are our enemies. We can pray that they will come to a saving knowledge of the truth, and become Christians, true followers of Jesus. And, you can pray that the Lord will change them so they will no longer curse or abuse you or anyone else. You can pray that love and justice will in some way stop them from continuing in sin and harming themselves and others. You can pray that God will give you the wisdom to deal rightly with them.

(Luke 6:29) If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

Jesus did all that He preached. His disciples should do all that He preached. Jesus taught that we need to pray and also provide a visible example of what it means to be one of His true disciples. Prayer needs to come first so we will know what to say and do in every situation for Jesus’ sake, and so God can work in the heart and mind of those who hate and abuse us so they will change. The followers of Jesus do not need to be so possessive of this world’s goods that they are unwilling to part from them, even if someone tries to steal them. Jesus teaches a general principle and does not mean that we should allow ourselves to be constantly abused, beaten, or stolen from without praying for and seeking justice from the right authorities, while also praying that the abuser and thief will become a true follower of Jesus as Lord and Savior. To prevent injustice, justice sometimes needs to take its full course of prevention.

(Luke 6:30) Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.

Jesus' sermon included general principles that His disciples should seek to prayerfully follow. He does not mean that we should not use good judgment when someone begs from us, because we do not want our giving to create or increase an unhealthy dependency or make someone lazy. Sometimes begging and taking the property of others is stealing, behaviors the Bible says disciples must avoid, "Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy" (Ephesians 4:28). Jesus never intended to command or commend begging as a way of life, but He did recognize that some need to beg to survive and disciples need to have something they can share with the needy. Peter gave what he had to a beggar and said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Peter gave the man what he had and what the man needed more than money. In addition, for our own good, if someone cheats us or steals our goods, we and others may be better off not trying to get justice or get back our goods but move on with our lives. Answers to our prayers may indicate that we need to seek justice in order to teach someone a valuable lesson and to prevent them from hurting others. Answers to our prayers may indicate that we need to let go and let God take care of them and the situation.

(Luke 6:31) Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Jesus expressed the Golden Rule in a way that emphasized doing the good and right thing for others that you would like for others to do for you. His moral principle did not focus on only not doing bad things to someone. He focused on His disciples seeing others and loving others as they loved themselves. If you see someone who needs something good done for them, and it is something good and wise that you would like done for you in the same or similar situation, then pray for the Lord's leading and the Lord's resources to help you know what to do to help them.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What three reasons does Luke list for why so many people came to Jesus?
2. Of the three reasons above, which one is the most important? Why?
3. Why should a disciple of Jesus who is poor be happy in spite of their poverty?
4. According to Luke 6:22, what are the four unpleasant situations that Jesus' disciples may experience if they follow Him?
5. What might be the reason when everyone speaks well of you? If your goal is not everyone speaking well of you what is your goal?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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