

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further ***International Bible Lessons***

Matthew 23:2-12 & Mark 12:38-44

Sunday December 27, 2015

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How did Jesus describe those who sat in Moses’ seat?

These were religious rulers in official positions who enforced, interpreted, and made laws for the people, but they did not follow the laws themselves. They made burdensome laws for others, and did nothing to help anyone obey their burdensome laws. They sought the praise of people and dressed ostentatiously to emphasize their religiosity.

2. Why did Jesus say His disciples and followers should not be called “rabbi”?

Because Jesus was the Rabbi or Teacher, they were not to try to take His place over others. They were to pass on His teachings without taking anything away or adding anything to His words. They were to be faithful witnesses of His teaching and behavior. They were all equal to one another, and none of them were to seek to be greater than others with the notion that others were to serve them. We must see what Jesus meant by understanding what Jesus has given us in the Church: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-15).

3. What do you think Jesus meant when He said we should not call anyone on earth “father”?

We can call our natural or legal parents “father” and “mother.” But only our heavenly Father can give us the new birth by grace through faith in Jesus Christ in the power of

the Holy Spirit. We are not to give credit to anyone but our heavenly Father (and the Son and the Holy Spirit) for our new birth and spiritual life.

4. Why did Jesus say His disciples and followers should not be called “instructors”?

Jesus’ disciples are not to be called instructors because their task is to point people to the Instructor, Jesus the Messiah. No one is to try to take Jesus’ place in the lives of other people in any way.

5. What are some lessons you learned about giving from the incident in the Court of the Women?

Since the poor widow voluntarily gave all that she had to live on, she loved and trusted God much. Peter voluntarily gave what he had to give when he healed the blind man at the temple, for he had no money. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: “So we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well” (1 Thessalonians 2:8). And God the Father through Jesus Christ is the supreme example of voluntary giving: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

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