



Check In

Connect with God honestly about where you are at



Reflect

"Review until" something pops to talk to God about



Share

Talk with God & others about what is now on your heart to do

Matthew

Session 8 - A Heart of Spontaneous Love

Check-In

God is glad to connect with you. He wants to hear about how you are doing. Take a moment to notice your primary emotion of the day to help yourself be fully present. Consider whether you are primarily sad, angry, scared, happy, tender, etc. Share with God that emotion. Write out: What are you thankful about? Ask him, "How does he feel about you?"

Reflect

Spend some time with the biblical texts and the resources below. Do so until something pops out to you; feel free to stop when the Lord prompts you this way. Talk with God about what encourages, challenges, or confuses you.

Read Matthew 5:17-48

Jesus has invited everyone to surrender to the heavenly life he proclaims. This is a life of flourishing inwardly with a heart of spontaneous love for enemies that Jesus has embodied in Matthew's preceding stories. Jesus wants to bring people to a deeper wholeness (often translated as "perfect," see v.48) through a loving relationship with God as Father. The ancient revelation in the Old Testament always pointed to this. Jesus carefully walks his listeners through an inward transformation of dealing with their thwarted will (anger), their controlling bodily desires (lust), the superficiality of their behavior (divorce and oaths), and the brokenness of their relationships (vengeance and hatred). Each of these moves through every dimension of a person. Their mind (will), body (desires), heart (fidelity and integrity), and relationships (remaining loving). He offers this as both a vision and a process. By dealing with each, his disciples can cultivate the same spontaneous love for enemies that Jesus demonstrates in coming from heaven to reconcile with enemies of God.

Pay attention to these recurring themes in Matthew:

Immanuel, God With Us - What is it like to be with Jesus?

Teaching, as revelation - What does Jesus' teaching reveal about reality? God? People? The world? The enemy?

The Church - What do you learn about the true Israel and the community of people shaped by life with Jesus?

Read this excerpt from [*The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church*](#) by Farley

NOTE: Is there something you, or your family, need in light of this part of the Sermon? To be heard, prayer, time to practice, or shepherding (truth-telling, encouragement, or support)?

Share

Be quiet for 3 minutes. What do you sense God is saying to you? How will you pursue being faithful with that this week? The community is blessed when we share out of our life experiences, gifts, time with God, and reflect on scripture. We believe everyone contributes to teaching. What insight, question, or experience do you want to share with us?

Steps for Church Families of Prayerful Love:

- What are you thankful for? What challenges are happening in your life, family, and community?
- What did you like/not like about the Scripture?
- What did you learn about God and people from the Scripture?
- What do you think God is inviting you to live with him this week?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this?
- Ask God: How can I bless (body, labor, emotions, social, spiritual) those people who need this?