

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Matthew Season 6: Religion to Redemption
Episode 5: Condition of the Heart
September 3 and 6, 2026
Pastor Matt Carter

LEADER NOTES – *Leading Well in 7 Minutes or Less*: Listen to ALL episodes for free on [Spotify](#) or [Apple](#).

Fall trimester: 8/17–12/7

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Serve at our San Pablo campus for Church Leader's Summit: On September 14, 15 and 16 our church will open its doors at our San Pablo campus to over 1,500 ministry leaders. If you'd like to serve, please visit: <https://live.churchleaderssummit.com/serve>

Saturated, September 16-20: Our annual five-day event in which we anticipate a movement of God to bring revival in our lives individually and as a church body. [Click here for campuses and times](#).

Growth Track: Designed to equip you as a disciple-making disciple. You'll learn practical skills and deepen your understanding of core Christian principles so you can continue to grow in your walk with Jesus. Growth Track is a hybrid course with two on-demand online sessions (20-30 minutes each) exploring the Discipleship Triangle, followed by a final in-person gathering at your local campus. [Learn More](#).

THIS WEEK'S READING PLAN: Download our app for [Apple](#) or [Android](#). Click the "Daily" icon at the bottom of the app for our daily Bible reading plan.

Share Wins, Praises and Prayers: Where did you see God move this week?

Action Step Review: Last week's action step: *Ask God to reveal one area where you have been negotiating rather than surrendering. Write it down and identify one concrete act of obedience you can take this week. Share it with someone in your group.* How did God answer your prayers? What did you learn about God? About yourself?

Memory Verse: *John 14:15*

Sermon Text: *Matthew 16:17-19; 23:1-33; Mark 7:6-7; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 2:1-5*

Discussion Questions

Leaders: Please use the questions in the curriculum to facilitate discussion of the sermon and the Scriptures. **But there's no need to answer every question.** The goal is to get your group members talking more than you and to get them going deeper. **The answers in parentheses** are simply possible responses you can use after your group has shared their thoughts to help keep the discussion going. They are not intended to be the only or "correct" answers.

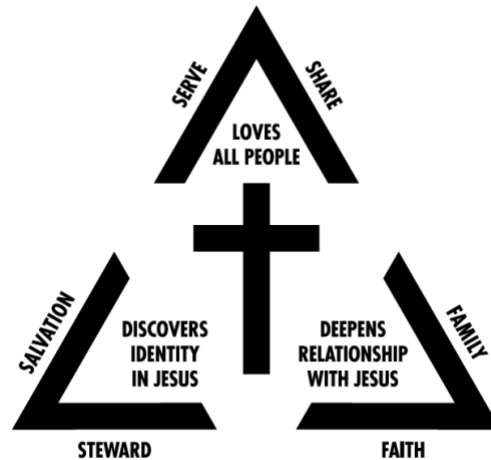
- **Read Matthew 23:1-33. What stood out to you this week in the sermon, in the Scriptures and what God revealed to you about Himself?**
- **What does Sitting in the seat of Moses mean?** *(Synagogues had a stone seat at the front where the authoritative teacher sat. The Pharisees occupied a position of God-given authority to teach the word of God to the people, even though they were abusing it. Jesus was saying, do as they say, not as they do.)*
- **Jesus called out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. What are you preaching but not practicing?** *(The Pharisees wore fancy robes to preach. What do your fancy robes look like?)*
- **When you're doing all the right things for God, but you know your heart isn't really in it, how can you repent and turn to Jesus?** *(Slow down enough to enjoy your relationship with Jesus. Practice contemplative prayer. Pray that God will renew your love for Him. Read Psalm 46:10; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10 and 4:19.)*
- **Discover:** Discuss examples of how the Pharisees took the "commandments of men" and taught them as if they were the commandments of God. *(See Mark 7:1-8 and Matthew 12:1-14 as two examples. Don't let man-made commandments take you away from God's commands or make them unnecessarily burdensome. Obedience follows what God has actually commanded us to do. Legalism takes God's commands and adds to them or puts man-made rules on the same level as or higher than the Word of God. See Matthew 23:23.)*
Deepen: What did you used to believe was a Biblical command that you later found was just a church tradition, cultural expectation, family rule or someone else's personal preference?
- **Read John 14:15. Discuss what the verse means.** *(It's not If you REALLY love me, you'll keep my commandments. It's if you truly love me, the RESULT will be that you WANT to keep my commandments and so you will. If love of God is the root, obedience to God will be the fruit.)*
- **Read Matthew 23:29-32. What areas have you been tempted to put legalism over the gospel?** *(How might you think you would have been better, and more Christlike, than generations before you?)*
- **Discuss the differences between how Jesus dealt with the sin of people that were far from God versus how he dealt with the sin of the Pharisees.** *(Jesus dealt with the sin of people far from God by gently and privately calling them to repentance. He dealt with the sin of the Pharisees publicly and loudly because they sat in the seat of Moses with authority. They knew the law and were leading people away from God with their actions and man-made commandments.)*
- **Read Matthew 16:17-19 and 1 Peter 2:9. How is God calling you to use your sphere of influence to help others enter the kingdom of heaven?** *(You can share the gospel, invite someone to church or group, pray for someone, serve others, share your testimony, answer questions about Jesus, demonstrate the love of Jesus and disciple your children.)*

Action Step: Identify one person God has placed in your sphere of influence who may be far from Him. Pray for that person every day this week, then take one intentional step to make it easier for them to move toward Jesus.

Your Discipleship Journey

- **RightNow Media:** Find an *unending supply of resources* by signing up for a FREE RightNow Media account. Go to coe22.com/rightnowmedia or text “RightNow” to 441122.

(Note: You'll need to login or create an account to view RightNow Media content.)



Go to coe22.com/growthtrack, scroll down to “What’s Growth Track?” and click the words, “Discipleship Triangle” to download or print a discipleship journey tool with questions for you to ask yourself and others. Please share the link and directions with others in your group.