

Jesus Taught about Behavior (Matthew 6)



Dear families,

Have you ever wondered, *Does Jesus care more about what I believe or about what I do?* That's one of those questions that can't be answered in a word.

We learn in the Bible of the danger of a "belief" that is only external. We find warnings like Matthew 15:8: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." On the flip side, we also learn in the New Testament that "Faith without works is useless" (James 2:20).

This is not evidence of the Bible contradicting itself but of the Bible teaching that these two are not mutually exclusive. So, what is it that the Bible tells us God is looking for? Scripture seems to suggest both belief and action: faith and works.

In Matthew 6, Jesus used the Sermon on the Mount to emphasize this further by spelling out some of the specific actions that true belief will produce. Jesus speaks of giving, prayer, fasting, and holding a right perspective on our possessions.

The irony of Jesus' explaining the appropriate actions that flow out of genuine faith is that elsewhere in the New Testament we learn that Jesus is the central ingredient in the faithful production of these behaviors in our lives.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 reminds us that the Word of God is able to teach, rebuke, correct, and train us so that we are fully equipped for the work that God created us for. Considering the whole counsel of God, Jesus is identified in John 1 as the living Word of God. Therefore, Jesus

does not simply teach us about the behaviors He calls us to, He is the very One equipping us to live out of these behaviors.

In 2 Peter 1, we find this idea spelled out even more directly: “His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3).

Jesus is deeply concerned with what we believe and what we do. His expectations are high, but He promises to give us everything we need for both faith and works. This is a promise we can count on.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week’s Bible story points to Jesus.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** People who trust in Jesus will live like Him.
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live for Him because God has forgiven their sins.
- **Older Preschool:** Jesus taught what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God because God has forgiven their sins.
- **Kids:** Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should interact with God and others. Believers live to honor God—not to earn God’s favor but because they already have it.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Younger Preschool:** What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God.
- **Older Preschool:** What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom.
- **Kids:** What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Lord, You are great and powerful. 1 Chronicles 29:11
- **Younger Preschool:** Lord, You are great and powerful. Everything belongs to You. 1 Chronicles 29:11

- **Older Preschool:** Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory ... for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to you. 1 Chronicles 29:11
- **Kids:** Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to you. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. 1 Chronicles 29:11

**** Next week:** Jesus Taught about God's Love (Luke 15)