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## study questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.



### INTRODUCTION

Nobody wants to be average. Sometimes events happen in our lives, or we find ourselves behaving in such a way, that we wind up feeling like one more statistic in a goofed up world. In the Message on the Mount Jesus says he came to change all of that -- then, today, and forever.

Here at the beginning of his ministry he announces that it's actually possible for things to be different because his kingdom has arrived! We don't have to be locked into the sins and ruts of our fallen selves or this fallen world. He can blow us out of *average* and we can rise out of our former lives. He has come to show us a whole new way of being human.

The deeper we get into what Jesus is saying, the more we realize this isn't just good advice, it's great news!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has there ever been a behavior, situation, or happening that you feel labels you as *average* or just like everyone else. What was it and why?
  - a. Have you ever noticed a desire, no matter how strong, to want to rise above the crowd and the typical patterns of your life?
  - b. Do you think it is intolerant or unfair to feel such a thing? Or is it a desire that connects with something planted inside you by your Creator?
2. **Read Matthew 5:20-48 together.** Do any of the "You have heard...but's" feel like they especially connect with your life?
  - a. Keeping in mind v. 20 (and that Jesus is challenging the crazy legalistic applications of the Old Testament laws in his day by the Pharisees and Rabbis), what do you think he is asking you to do about that area in your life?
  - b. Do these commands seem impossible to you?
  - c. Do you think these behavioral commands, which are obviously behavioral directives, are actually more? Are they more than just a list of "dos and don'ts"? How would you describe what these are in your own words?
3. Is verse 48 realistic? In as precise words as you can think of, what do you think Jesus is saying practically when he calls us to be perfect like our Father?
4. What do you think of the C.S. Lewis quote?:  
 "The command *Be ye perfect* is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command... If we let Him...He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into... a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine....The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what he said." – *Mere Christianity*
  - a. What do you think Lewis is saying about Jesus' statement?
  - b. Do you think he's right? Is it a comforting or scary statement...something else?
  - c. How does Lewis's thought add to your understanding of Jesus' Message on the Mount?

### MOVING FORWARD

How can your friends in your community group pray for you this week? Do you have a specific area of you life that you would like Jesus to take you beyond what is humanly average?

### PRAYER

**Each tree is recognized by its own fruit...A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart... Luke 6:44 -45 (NIV)**