

## Application Guide: “Are You A Pagan?” (Mt. 5:43-6:34)

**April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005:** Pastor Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church, felt convicted to go back to a portion of the “Sermon on the Mount” and walk through Jesus’ stirring words that contrast the life of a true follower of Christ and the “religious” life focused on self. At the heart of those who live in the Kingdom of the Heavens is a willing and radical self-denial and desire to serve others above oneself (Phil. 2:2-3). It is a heart that lives solely for the pleasure and glory of God (2 Cor 5:9; Mt. 5:16).

1. *Do you love like a pagan* (Mt. 5:43-48)? It is easy to love those who love you in return. The mark of true Christianity – of those radically transformed by the grace of Christ – is the presence of a power to love those who hate, spend time with the annoying and outcasts, and pray for one’s enemies. Do you see the world through grace-healed eyes?
  - a. Read Luke 10:25-37. Who do you find hardest to love in your sphere of influence? Who do you find annoying at work or avoid at church? Who do you get angry at on the highway or make assumptions about while in the grocery line? How would Jesus have us respond to these people?
  - b. Read Romans 12:16-21. Who might be labeled your “enemy”? Who is “persecuting” you at the moment? Do you do good to them for Christ’s sake?
    - i. If Jesus were in your shoes, how would he respond to illegal aliens? Gangsters and drug dealers and prostitutes? Those who work for the ACLU or Planned Parenthood? Biology professors who teach evolution?
    - ii. Have you ever prayed for Saddam Hussein or Osama Bin Laden to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Have you ever mourned over the lost souls of Ben Affleck, Eminem, Christina Aguilera, Abercrombie & Fitch Models, Howard Stern, or Hugh Hefner (Read Mk. 5:1-20; Mt. 23:37; & Lk. 23:34)? Can these people be saved (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-11)?
2. *Do you give like a pagan* (Mt. 6:1-4)? The pagan longs for man’s approval. If our religious acts are for human praise, that is *all* the reward we will get. On the contrary, The one who gives without regard to who is looking and does not even notice it as anything special themselves, no “big deal,” is the very one who has God’s attention and becomes God’s creative partner in well-doing. He or she will know the fellowship of God and see the effects of these deeds multiplied for good in the power of God.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Why do you give of your finances, time, and energy? What are ways you are involved at church in which you struggle at doing it for the right reasons? What thoughts go into your mind?
  - b. How can you take these thoughts captive (cf. 2 Cor 10:4-5)? How can we practice what is right *from the heart*, with pure motives?
3. *Do you pray like a pagan* (Mt. 6:5-15)?
  - a. When you pray in groups, do you formulate your words as others pray so you can sound spiritual when it’s your turn? Do you pray longer and more meaningfully in public than you do in private?
  - b. Does your prayer life communicate that you have a loving relationship with God or are your prayers “vain repetitions” where you constantly ask God to give you what you want?
  - c. With the way you are living your life right now, what kind of rewards will there be for you when you stand before Christ after you die?

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (New York, Harper Collins: 1998), 193.