

A note from Kathy

When I was young and learning to sew, I found pinning a pattern on my material a tedious and difficult part of making a new dress. But following the pattern was crucial if I wanted to end up with a dress that looked like the picture. What pattern is your life following today? God has a plan for each of us...it is a plan to give us hope and a future. Please read this chapter at least twice, then pray asking God to open your eyes and ears to all he has for you. God longs to have an intimate relationship with you. Enjoy your time in his word and the unhurried rhythm of His grace.

Observation

1. Locate Galilee, Judea and the Jordan River on a map in order to see where these events took place. Once again, we see Jesus leave the land of Israel to go into Gentile territory. Why do you suppose he did this?
2. If Jesus had gone over the Jordan River to get away from the crowd for a while, that did not last long. The crowds had gathered once again, and what did they want of Jesus?
3. Who do we find was in the crowd once again?
4. Were they there to learn from the Master?

The word “test” in the Greek is *Peiraz*; it means to maliciously, craftily try, trap.

5. What is the question they posed to Jesus?
6. Jesus did not directly answer their question; he simply taught them truth. What truth did he point out?
7. The word in verse 5 for “unite” is *Proskollao*; it means to glue together. How does knowing the meaning of this word help you see the gravity of Jesus’ statement?
8. Why do you believe Moses told the people they needed to get a certificate of divorce if they were going to dissolve their marriage?
This is another time when looking up the Greek definition shines much more light on the text. The word “hard” in the Greek is *sklero*; it means offensive, intolerable, violent, stubborn, and inflexible.

9. Jesus said there are people who by choice have remained single because of the kingdom of God. In what way would marriage be a help or hindrance in your service to God?
10. Once again in verses 13-15, we see the children were coming to Jesus. What did Jesus do?
11. Jesus said, "the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Describe this type of person? What would their character be like?
12. Verses 16-23 tell the story of a rich young man who came to Jesus. What do you suppose this man had heard about Jesus?
13. How would you describe this young man from what you have read (vs. 20)? Try to think of the positive as well as the negative qualities.
14. In spite of a lack of humility, we see that there was still a nagging in his heart. He still felt there was a lack, something was missing. Jesus saw straight to the heart of the matter because he sees our hearts. What was this young man's problem?
15. Notice how he felt as he left Jesus that day. Which soil of Matthew 13:18-23 would you say was the soil of his heart? Why?
16. The encounter with this rich young man sparked some questions in the disciples. Notice the statement Peter made in verse 27. What did Peter ask Jesus after the young man left?
17. Did Jesus reprimand Peter for this question? What did he tell him?
18. You cannot out give God, not with your money and not with your life. What has Jesus promised us? Verse 29
19. Notice the warning in verse 30. Write this verse in your own words.

Application

1. The jealousy harbored by the Pharisees drove them to try to trap, trick and trip up Jesus. Proverbs 27:4 says, "Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before

jealousy?” Wrath is like a forest fire that burns and devours, but when it runs out of fuel it will die down and go out. Anger can be like a flood of water that comes down when a levee breaks and destroys anything in the way. But jealousy is not like these two; it continues to burn and refuel itself because it cannot be satisfied. It is not satisfied until the object of the jealousy has been destroyed. Do you see why Jesus did not try to argue or reason with them? He simply used their questions as a teaching tool for those present in the crowd who had ears to hear. What lesson can we glean from Jesus dealing with the Pharisees?

2. The Pharisees came to Jesus with their questions. Does their twisting of the law remind you of the way Satan came to Eve originally? God had given Adam and Eve everything they needed for the abundant life, but Satan came accusing God of holding out and lying to them. How were the Pharisees twisting the Law of Moses? Is this a problem we still need to watch out for today? What can we do in order to be prepared so that we will not be deceived or caught off guard?
3. Divorce is a complicated and sensitive issue to discuss. No one walks down the aisle with the expectation they will one day divorce. This was not God’s original plan. So many of the amazing things God had in mind for us at creation have been twisted and tainted by sin. Often people think their circumstance is so bad that there is no fix. That is understandable; our flesh grows weary. This is the perfect time to try something new. Purpose to spend the next year focusing on pleasing God, being in his word with new vigor and focus, asking him for specific healing in this marriage relationship. We cannot change another person, but we can be the kind of person God loves to bless. You may not be at the point of divorce, but everyone can improve their relationship with their spouse. Are you willing to try this for 1 year? What will this look like for you?
4. I have a project for you to do. Yes, I am serious; I would like you to actually do this. Glue two sheets of paper together and let them dry. Then separate them again. Be as careful as you can but make them two again. If you are married, this will be a wonderful visual illustration for you to remember at times of frustration and discouragement. If you are divorced, I believe you would agree with me that that is exactly how it feels. It feels like something of you is gone and yet you still have some of the other person with you. It is a very unnatural feeling. If you are already divorced, do not despair. God is able to do mighty things in and through you. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin, but it

is the kind of choice we make that has on-going complications and consequences. Jesus wants so much more for us. Read Matthew 17:20.

5. Take a few minutes to study 1 Corinthians 13:4-5. Do any of these descriptions seem to jump off the page? Why not ask the Lord to show you areas where you have been unloving, seeking his forgiveness. (You may even want to ask someone else to forgive you.)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6. Verses 16-30 tell the story of a very wealthy young man who came to see Jesus. He obviously was a man who wanted to please God and was interested in going to heaven. He realized that it would probably take something good that he had never thought of in order to gain admittance into such a wonderful place. Notice how sad he was when he was asked to separate himself from what he had previously placed his hope and confidence in and follow Jesus. Do you ever leave church feeling sad as this young man did that day? You long to please God and want to go to heaven, but there is something he has asked you to change, to lay aside and follow him. Perhaps it is a relationship or the way you make your living or what you are placing your hope in, and you are not willing to give it up. I want to encourage you. No one can out give God. You will never sacrifice in such a way to out give him. You will also never be without. God knows how to care for his own. This young man was sad because he had great riches, but he would never know how God would have supplied and cared for him. He would never have the kind of sweet relationship with God like the disciples. What is God asking you to do in order to follow him?
7. Perhaps you can relate to Peter when he said, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Why not stop and talk to God about it? You will not shock him. Now be still and listen for his answer.
8. What is the most important thing you have discovered about God in Matthew 19? Intimate relationships grow over time. Spending time with someone is how we get to know them. It is how we get to know God. Now what will you do with this discovery?