

## Word and Spirit Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Do you have a good sense of direction? Explain.
2. How many Bibles, if any, do you own?

**Read the following passage:** Matthew 5:17-20.

In this passage, Jesus upholds the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. The phrase “the Law or the Prophets” was a typical Jewish way of referring to all of the Old Testament writings. There are a number of sticky theological questions that spring up in relation to this passage. What does it mean that not the smallest letter will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished? Does this mean that Christians should literally adhere to all of the commands in the Law of Moses? (In Acts 15, the early church decided that Gentiles did not need to follow the Law of Moses.) What does it mean that our righteousness needs to surpass that of the Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of God?

Jesus is likely teaching that God’s word expressed in the Scriptures has eternal authority, and that true righteousness — righteousness that goes beyond mere attentiveness to the letter of the law — is what God requires of human beings. In verses 21 through 47 Jesus will go on to describe the kind of true obedience to the Scriptures that God desires from people.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Do you read the Scriptures? How often? Do you use any resources to help you understand the Scriptures?
2. What role should the Scriptures play in the lives of disciples of Jesus?
3. Describe some of the ways, if any, that you allow the Scriptures to have authority in your life? Are there any areas of your life you are aware of in which you are not following the Scriptures? Explain.
4. According to the Scriptures, what are the primary purposes of human existence?
5. What are some of the things the Holy Spirit does in the life of a follower of Jesus?

6. Describe how the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit both play a role in providing guidance to us.
7. What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit empowers followers of Jesus Christ?
8. Do you sense the power of the Holy Spirit operating in your life? Explain.

**Pray**