

Week of June 12 - "If You Believe..." - Small Group Lesson Lesson 4

Connect Together

Why can it be so disappointing when something you expect someone to have done, is not? How have you dealt with such situations?

Lesson Verses - Matthew 21:18-22 (CSB)

18 Early in the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry. 19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it except leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" At once the fig tree withered. 20 When the disciples saw it, they were amazed and said, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" 21 Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Study & Apply

1. Jesus had just performed miracles to show He fulfills the OT messianic prophecies. He also fulfilled the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah riding on the colt. People praised Him and God. Despite these clear signs, the Jewish authorities refused to recognize Him.

    a. What is the teaching about "fruit" in the book of Matthew? Why fruit? (Matthew 7:16-20; Matthew 3:8-10; Matthew 21:43)

    b. According to Jesus, what was the sin of the Jewish authorities? (Matthew 23:27-28, v.21-22; Matthew 17:17)

APPLY: How has your faith in Jesus changed the way you do things? What aspects of living righteously are particularly challenging in the world today? How can we live righteously in this "perverse generation" (Matthew 17:17)?

Study & Apply

2. Let us take a look at the relationship between faith, righteousness, fruit and answered prayer.

   a. Let's recall - what makes a person unrighteous and how does one become righteous? Why is this way of becoming righteous important vs. one's own effort? (Romans 3:22-24; Philippians 1:11)

   b. Read John 15:16. How does faith enable you to produce good fruit? What is the "effort" to produce good fruit? Why does the effort have to be as described in John 15:16? (Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:13)

APPLY: According to James 5:16, what fosters effective prayer? What then is the simple key to producing lasting Christlike fruit? (💡 Holiness results in prayer, but prayer also fosters holiness.)

Discuss & Share

What would you expect to see in your life as you mature in faith? What possible changes could your righteous prayer affect the lives of others through its fruit?

Grow & Minister

Minister to one another through sharing specific prayer requests.