

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

Topic: Matthew 6: 1 to 6:24 "Watch your focus."

The gospel of Matthew's message is powerful and relevant to our current human situation. Matthew's purpose is to give us a training manual for teaching the Deeply Satisfied Life. This material is developed for the early church, but is applicable for us today. Matthew's teaching role model is Jesus. The "Deeply Satisfied Life" is the experience ("Gut Trip Analysis") of the term Sanctification (which is an Old Christian Code Word understood as "Head Trip Analysis").

This is our seventh lesson in this series, and is associated with "Tools For Teaching The Methods For A Happy/Holy Life." My reflections on the gospel give us the overall title of "The Training Manual For Teaching The Transparent Sanctified Life." With this metaphor established, let us continue. .

I. Read the assigned reading at one time.

II. The theme of this lesson is "Watch your focus." What is the "focus" Matthew is embracing? As I was chewing this over in my mind, the closing verse in last week's lesson caught my attention, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is Perfect" (5:48).

Focus: An intimate relationship with Perfect At-One-Ment

This statement is filled with old Christian code words. Perhaps a transliteration will suffice: "*Live in an intimate relationship with Perfect At-One-ment.*" This is the fundamental focus for Christians, in particular those seeking to experience their faith, rather than just understand it.

The way in which we make the relationship intimate is "to do what we do for Jesus;" i.e., we make ourselves look good when we make Christ look good.

Focus: In the soup of reality, it is the spiritual pieces that are the sweetest.

Last week we explored a little bit of this theme of the "one reality." It is helpful to give it another go, because of our present day confusion in Christian circles about living in a parallel universe.

Much of Christian theology embraces two realities. One is the human/natural reality, the other is a spiritual reality that co-exists above or beyond the natural reality; i.e., in heaven. This dual universe is supported in the statement by some branches of Christianity that the world is only 5,000 years old, because this is what the Bible describes, and THE BIBLE IS INFALLIBLE AND IS TO BE INTERPRETED LITERALLY. This "infallibility" and inerrancy are gifts from the spiritual universe, and not the physical/natural universe.

The problem this causes for thinking people is that we live in an UNI-verse and not a parallel-verse.

One reality and prescriptive lenses--

The suggestion I make is to understand that we live in ONE REALITY. This reality is a soupy mixture of natural and spiritual elements. The only way to focus on these two dynamics separately is to view them through a set of prescriptive lenses. One lens illumines the physical/natural and the other lens to illumine the spiritual.

The sweetest pieces—

The soup of the one reality has two tastes: the physical/human taste is characterized as The Way Life Is—“if it can happen it will.” It is not always so sweet, but it is meaty. The Spiritual taste is experienced when we live in harmony and peace, when we live At-One with all things. This is experienced as a peace that passes understanding. This is how the spiritual part of the soup is the sweetest.

Focus: *The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.*

This axiom is based on the knowledge that God is only experienced as LOVE. Yet, God is THE GUARANTOR of the reward for our deeds.

God guarantees the reward of gravity. We can drop a heavy non-Christian and a light Christian off the top of a 10-story building and both hit the ground at the same time. God is not the punisher, because, the reward for our deed is found in the deed itself. God Guarantees it.

God guarantees the reward of our social laws. Individuals choose to drive the wrong way on I-135, and they will get a ticket. God is not the punisher, because the reward for our deeds are found in the deed itself. God Guarantees it.

God guarantees the reward of our moral laws. Individuals choose to be abuse to their children, and their children will be taken from them. God is not the punisher, because the reward for our deeds are found in the deed itself. God Guarantees it.

III. Now, apply these principles to the following:

A. 6: 1 – 4 Acts of righteousness: giving to the needy.
What is the relationship to Perfect At-One-Ment?

In the “soup of the one reality” describe the physical/natural and the spiritual focus.

What are the rewards found in the deed itself?

B. 6: 5 – 15 Praying in secret: not babble; forgiveness of sin (separation)
What is the relationship to Perfect At-One-Ment?

In the “soup of the one reality” describe the physical/natural and the spiritual focus.

What are the rewards found in the deed itself?

C. 6: 16 – 18 Fasting in secret: Do it for Jesus.
What is the relationship to Perfect At-One-Ment?

In the “soup of the one reality” describe the physical/natural and the spiritual focus.

What are the rewards found in the deed itself?

D. 6: 19 – 24 Treasurers in heaven (watch this word “Heaven.” It is a parallel universe word. From our perspective it is translated as the experience of the Place of Perfect At-One-Ment.)

What is the relationship to Perfect At-One-Ment?

In the “soup of the one reality” describe the physical/natural and the spiritual focus.

What are the rewards found in the deed itself?

IV. Extra Credit

Ground the two terms “Good eyes” and “Bad Eyes.” (6 22, 23)

All right people. Tall to me!