

CHAPTER 6

Overview of Luke 6

Chapter 6 contains three major portions, each with its own significance and relevance. The first portion presents additional conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees, but this time the subject focuses on laws about the Sabbath. In the eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus routinely violates Sabbath law. One of those conflicts about the Sabbath involve the healing of a man with a withered hand. This conflict will reveal the true evil hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. The second portion of the chapter describes Jesus' calling "the twelve" as apostles. The last portion of the chapter is Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount, which the author is calling the Sermon on the Plain. It is important to understand the relationship between Luke's record of Jesus' sermon, and the teaching of John the Baptist.

What to look for in Luke 6

1. As you read each paragraph ask, "How is God speaking to me personally through His word?"
2. Look for the conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees and determine the intent of the hearts of the Pharisees.
3. Throughout the chapter, underline each instance of the word "good."
4. Discern the hearts of the Pharisees when Jesus heals the man with the withered hand.
5. Look for the naming of the twelve apostles, and what activity Jesus was engaged in before He appointed them.
6. Look for the key elements of the Sermon on the Plain, and determine what are the central themes.
7. Look for Jesus' warning concerning the words He taught during the Sermon on the Plain.

1 Now it happened that He was passing through *some* grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating *the grain*.

2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

3 And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him,

4 how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?"

5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

6:1-5 Luke continues his theme of conflict with the Pharisees, only this time it is regarding the Sabbath. Luke's purpose in recording this incident is to demonstrate that the Pharisees were not knowledgeable about God's law, the Torah, the law of Moses. This first incident involves plucking and eating corn. According to the law, plucking and eating corn as the disciples were doing was permissible under the law (Deut. 23:25). It was using a tool to cut the grain or harvesting for the purpose of selling the grain that was considered work on the Sabbath, and therefore not permissible. Jesus asks the Pharisees, "Have you not even read...?" implying they had spent more time memorizing the 2000 manmade laws about the Sabbath than studying what God's word actually says. Essentially, they were holding their own laws above the Law of the Lord. Therefore Jesus directs the Pharisees to the incident when David and his men ate the showbread; that is, the sanctified bread of the Tabernacle that only the priests were to eat. David did what was unlawful, but the Pharisees didn't seem to have a problem with that. The irony in this story is that the Pharisees accuse Jesus of violating the law—which He didn't—while ignoring David's infraction eating the

showbread, which he did. This clearly demonstrates that the Pharisees had an agenda against Jesus which defied logic, reason, biblical facts and truth.

This is the second time in Luke that Jesus refers to Himself as “the Son of Man,” the first being when He forgave the sins of the paralytic. “Son of Man” is a title used once in Psalms, once in Daniel and eighty times in Ezekiel. Interesting enough, it is used 82 times in the gospels. The title was not necessarily messianic, but did come to have the meaning of God’s acceptable representative of mankind. There is also an eschatological significance in that the Son of Man is the one to whom God’s plan and will for mankind has been revealed.

“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” is another way of saying, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Lost in the conflict over Sabbath law is a love issue. God created the Sabbath out of love for mankind. Of all the Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment regarding Sabbath rest is the only one that encourages man to act in love toward himself; that is, to take care of himself. The Sabbath is to be a time of rest, refreshing and relaxation, not fear and anxiety over potentially breaking some law. Jesus Himself is showing love for His disciples by letting them take time to eat. There is an underlying theme of caring here. Unfortunately, it is a theme the Pharisees cannot grasp, for they are more concerned about maintaining power over people’s lives than doing what is best for God’s people. Although the Pharisees make this incident an issue of law, the real issue is one of love.

6 On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.

7 The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely *to see* if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find *reason* to accuse Him.

8 But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” And he got up and came forward.

9 And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?”

10 After looking around at them all, He said to him, “Stretch out your hand!” And he did *so*; and his hand was restored.

6:6-11 In this next encounter with the Pharisees, Luke will once again highlight the incompetence of the Pharisees, how far they had strayed from God’s word, and their total inability to understand the intent of God’s word. The key word in this incident is “good.” The second conflict over the Sabbath is the most disturbing of all, for it clearly demonstrates that the Pharisees had so idolized their own laws that they had lost the primary purpose of God’s law—to do good. The man in subject has a withered right hand. In Middle Eastern culture, each hand has its purpose. The right hand is considered the “clean” hand; that is, it is used to shake hands, eat and transfer something to another. The left hand is considered unclean and is used for personal hygiene, including wiping oneself. The fact that this man’s right hand was unusable meant that he could only use his left, or unclean hand, for everything. That would essentially make the man unclean, and that is why Luke includes the fact that it was the man’s *right* hand that was withered. Verse 7 demonstrates that the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees has become hostile; they are

11 But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

“watching...to accuse Him.” It is a very sad scene that the spiritual leaders of the community are more interested in Jesus keeping their laws than in healing someone. Jesus is not intimidated by the religious leaders and commands the man to “come forward.” Before the healing, Jesus asks what should have been an unqualified rhetorical question: “Is it lawful to do good...on the Sabbath?” Without answering—for the answer was obvious—Jesus commences to heal the man’s hand.

The reaction of the Pharisees and scribes is beyond comprehension. They were “filled with rage.” Why? Because Jesus violated one of the 2,000 rules the rabbis had concocted concerning the Sabbath. Clearly, they had supplanted God’s word for their own. Let’s see how it came to this.

In the giving of the Ten Commandments, the fourth commandment prohibited “work” on the Sabbath. However, there are very few passages in the Torah (the Law) that define what actually comprises work. Therefore, over the years, an oral tradition developed called the Midrash, meaning “interpretation.” The Midrash first started as oral traditions for the purpose of “filling in the gaps”; that is, interpretation of that which was found in scripture, and supplying information on things not found in scripture. Therefore, the rabbis concluded, someone needs to interpret what God means by “work” and subsequently began to elaborate on what comprised “work.” These laws began to be codified during the period between Ezra and Jesus, to the extent that by the time of Jesus, there were approximately 2,000 laws defining what a Jew could or could not do on the Sabbath. Jesus, in confronting the Pharisees about this, warns, “You weigh men down with burdens hard to bear....”

One of these Sabbath laws specified that non-emergency healing was not allowed on the Sabbath because it comprised “work.” Jesus challenges the Pharisees about this law, which is not found in the Old Testament, but in the rabbinical laws which are not from God, but from man. Therefore, the Pharisees are more concerned about Jesus keeping their rabbinical laws than they are concerned about the man himself. And herein lies the tragedy of the situation. They love the law more than they love the man.

What should have been the reaction of the Pharisees and scribes? They should have rejoiced for the man! They should have praised God for caring enough about the man to allow him to become “clean” and a normal part of society. They should have crowded around him, congratulated him, hugged him and been glad for him. And they should have fallen at the feet of Jesus and confessed their unbelief, as Peter did.

But instead they were “filled with rage,” huddled together and discussed how they might undo Jesus. It is a terrible, tragic and disheartening scene, and one of the most pathetic scenes in the gospels. This is the hideous outcome of valuing law over love. The Pharisees had substituted their own law for God’s, and in so doing, lost the whole point of the law of the Lord which is to love and care for one another.

12 It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

14 Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;

15 and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;

16 Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

6:12-16 The spiritual leaders of the Jews have disqualified themselves, as demonstrated in the two incidents above concerning the Sabbath. Not only do they not know God’s word, but they have substituted God’s word with their own—the “tradition of the elders,” as it will be called. Therefore, God must begin anew. New spiritual leadership is going to be established and this will come in the form of the apostles. This new leadership will proclaim the true law, which James will call “the royal law”; that is, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (James 2:8). Once again, Jesus departs from the crowd and spends the night on a mountain in prayer. Jesus demonstrates His complete dependence on the Father, for the two are One. The result of this night in prayer is the appointing of twelve of the disciples (for there were many) who would also take on the role of “apostles.” An apostle literally means “one who is sent out,” or “messenger.” They will also be referred to as “the twelve,” as other apostles will be identified later in the Early Church. These twelve men have symbolic significance to the twelve tribes of Israel, although there is no indication that each man was from a different tribe. When the church first begins, as described in the Book of Acts, false apostles will arise. Therefore, true apostles needed to be identified. There were three qualifications for becoming a true apostle. First, he had to have been with Jesus from the very beginning. (Paul was the only known exception to this.) Second, he had to be a witness of the resurrection; that is, he had to have seen Jesus after the resurrection. And third, he had to be able to perform the “signs and wonders of a true apostle.” *Today, there are no more apostles, no matter what a person, preacher, evangelist or healer chooses to call himself (or herself). Anyone today who calls himself an apostle is a false apostle.*

There are four lists of the apostles in the New Testament, three in each of the synoptic gospels and once in Acts. Peter is always the first one named. Note that there are two Simons (though Simon Peter is always identified as Peter or Simon Peter), two James, and two men named Judas. Judas Iscariot is always identified as the “traitor.”

To help the student not be confused with who is whom, neither James the brother of John nor James the son of Alphaeus are the author of the Epistle of

17 Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and *there was* a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon,

18 who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured.

19 And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing *them* all.

20 And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He *began* to say, “Blessed *are* you *who are* poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed *are* you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed *are* you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn

James. That James was not one of the twelve but was a half-brother of Jesus and became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. John, the apostle James’ brother, *is* the author of the Gospel of John, the letters of John, and the Book of Revelation. Matthew, or Levi, is the author of the Gospel of Matthew. Peter himself wrote two letters in the New Testament.

Few details are known about the twelve after the resurrection, and especially after the end of Acts, with the exception of the James the brother John who was executed by Herod Antipas. Most of what is known about each of the twelve is gleaned from the writings of the early church fathers; that is, theologians who anchored the church after the twelve had passed away. Tradition states that all of the twelve were martyred except for John, who for a while was exiled on Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation and, after his release, eventually died of natural causes.

6:17-19 Luke is about to share with us the basic precepts of Jesus’ teaching. This teaching is the essence of “the gospel” before the resurrection, gospel meaning “good news.” Notice that those who have come to hear Him and be healed are coming from as far away as “Tyre and Sidon.” They are probably Jews living in these Gentile towns, but it is possible there were Gentiles in the crowd. Sidon is about 50 miles northwest of Capernaum.

Note that Jesus stood “on a level place” whereas in Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was on the side of a mountain or hillside. Yet the text of the sermons are almost identical. This means that Jesus probably preached essentially the same message everywhere He went, perhaps hundreds of times. That is why the authors of the gospels can record Jesus’ words so accurately. The primary means of memorizing in that day was audible (rather than visually in writing) and no doubt they had every teaching of Jesus thoroughly memorized. Therefore we can safely say that the words the gospel writers have preserved for us are the actual words of Jesus, *word for word*.

6:20-26 Oh! The volume of commentary that could be written on this section! The writer will do his best to summarize the main points.

Jesus now explains what it means to be “good,” something the Pharisees were incapable of comprehending or expressing. Those who are good love others and care about them in a manner that is consistent with God’s word. Those who are evil do not.

6:20 The poor are blessed because they know they have a need and are willing to learn about the kingdom of God. Those who are self-sufficient don’t

your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

23 “Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

25 “Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe *to you* who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

26 “Woe *to you* when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

need God. God loves those who are legitimately poor.

When Jesus uses the term “blessed,” He is actually *invoking* a blessing; that is, He is blessing the poor. He is speaking for God because He is God, and He is promising better things to come. Better things will come because, by following Him and obeying Him, they will receive the benefits of the kingdom of God. This will eventually result in joy, peace, happiness and contentment. The rich will not be interested because they are being “blessed” (made happy and content) by the things of the world. Therefore, they do not perceive that they need anything more. The poor, on the other hand, know what it is to live in need, and therefore are open to good things promised.

6:21 God loves those who are oppressed and all the more those who weep out of grief from great loss. All their losses, their sufferings, their afflictions, and their deprivations will be replaced by the fullness of all things lacking. Those who weep will learn to laugh because all that is lost will seem trivial to all that is gained. As the martyred missionary Jim Elliot wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” The kingdom of God will turn their hunger into satiation and their grief into joy.

6:22-23 Christians who are persecuted, ostracized, rejected, mocked, scorned, belittled and even sued for taking a moral stand will receive a great reward for their faithfulness and their unwillingness to yield to the intimidation of those who do not know God. Those who persecute do not love Christians because they do not love God, and they do not love God because they are blinded to the fact that God loves them and still has a plan for their life. They either cannot see it or their refuse to see it. Those who identify with Jesus Christ will be scorned and rejected by the same ignorance and hatred with which Christ was scorned and rejected. God loves those who, in spite of all threats, maintain their loyalty to God and their faith in Jesus. Persecuted Christians will receive a greater reward in heaven, for they have paid a greater price for their faith. The great prophets also suffered; therefore, Christians who suffer can take refuge in the truth that they are not alone.

6:24 The rich are rich only because God has allowed them to be rich. Self-made men are self-made men only because gave them the wherewithal to become self-made men. Therefore, they should take no credit for their own success, and give all the glory to God.

The rich are also rich because they keep what they gain. They (we) fail to share with those who are legitimately poor. Their (our) richness is a failure to love others as God loves others. The teaching of

Scripture is clear—keep only what you need, and give the rest to those who have legitimate needs.

The those who hoard their riches, there is an eternal price to pay. “Woe” is a negative interjection referring to horror, denunciation, and judgment. The sentence could be paraphrased, “Judgment is coming upon you who are rich.... Your world may be luxurious and pleasurable now, but in eternity, it will be the very opposite.” (cf. Luke 16:19-31)

6:25 Merriment must never be at the expense of those who suffer. There is nothing wrong with eating or laughing, but it is a failure of love if the legitimate needs of others are being ignored.

The reference to “those who laugh now” is not contradictory to what Jesus has said in verse 21. The context is the same for those who are rich and dwelling in luxury and comfort at the expense of others. Once again, it is a failure to love others; the love of oneself has overruled the command to “love one another.”

6:26 Those who seek the approval of men rather than God, and those who desire to please men rather than God are deceived and deceivers. The gospel of Christ is an unpopular message, and the world hates the truth because biblical truth always exposes personal sin.

6:27-36 This next section of Jesus’ teaching goes into somewhat more detail that what is recorded by Matthew in his gospel. However, the content is essentially the same when it comes the subject of one’s enemies.

6:27 No other religion teaches that one should love his enemy. The message of the Bible is unique in this. Truth always trumps love because true love requires biblical definition. This is one of the definitions of biblical love—it is a love so great and so inclusive that it reaches out even to one’s enemies.

Note that Jesus says, “Love your enemies.” He does not say, “*Like* your enemies.” There is a huge difference, and it is often a stumbling block to those who first hear these words. The nature of biblical love (*agape*) is that it is a love that supersedes emotions and feelings. *Agape* is not void of emotions and feelings, but emotions and feelings are not to get in the way of doing the right thing; in this case, treating your enemy like you would want him to treat you. Why is this an imperative for the Christian? Because all who have sinned are essentially enemies of God: enemies of all that is good, enemies of all that is holy, and enemies of all that is righteous. Yet “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son....” The world could be considered an enemy to God, yet He loved the world anyway.”

“Do good to those who hate you” is the only way to respond. The world’s method of treating those who

27 “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

29 “Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

30 “Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

31 “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

33 “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same.

34 “If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*.

35 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.

36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

hate you is “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” One cannot watch the news these days without seeing that same endless cycle of vengeance played out in every conceivable arena. But it is not the way of Christ. The law of Christ is to “love one another,” and that includes one’s enemies.

6:28 Doing good to those who hate you, blessing those who curse you and praying for those who mistreat you is the only chance of breaking up the cycle of worldly violence. The church is called upon to reflect God’s love in the world and to be the forerunners of those who break up the cycle. This is why it is so tragic when churches split, sue one another, and treat each other in the same manner the world treats its own.

6:29 Love requires that possessions should never interfere with relationships, even adversarial ones. Verse 29 could be taken literally, but not necessarily so. The issue is caring more about oneself and one’s material possession than demonstrating the kind of love that only comes from God. It does not mean that one should be careless or allow himself to become a target of scammers and con men. But it does mean that in the arena of personal relationships—neighbor to neighbor, worker to worker, church member to church member—it is *agape* that should define the outcome, not selfishness.

6:30 Love insists on letting go of the things of this world. People, especially those held captive by the devil to do his will, hang on to the things of the world. They have yielded to the second temptation of Jesus.

Once again, the same principle applies concerning those who would take advantage of someone. The lesson is more about what a person loves more—people or possessions.

6:31 If you want others to treat you with love and respect, treat all others with love and respect, even your enemies.

6:32 Loving those who love you is far easier than loving the unlovable. God loves everyone, especially the unlovable and those who are unloved. The church of Jesus Christ is called to do the same—love the unlovable. Unfortunately for evangelical Christianity, the Catholic church does a better job at this. Equally unfortunately, they do not have the message to go along with the good works.

6:33 Loving others is not necessarily having great feelings of love, but rather it is willingness to do good and show love in spite of feelings. True love is not void of feelings, but true love is never ruled by feelings.

6:34 Lending to those in legitimate need who may not be able to pay it back is another definition of *agape*. Failure of those who have to give to those in need is a failure to love others as God’s has loved the one who has. It is also a failure to trust that God will

provide for the follower of Jesus Christ. Here again, the issue is one of loving others more than loving one's possessions.

6:35 This is the second time there is a command to love your enemies. That also means doing good to them. Remember that God is not expecting His people to *feel* loving toward their enemies; that may be impossible to do. But one can still do good in spite of feelings. Indeed, doing good to enemies in spite of feelings is an ultimate act of love. Why does Christ ask His followers to do these things? Because He will demonstrate this very love at the cross.

The last statement in verse 35 is absolutely contrary to Jewish thinking and theology. Old Testament theology teaches that God blesses righteous people and withholds blessings from the unrighteous, or removes blessings from those who sin. This principle is well spelled out in the Book of Deuteronomy, and that is why the Book of Job was difficult for Jewish rabbis to reconcile. Jesus' statement here would be astonishing to His listeners: "For He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men." In their thinking, God is to do away with and judge ungrateful and evil men. But what Jesus has introduced in this entire sermon is the expansiveness and inclusiveness of God's incredible love—"God so loved the world..." What Jesus is introducing is that *anyone* is capable of receiving God's love. This new theology will be instrumental when Gentile Christians begin entering the church. God wants *everyone* to experience His love and learn to express His love to others. How else will even evil and ungrateful men experience God's love if Jesus' followers are not there to demonstrate it?

6:36 Thus the final command in this section—Jesus' followers are to reflect God Himself.

6:37 This statement by Jesus is one of the most frequent misapplied quotations, especially by non-Christians. Unfortunately, many Christians are intimidated and do not know how to respond to the statement when used in an adversarial context.

"Do not judge" does not mean that Jesus' followers are not to judge in terms of discernment. It means that Christians are not to judge out of prejudice or a spirit of criticism and condemnation. Christians *must* discern truth and love.

Instead of clamming up with intimidation, the Christian should respond to the sarcastic skeptic with something like, "Oh really? Where do you find that in the Bible. What is the context. Is that what Jesus meant?" Or, "Are you actually quoting Scripture to correct me? Then you must believe in the Bible."

And then, "speaking the truth in love," gently inform the skeptic what the real meaning of the passage is, and then get them to agree that not judging

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.

38 "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

39 And He also spoke a parable to them: “A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit?”

40 “A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

41 “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”

42 “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.

43 “For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit.

44 “For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.

45 “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

others in a condescending way is the right thing to do.

6:38 The illustration is that of wheat being measured out in the market place. The buyer wants the just portion being paid for. Therefore, portion out goodness to others in the same way you want it measured out to you. Give a good measure of love and a good measure of love will be given back.

6:39 Showing biblical love and doing good to others is supported by a foundation of logic. To love or do good any other way than God’s way is destined to fail.

6:40 This principle includes love. Jesus was the incarnation of God’s love, expressed in the flesh. Jesus’ life was the epitome of love that every Christian should seek to imitate. Such love can only be obtained by studying Him in God’s word, by seeking Him in fervent prayer, and by ministering to others in genuine love. The apostle Paul summarized it in his first letter to Timothy: “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5).

6:41 It is a lot easier finding fault with others than it is finding fault with oneself. The lesson here is to examine oneself first before taking up the task of examining others. If one Christian observes another failing to express God’s love, the question should first be asked, “Am I always expressing God’s love?”

6:42 One can easily become confused here, along with verse 37, when it comes to confronting wrong doctrine or errant Christian behavior. Jesus is not saying that those who teach error or behave in a bad way should not be confronted. All of the letters in the New Testament confront false teaching and those who teach it. What Jesus is referring to is criticizing another without good reason, and without considering one’s own faults. The simple answer here is that active believers should be constantly self-critiquing their behavior and beliefs in accordance with biblical standards.

6:43-45 The key word in these verses is “fruit.” The term fruit is used metaphorically here to refer a person’s character. There are many popular preachers, evangelists and so-called prophets whose lifestyle does not reflect New Testament values and standards, particularly when measured by the greatest fruit of all, love. Like all ripening fruit, it may take some time to determine whether a person’s character is actually in keeping with the biblical standards of love and grace. Christian leaders who divorce, commit adultery, embezzle, and are caught in acts of homosexuality or pornography are the more obvious rotten fruit. However, less obvious are those who build financial empires, whose lifestyle is opulent, whose behavior does not reflect love, who

46 “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

47 “Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like:

48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

49 “But the one who has heard and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

manage by intimidation or anger, who create fear in others, or even those who build great Christian ministries on the premise that the end justifies the means. Good fruit is seen in the one who loves and is the servant of all.

6:46-49 The word “Lord” here is not “God” but “master.” That is, if a person calls Jesus his or her master, then as a servant he or she should actually carry out the Master’s will and commands. This statement applies to all that has been recorded above in verses 21 through 45; that is, the Sermon on the Plain. This poses a problem for the one who reads these words as well. Once a person has decided to call Jesus Christ “Lord,” he or she is obligated to live in a manner consistent with that relationship. This most likely means a lot will change in the person’s life. Habits, behaviors and relationships that are not biblical must be done away with, and new habits, behaviors and relationships must replace them. Only then will a Christian’s life be built on solid ground, and only then will that life be able to truly experience God’s love. Once God’s love has been experienced, that person is now in a position to express God’s love to others.

6:21-49 In summary, reread these verses and see how many are referring to relationships. Then make an assessment of how many verses have love as the basis for one’s behavior. Finally, note how many verses mention the Sabbath, rituals, sacrifices, or laws concerning what is clean or unclean. Here we see an expansion of John the Baptist’s instructions to those who came for baptism and asked, “What shall we do?”

Questions for Your Personal or Group Reflection

1. In this chapter, there are three easily remembered sections. Can you name them? Can you determine what is the relationship between each section and why Luke constructed his gospel in this way? What do all three sections—particularly the first and the last—have in common, and why is that important?
2. Review the first conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. What are the Pharisees most concerned about, keeping the law or meeting legitimate human needs? Were they correct in saying that Jesus and His disciples were breaking a Sabbath law? An important question to ask is, “Why did they even care how Jesus and His disciples were getting food?”
3. Review the second conflict between Jesus and the disciples; that is, the healing of the man with the withered hand. Why was it important for Luke to specify that it was the man’s *right* hand that was withered? How did the Pharisees and scribes come to the place where they were teaching that it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath? What is the relationship between healing on the Sabbath and doing good?
4. If you haven’t already, go back and underline the number of times you find the word “good” in chapter 6. What is the context for each time the word is used? How is Jesus using the word “good” throughout His teaching, and what does it mean? Throughout the chapter, there is a contrast between good and evil. What portion of the chapter illustrates evil and what portions illustrate good?
5. Identify three key themes throughout the Sermon on the Plain. How do they relate to the definition of good and evil?
6. How do Christians identify those who are good and those who are evil? What does Jesus liken them to? How is a follower of Jesus supposed to respond when he or she reads Jesus’ words?
7. How do we know that Jesus’ teaching are accurate and word for word?

The Discipler's Commentary
Fill-in Outline for the Disciple
Luke 6

6:1-11 – Jesus is confronted by some Pharisees concerning His supposed breaking of Sabbath laws:

(Note – The significance of the Sabbath to Jews is that it is the “sign” of their _____
and is based on the _____)

6:1-5 – Regarding *working* on the Sabbath: Jesus says He is _____

(The title “Son of Man” comes from Ezekiel and means a _____)

(cf. Mark 2:27 where it states, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not _____.”)

6:6-11 – Regarding *healing* on the Sabbath: Jesus says it is okay _____

6:12-16 – The choosing of the twelve – done only after _____

The twelve: _____

Note: There were other apostles who were not part of the twelve. For example, _____

6:17-49 – Luke’s record of one of Jesus’ sermons, here called _____

6:20-26 – Called the _____

6:27-36 – The key theme here: _____

6:37-38 – How God responds to _____

6:39-45 – Various pronouncements, with the emphasis on _____

The Discippler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discippler

Luke 6

6:1-11 – Jesus is confronted by some Pharisees concerning His supposed breaking of Sabbath laws:

(Note – The significance of the Sabbath to Jews is that it is the “sign” of their covenant with God (the law) and is based on the Fourth Commandment to keep the Sabbath Day holy.

- *The discipler will need to help the disciple understand why the Sabbath was so important to the Jews. (See Exodus 31:16-17)*
- *Provide some of the background why the Pharisees instituted almost 2000 laws concerning the Sabbath.*

6:1-5 – Regarding working on the Sabbath: Jesus says He is Lord of the Sabbath

(The title “Son of Man” comes from Ezekiel and means a good representative of mankind (cf. Mark 2:27 where it states, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.)

- *The title “Son of Man” may be a bit confusing for the disciple; therefore, some background of where the term comes from may be necessary (see commentary).*
- *Explain that if Jesus is the Son of Man (the representative of mankind) and the Sabbath is made for man (and not man for the Sabbath), then the Son of Man is the one who dictates what is acceptable activity on the day of rest, and how to interpret and implement the fourth commandment regarding the Sabbath.*
- *The discipler may also want to point out how wrong the Pharisees were of accusing Jesus of breaking the Sabbath.*
- *Most importantly, help the disciple understand why the conflict over the Sabbath is actually a conflict over love. Help the disciple use some critical thinking skills here.*

6:6-11 – Regarding healing on the Sabbath: Jesus says it is okay to do good

- *This incident will probably be more obvious to the disciple than the one above. The natural reaction will be, “Of course we help others on the Sabbath.” So help the disciple see why the word “good” is related to the issue of love.*
- *Ask the disciple what the reactions of the Pharisees should have been. Also, explain why Luke was so careful to mention that it was the man’s right hand that was involved, and why that is so important in Middle Eastern culture (even to this day).*

6:12-16 – The choosing of the twelve – done only after spending a night in prayer

The twelve: Peter (aka Simon Peter, Cephas), James & John (brothers; sons of Zebedee)
Andrew (Peter’s brother), Philip, Bartholomew (aka Nathaneal)
Matthew (aka Levi), Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus)
Simon (the Zealot), Judas (son of James) Judas Iscariot (the traitor)

Note: There were other apostles who were not part of the twelve. For example, the apostle Paul

- *This is actually a very important section of the commentary for a disciple or a new believer to understand. It has to do with the definition of “apostle” and who apostles are (were). Using the commentary, help the disciple learn how the early church defined an apostle, and why there can be no more true apostles today, no matter what someone calls himself.*
- *This explanation will have to be tempered by the fact that there is the “office” of apostle, and there is the “ministry” of apostle. Whereas there can be no more official apostles today, there can be those who are doing apostle-like ministries, such as missionaries or church planters.*
- *Make sure the disciple understands that anyone calling himself or herself an apostle today is a false teacher and is looking more to be highly esteemed by men rather than highly commissioned by God.*
- *It might also be important that the disciple is able to differentiate between the apostle James and the writer of the Epistle of James, and that two of the twelve had the name James.*

6:17-49 – Luke’s record of one of Jesus’ sermons, here called the Sermon on the Plain

- *Explain the similarities and differences between the Sermon on the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. It’s important here for the disciple to realize that Jesus probably gave the same message hundreds of times, and that’s why the writers of the gospels could quote Him so accurately.*
- *Knowing this information will help the disciple answer the skeptics and scoffers who claim who question the accuracy of the words of Jesus.*

6:20-26 – Called the beatitudes (these contain blessings and woes)

- *Explain to the disciple that to be “blessed” is to be made glad and happy, whereas a pronouncement of “woe” is a warning that requires urgent attention and indicates a theme of judgment.*
- *It may take awhile, but a great exercise—especially in a group setting—would be to go through each verse in this section and ask, “Why?” For example, why would the poor consider themselves “blessed”? The same question can be asked about the word “Woe.” The exercise is called “brain storming” which allows the group freedom of thought and expression. Generally, there are no wrong answers, and it becomes an opportunity for the discipler to learn from the disciple!*

6:27-36 – The key theme here: love your enemies

- *It is important for the disciple to understand that Christianity is the only religion that teaches to “love your enemies” and “pray for them.”*
- *No doubt the disciple will raise the question about loving one’s enemies because they do not understand the nature of biblical (agape) love. Agape love is not without feelings, but feelings—such as warmth and tenderness toward another—must never overruled loving actions toward them. The Christian is to act in love toward their enemies, even though they may have ill feelings about that person.*
- *The reason God wants His children to love their enemies is twofold: (1) all unsaved people on the earth are “held captive by the enemy to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:26). Love is the only power that will free that captive. And (2), all of us were enemies of God when Jesus went to the cross to die for our sins, yet He loved us.*

6:37-38 – How God responds to one’s willingness to obey these teachings

- *This section is another way of saying, “You reap what you sow.”*
- *Perhaps the most important question the discipler can ask the disciple is, “Now, how do you plan on implementing the things you’ve learned from verses 20-49.”*

6:39-45 – Various pronouncements, with the emphasis on bearing good fruit

- *An important part of this section is helping the disciple discern what is good fruit and what is bad fruit. Good fruit always involves love, and bad fruit always involves the absence of love (biblical love, that is).*
- *Help the disciple see that almost every verse in this Sermon on the Plain involves relationships in one way or another. Suggest to the disciple that he or she go through the sermon verse by verse and point out why it involves relationships.*
- *Ask the disciple how he or she plans to “act on” these words (v. 47).*
- *After the lesson is over and the disciple is dismissed, the one doing the discipling should take some time to reflect on these verses and see what areas of one’s life needs improvement.*