

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**  
**By Stephen R. Graves**

I love when a proven leader delivers a distilled executive summary or brief with points or principles you can quickly understand. This is one reason Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount has always captivated me. Recounted in Matthew 5-7, Jesus pulled together His "leadership team" (a group that included former fishermen, a political figure, and a tax collector) for a strategic mountain retreat where He presented the equivalent of mission, vision, and values statements for their new venture.

Nearly every executive I know designates time each year to connect with his or her senior team about the crucial items that steer their enterprise. Just as U.S. Presidents deliver State of the Union addresses to the nation every year, all leaders should also regularly present a "State of the Business" address to their organization, articulating the What, Why, and How of their organizations.

I have spent most of my adult life pondering these three chapters in the gospel of Matthew. During a two-year period in which I studied them intensely, I concurred with author Philip Yancey's statement regarding the Sermon on the Mount: "If I fail to understand this teaching, I fail to understand Him."

Here are 10 takeaways from the Sermon on the Mount for the business and professional world: **No single verse contains all of God's thought on any single topic.** In other words, I need to grapple with all the Bible says about a given topic to accurately capture God's thinking on it. **High impact, long-lasting kingdom influence usually requires adapting and customizing your approach to your audience.** When I think about it, Jesus had at least four audiences throughout His ministry, each with a particular approach: The Uninterested Outsider; The Interested Observer; The Committed Learner, and The Starving Heart.

**The Gospel travels the road of caring and authentic relationships.** The formula for greatest kingdom impact is a life that demonstrates redemption and grace, authentic relationship, and customized intentionality. No one wants to be a project or a notch on someone's belt.

**Lasting influence is more about who you are than what you do.** Perhaps this is why Jesus started His sermon with the "BE attitudes" – who I am supposed to be, then what I am supposed to do.

**The way I embrace culture defines the way I understand the Gospel.** How I perceive the Gospel dictates the way I approach cultural engagement as a Jesus follower. Followers of Jesus have applied the Gospel to their culture in one of four possible ways: Christ against Culture - Withdraw; Christ of Culture – Acquiesce; Christ over Culture – Mandate; Christ the transformer of Culture – Influence. H. Richard Niebuhr first captured these distinctions in his classic work, Christ and Culture.

---

由香港工商基督徒協會 (CBMC Hong Kong Ltd) 逢週一發放

地址: 香港上環禧利街2號東寧大廈20樓2004室 Tel: (852) 2805-1923

Email: [enquiry@cbmc.org.hk](mailto:enquiry@cbmc.org.hk) Web: [www.cbmc.org.hk](http://www.cbmc.org.hk)

支持本會使命, 服侍工商界及職場, 請下載奉獻表格

<https://www.cbmc.org.hk/file-download.html>

---

**Jesus redirected the standard for righteousness from external actions to the heart.** Real righteousness was never meant only for externally oriented practice. Jesus always intended for our faith to be a heart-based and heart-transforming journey.

**Jesus expected the true gospel (inside-out righteousness) to touch and transform everything about us.** His redemptive work should affect every detail of our life and work.

**If Jesus can perfectly care for things of lesser value** (such as birds and flowers), why do I worry that He will not take care of me (His greatest creation)?

**Authenticity is essential but hard to attain.** Outward appearances do not always reflect our inner motivations and desires.

**I must work on my own life with as much intensity as I can muster.** Then I can trust God to address the problems and shortcomings I see in others.

*© 2024. Dr. Stephen R. Graves describes himself as an organizational strategist, pragmatic theologian, and social capitalist. He advises executives and business owners, as well as young entrepreneurs. He is author of numerous books and many articles, and a public speaker.*

### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Do you think it is important for top leaders not only to understand but also to effectively communicate the corporation's or organization's mission, vision, and values – the What, How, and Why that are intended to guide them? Explain your answer.
2. If someone were to ask you to describe or define your company's mission, vision, and values, how would you respond?
3. How familiar are you with Jesus Christ's "Sermon on the Mount"? Do you agree that many of its principles can be directly applied to issues and challenges we encounter every day in the marketplace? Why or why not?
4. Which of the points cited by Dr. Graves seem most significant to you?

### Challenge For This Week

Developing statements of mission, vision, and values for an organization is one thing. But understanding our own personal mission, vision, and values is something different – but equally important. This week, if you have not already done so, sit down and try to write down what you consider to be your life's mission; the vision you have not only for the present but also for the future; and the values by which you seek to live and work.

Consider seeking out a trusted friend – or small group, such as your CBMC group if you are in one – to help you in doing this.

#### NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 31:33, Matthew 5:1-16, 6:1-23, 7:1-14, 24-27; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

---

由香港工商基督徒協會 (CBMC Hong Kong Ltd) 逢週一發放

地址: 香港上環禧利街2號東寧大廈20樓2004室 Tel: (852) 2805-1923

Email: [enquiry@cbmc.org.hk](mailto:enquiry@cbmc.org.hk) Web: [www.cbmc.org.hk](http://www.cbmc.org.hk)

支持本會使命, 服侍工商界及職場, 請下載奉獻表格

<https://www.cbmc.org.hk/file-download.html>

---