

Adult Study: The Hole in Our Gospel
Team Teachers – Gene Collier, Kyle Allen

What does God expect of me?

That's the question Richard Stearns asks in his book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*. Sharing his faith journey that led him from being the CEO of Lenox, Inc. to becoming the CEO and President of World Vision, Inc. (one of the largest U.S. non-profits), Stearns writes:

The question, "What does God expect of me?" is a very profound one but for everyone who claims to follow Christ. Jesus gave us deep insights into the character of God and our relationship with God as well, but Jesus also spoke at length about God's expectations, our values, and how we are to live in the world. So how are we to live? What kind of relationship are we to have with a holy God? What is God asking for, really, from you and me?

Often the world's problems just seem too big and too hard for most of us; it's so much easier to retreat from them than to take them on. On Sunday morning, safe in our church pews and surrounded by friends, it can be all too easy to leave the world's violence, suffering, and turmoil outside – out of sight, out of mind.

But wait – as Christians, are we really given the option of turning away from the world's problems?

Embracing the gospel, or good news, proclaimed by Jesus is so much more than a private transaction between God and us. The gospel itself was born of God's vision of a changed people, challenging and transforming the prevailing values and practices of our world. Jesus called the resulting new world order the "kingdom of God" (Matthew 12: 28; 19: 24; 21: 32, 43; and Mark 1: 15, among others) and said that it would become a reality through the lives and deeds of his followers. Jesus asked a great deal of those who followed him. He expected much more from them than just believing he was God's Son. He challenged them to embrace radically different standards, to love their neighbors and their enemies, to forgive those who wronged them, to lift up the poor and downtrodden, to share what they had with those who had little, and to live lives of sacrifice. Then he likened their effect on the world around them to that which light has on darkness. Light dispels darkness; it reverses it. Likewise, truth dispels falsehood, and goodness reverses evil. (Adapted from the introduction to *The Hole in Our Gospel, Special Edition: What Does God Expect of Us? The Answer Changed My Life and Might Just Change the World*. Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.)

Gene Collier and Kyle Allen look forward to exploring *The Hole in Our Gospel* with you and to discerning practical ways we can partner with God who is at work in our lives and actively engaged in transforming the world through faithful, Christian discipleship.

<https://www.amazon.com/Richard-Stearns/e/B001JRUFJ4>

