

Neighborhood Life Group Guide

Matthew: The Outworking of a Righteous Heart

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Matthew 5:21-48

February 18, 2018



Prayer: Ask God to bless the Olathe Bible Church missions team heading to Ethiopia to train up church leaders from February 25 to March 11. Pray for peace among the Ethiopian government and tribal groups. Pray for unity among Ethiopian Christians whose tribes may be in conflict with one another.

Read: Take a few minutes to read and mark up the following passage on your own.

Matthew 5:21-48

Anger

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. ²⁶ Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Lust

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Divorce

³¹ "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³² But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

³³ "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' ³⁴ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

Retaliation

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Discussion Questions

1. After reading Matthew 5:21-48, share some observations from the verses you've just read.

2. What from this week's sermon impacted you?

3. In this part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses six areas: Anger, Lust, Divorce, Oaths, Retaliation, and Loving Enemies.

➤ How does Jesus *intensify* what the Jews had heard said about the Law in each of these six areas?

4. Jesus says, "Come to terms quickly with your accuser" (Matthew 5:25).

➤ If someone has wronged you (or vice versa), why is it wise to pursue reconciliation *quickly*?

➤ When it comes to reconciliation, why do people often wait so long to start reconciling?

5. It's no accident that Jesus links lust and divorce so closely together. Most studies show that marriages engaged in pornography are 2-to-3 times more likely to end in divorce.

➤ Why do you think sexual sin is so rampant in our culture today?

➤ What hope is there for families who have struggled through sexual sin and/or divorce?

6. Why is keeping your word so important to God? What can help a Christian become a better promise-keeper to others?

7. It can be especially difficult in the family or the workplace not to retaliate when someone wrongs you. What can a Christian do to help break cycles of retaliation?

8. Jesus says, "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matthew 5:46-47).

➤ What does it look like for a Christian to show love to an enemy today? How does this glorify God?

9. Jesus says, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

➤ In light of what Jesus says, what hope is there for imperfect people?

Personal Reflection: Take a few minutes to reflect upon how you have been living out your faith for Jesus Christ this past week.

- ❖ **Word:** Have I read God's Word every day this week? What has God been teaching me?

- ❖ **Prayer:** Have I prayed to God every day this week? What have I prayed for?

- ❖ **Fellowship:** Have I gathered with other believers for fellowship and worship this week? How have I encouraged other Christians? How are other Christians encouraging me?

- ❖ **Confession:** Where am I struggling with sin, temptation, doubt, or hardship? Is there someone I need to seek forgiveness from? Is there someone I need to forgive?

- ❖ **Praise:** How have I seen God at work this week? What fruit have I seen in other people's lives?

- ❖ **Mission:** How have I been on mission this week? Who needs to hear the Gospel? Who can I invite to church? Who can I encourage or pray for this week?

Prayer: After you've spent some time in personal reflection, share one prayer request – a praise, a need, a confession, etc. Write down your group's prayer requests and commit to praying for them this week.