



**Week of February 16, 2020**

**Matthew 5:21-37**

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.'

<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire.

<sup>23</sup> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you,

<sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

<sup>25</sup> Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.

<sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

<sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

<sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

<sup>31</sup> "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

<sup>32</sup> But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup> "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.'

<sup>34</sup> But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

<sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

<sup>37</sup> Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.



### Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

### Gathering questions:

- A. What is the first Bible story you remember learning? What did it mean to you?
- B. Can you remember a time when you exploited a loophole in a set of rules to get what you wanted?

### Bible Study Questions:

1. Why do you think there are three different examples of anger/insult given in verse 22?
2. Since it is clear that the apostles did not take the teaching about plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand literally – what does that teaching mean to you?
3. What do you think is the point of having Jesus (essentially) convict every married man of adultery?
4. If it's all the same (anger/murder, lust/adultery), what keeps you from acting on your darker impulses?
5. Name the aspect of this passage that makes you most uncomfortable. Name the aspect of this passage that is most reassuring.
6. Do you have someone who is an "accountability partner" for you in whom you can confide your darker thoughts and struggles? What makes someone a good "accountability partner"? Would you be a good one for someone else?
7. Did you have a bad habit or behavior at one time that you have since stopped? What helped you stop?

Closing prayer: particularly invite prayers about areas of your lives where you are vulnerable to darker impulses.