

MasterClass

LESSONS FROM THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

WARM UP QUESTION

When are you tempted to look for a loophole in a situation?

Read Matthew 5:31-32 and Jesus' later discussion of the same topic in **Matthew 19:1-8**.

1 How are the Pharisees looking for loopholes while Jesus looks to God's original design and intent for marriage? How is Jesus looking to protect women against mistreatment in a culture that favored men? How has your own life been affected by divorce? Spend some time as a group praying over marriages, that they would be something that point people to a faithful, promise-keeping God, and for people who have been hurt by the effects of divorce.

2 **Read Matthew 5:33-37**. What do you think God's heart was behind the law Jesus quotes here from Numbers 30:2? The scribes and Pharisees had once again found a loophole which implied truth telling was only necessary when under oath. How do you manipulate with your speech? What steps can you take to run toward a purity of heart with your speech and commitments rather than toe the line of loopholes and manipulation?

3 **Read Matthew 5:38-42**. The intent behind this Old Testament law was protection against inhumane over-punishment of a crime. How does Jesus elevate it? How is it not a command to turn away from violence or to help when it would hurt someone? Do you err on the side of justice or mercy?

4 **Read Matthew 5:43-47**. Does the Old Testament law really say hate your enemy? What does Jesus imply we will have according to verse 44? How does love go beyond merely tolerating someone? Who are your enemies? How does praying for someone make it impossible to hate them?

5 **Read Matthew 5:48**. How are verse 20 and this verse good bookends for Jesus' six "you have heard it said...but I say" statements? How does this statement fit with the gospel message (consider this quote from Dallas Willard to help understand it: "Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action"). What have you learned from chapter 5 about the heart of a disciple of Jesus?

RESPOND

What have you learned about God from His Word? How is He asking you to apply it to your life? When will you apply it?

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