

Matthew

Chapter 5b



As you prepare for this week's study, begin by praying and asking God to open your heart and mind to understand the truths He has for you this week. Then read through this week's assignment, **Matthew 5:21-48**. As you read through the second half of the chapter, what are your first impressions? What stands out to you?

Mission 119: Search Matthew and listen to the commentary for Matthew 5-7, if you haven't already done so.

Day 1 - The Extra Step

Matthew 5:21-37

In this part of chapter 5, Jesus used a familiar teaching method: He began with what His listeners had already heard and then challenged them to think more deeply about its meaning.

1) What distinction did Jesus make about murder and anger? (v.21-22)

2) Describe the alternative to anger Jesus suggested. What did Jesus want us to achieve? (v.23-24)

See also:

a) Matthew 18:15 _____

b) Colossians 3:13-14 _____

c) Galatians 6:1 _____

3) What advice did Jesus offer regarding a court case? Why? (v.25-26)

4) What was the new definition Jesus gave to adultery? (v.27-28) How did that echo the view of marriage we read in the epistles (letters written by apostles such as Paul, Peter, and James to churches or individuals in the New Testament)? See Ephesians 5:25-28.

5) What extreme measures did Jesus suggest we employ to combat sin? What do you think He was saying? (v.29-30)

See also:

a) Romans 6:23 _____

b) James 1:15 _____

6) Divorce was rampant in the ancient world both in the broader culture and within Judaism. Many believed divorce was necessary. What was the emphasis of Jesus' admonition regarding divorce? (v. 31-32) See also Genesis 2:24.

- 7) In Jesus' day, people used oaths to prove their words or promises were true. What clarification did Jesus bring to this practice? What was His point? (v.33-34)

- 8) What were the specific things Jesus said not to "swear by"? (v.34-36)

- 9) How did Jesus settle the matter regarding oaths? (v. 37)

Day 2 - The Counterculture

Matthew 5:38-42

- 1) Read Matthew 5:38-42 and summarize it in your own words.

- 2) Describe the radical action Jesus was calling His disciples to take. List the specific things He was instructing. (v.39-42)

a) (v.39) _____

b) (v.40) _____

c) (v.41) _____

d) (v.42) _____

3) Where was the origin of this concept? See Leviticus 19:18.

4) How did Jesus live His life in accordance with this concept?

See also:

a) Matthew 20:25-28 _____

b) John 14:12-17 _____

What was the next common behavior Jesus turned upside down? (v.43-48)

5) To what countercultural action did Jesus call His disciples? (v.43-44)

a) (v.43) _____

b) (v.44) _____

Why? (v.45) _____

6) What logic did Jesus use to prove His point? (v.45-47)

7) To what standard did Jesus call His followers? (v.48) See also 1 Peter 1:14-16.

8) **Is there anything in this chapter new to you?

Day 3 - Connecting the Dots...

From the start God had been calling His people to reflect His character, not the world around them. Jesus repeated that call through His teachings and actions. He neither lowered the standard of the Old Testament (OT) Law nor did He enforce it more strictly. He wasn't replacing the OT Law but revealing its true intent.

1) Research these OT Scriptures to better understand God's goal for each of His disciples.

a) Leviticus 19:2 _____

b) Deuteronomy 10:17-19 _____

c) Micah 6:8 _____

2) Jesus taught anger, contempt, and broken relationships matter to God. Research these OT references to understand more about God's heart, and why He wanted His people to deal with hatred before it produced destruction.

a) Exodus 20:13 _____

b) Genesis 4:1-16 _____

c) Leviticus 19:17-18 _____

- 3) **What respectable forms of anger or resentment do we as a culture tend to excuse? What about you?

- 4) Wisdom literature repeatedly recognized sin began in the heart. Desire came before the behavior. Research these OT references to understand more.

a) Exodus 20:14 _____

b) Proverbs 6:20-29 _____

c) Job 31:1-4 _____

- 5) **Jesus wanted to expose the root of the issue and not just the cause. How can we cultivate purity of heart in a world saturated with temptation?

- 6) Jesus' teaching on divorce emphasized the covenantal aspect of marriage as opposed to the world's emphasis on it as merely a contract. Research these Scriptures to understand more about God's perspective.

a) Deuteronomy 24:1-4 _____

b) Malachi 2:13-16 _____

- 7) **What did God's faithfulness to His covenant teach us about commitment in our relationships?

8) What did the OT teach about truth-telling?

a) Leviticus 19:12 _____

b) Numbers 30:2 _____

c) Zechariah 8:16-17 _____

9) The “eye for eye” principle found in the OT was never meant to justify personal revenge but to limit justice in the courts. What do you learn from these Scriptures?

a) Leviticus 24:17-20 _____

b) Proverbs 20:22 _____

c) Proverbs 24:29 _____

10) Why do you think it is easier to take matters into your own hands rather than wait for God’s justice?

11) Love is the chief characteristic of God. What did these Old Testament Scriptures command?

a) Leviticus 19:18 _____

b) Exodus 23:4-5 _____

c) Proverbs 25:21-22 _____

- 12) **Who is difficult for you to love? What could you do to actively seek that person's good?

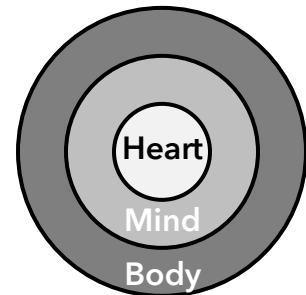
Day 4 - Walking the Way of Jesus

How would you describe the character, values, and emotions of Jesus in this passage? Who were His followers? What did they look like?

Review the diagram below that outlines the process of transformation Jesus described throughout the Sermon on the Mount.

The Words of Jesus' Gospel, energized by the Spirit, penetrate social relations and the body to the mind. The battle rages in the mind of the would-be disciple, but the war is for his/her heart.

The heart will make a decision for or against Jesus. As the heart says "yes" to Jesus, the truth of the Word of God energized by the Holy Spirit penetrates to the heart, bringing regeneration and setting the person free to become Jesus' disciple.



The regenerated heart is the beginning of the transformation of the disciple into the image of Christ, particularly to love like Jesus loves. The Spirit-indwelt heart directs the inside-out transformation process of mind, body, and social relations.

The disciple who continues to say "yes" to the Word of God is transformed to bear the fruit of the Spirit. The disciple is enabled to say "yes" to God with his or her entire person. The process of inside-out transformation goes on throughout the entire life as the disciple continually appropriates the truth of the Word in the Spirit to become more like Jesus.ⁱ

- 1) **When did you first hear the Gospel? How did you respond? How would you describe your process of surrendering to its call for obedience?

- 2) **As you read this second part of Matthew, how would you describe the deeper obedience Jesus called His disciples to embrace?

- 3) What was a primary mark of a disciple of Jesus? What was the associated promise?

See also:

a) John 8:31-36 _____

b) John 13:34-35 _____

- 4) **Read Romans 12:1-2. How can you practically obey this command as you strive to become more like Jesus?

- 5) What instruction did Jesus give to His disciple? See John 15:7-8.

- 6) What can a disciple of Jesus expect to see in his or her life? See Galatians 5:22-26.

- 7) Reflect on where you are in this process. Are there areas in which you feel the Holy Spirit inviting you into deeper surrender or obedience? What is holding you back?

- 8) **Read Philippians 2:5-11. What would it take for you to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus? What quality outlined in this description of Jesus was the starting point for looking more like Him?

- 9) **What key point did you learn this week about walking the way of Jesus?

Day 5 - What Do You Think?

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV)

Today, read chapter 5:21-48 with a seeking posture, and be attentive to where God is forming your heart, reordering your priorities, and inviting you into His kingdom life. As you do, take time to reflect on how God's living Word is at work in your life.

Use the questions below to notice where you sense His invitation, conviction, or encouragement. You do not need to answer every question each week. Instead, choose two or three that stand out and spend time with them. Pay attention to where God is leading you toward deeper trust, understanding, and transformation.

- 1) What part of God's redemptive story became larger, stranger, or more beautiful after studying this chapter?

- 2) **What assumptions from this passage quietly challenge in your life? (ideas about identity, comfort, control, security, significance, etc.)

3) Where do you see yourself in this story? Are you the hero, someone in the crowd, or someone in need of grace being revealed?

4) **What part of God's kingdom seemed upside down in this passage compared to the kingdom of this world?

5) Did any mystery remain unresolved after reading this chapter? Rather than solving it, how might living with that mystery deepen your trust in God?

6) **What invitation did Jesus extend here to experience transformation in your life?

7) **If we lived out the truths we've read about in this chapter in our families, workplaces, churches, and neighborhood - what might become more beautiful about our community? What might become uncomfortable?

ⁱ Adapted from Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 38.