

WEEK 6 | MATTHEW 5:21-26

A BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM

As believers in Jesus Christ, and citizens of His Kingdom, we have the unique responsibility to reflect the glory of God to a watching world. In this series, we are studying Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount, considering what it means to flourish under His rule and reign, and live as His representatives where we work, live, and play. In Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus gives six antitheses to contrast true and false interpretations of the Old Testament. In today's passage, Jesus corrects misunderstandings of murder and anger.

“**Antithesis:** the rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses, or sentences”¹

OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES.

The following passages may be helpful as you consider this text.

- **Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17** – Murder is forbidden in the Ten Commandments.
- **Ephesians 4:26** Paul instructs the Church about anger.

QUESTIONS.

Feel free to use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of this week's scriptures.

Part 1: *Let's remember how last week's passage leads into this week's:*

1. What did God say to you through last week's passage about Jesus coming to *fulfill* the law? How does Jesus fulfill the law? (v. 17)
2. How does Matthew 5:20 affect your understanding of “righteousness”?

Part 2: *Jesus confronts wrong interpretations of the commandment against murder.*

3. What does it mean when God commands: “You shall not murder”? (v. 21)
4. Why are murderers liable to judgement? Why is murder so wrong? (v. 21)
5. Who are you tempted to murder (even if only in your mind)?

Part 3: *“But I say to you” – Jesus has the authority to tell us what the Word of God means.*

6. Is it always wrong to be angry with another? What does anger mean in light of **Ephesians 4:26**? Was Jesus angry with others?
7. What do you think Jesus means when he talks about anger, insulting, and calling others fools? Is Mr. T in eternal danger? (v. 22)

Part 4: *Unrighteous anger affects our relationships.*

8. How does our anger with others affect our relationship with God? (v. 23-24)

“One man may be so placed that his anger sheds the blood of thousands, and another so placed that however angry he gets he will only be laughed at. But the little mark on the soul may be much the same in both. Each has done something to himself which, unless he repents, will make it harder for him to keep out of the rage next time he is tempted, and will make

¹ Merriam-Webster.com

the rage worse when he does fall into it. Each of them, if he seriously turns to God, can have that twist in the central man straightened out again: each is, in the long run, doomed if he will not. The bigness or smallness of the thing, seen from the outside, is not what really matters.”² - C. S. Lewis

9. Read **2 Corinthians 5:17-18**. What does it mean that we have been given the “ministry of reconciliation”? (v. 24)

10. According to verses 25-26, failure to reconcile has consequences. What might this mean in a spiritual sense?

PRAY TO CLOSE.

- Praise Jesus who has fulfilled the law.
- Ask the Spirit to convict you of any unrighteous anger in your heart.
- Pray for those you are tempted to resent, and consider what reconciliation looks like.

² C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1952),