

WEEK 8 | MATTHEW 5:31-32

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 marriage, divorce, and sexual immorality.

“**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.

- Matthew 5:8
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 139:23-24
- Psalm 51:10
- Psalm 119:11
- Proverbs 4:23

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.

1. Did the Holy Spirit use last week's passage or sermon to convict, challenge, or encourage you in any way? Did he use it to confirm or answer a prayer in any way? If you're willing, share with the group?
2. Which beatitude is Jesus illuminating in vv. 27-32?
3. Six times in vv. 17-48, Jesus starts his question with, "You have heard that it was said..." then, in contrast follows it with, "but I say unto you..." What is the purpose of him saying this?
4. The context of Jesus' statement in vv. 31-32 was in response to how the Pharisees had lowered the standard of justifying divorce to the point that it could be granted for almost any insignificant reason. Do you see parallels of this in our culture? How do the lowered standards of the Pharisees and today's culture compare to Jesus' words in Matthew 19:3-9?
5. Reflect on your life. What do your thoughts and actions reveal about the value you place on your marriage? Are you in danger of violating the marriage covenant? Are you secretly hoping for an "out" of your marriage?
6. Are there significant issues in your marriage that need to be addressed? What are the next steps you—or you and your spouse—need to take? How can your group help?
7. Considering the significance Jesus placed on the heart behind our actions, take some time to consider where your heart needs realignment with the words Jesus. If you're willing, share with the group.

PRAY TO CLOSE.

¹ Merriam-Webster.com