

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF JESUS

A Harmony Of the Gospels

A Daily Devotional Study Guide - Book 1



WEEK 10

“True Happiness”

Study: Matthew 5:7-9

Reading: James 3:13-18, Matthew 18:21-35

Memory: Psalm 51:17

When I used to sell items on the internet there were times when I made mistakes. There were times when I failed to see a slight problem with the item or times that I accidentally listed more items than I really had. Other times I forgot to remove an item that I had sold. Though I tried to do everything right, inevitably I would make mistakes. When I did, there were some buyers, normally the ones who attempted to purchase small, inexpensive items, that would become really upset. They would often send me nasty emails or give me negative feedback. I always attempted to make things right by giving full refunds and going above and beyond what was needed to make things right, but some people were never satisfied. They didn't show mercy, realizing that mistakes are made by all people.

Today, we are going to see how Jesus challenged us to be merciful, pure in heart and peace makers. Doing these things will show those who we come in contact with who Jesus is and the difference He can make in our lives. These actions will also result in living fulfilled lives that are full of joy and happiness.

What Does the Bible Say?

As Jesus continued His sermon, what would have been very clear to all those listening is that much of what Jesus was saying was in direct contrast to the way the Jewish people had seen their religious leaders acting. The idea of mercy in verse 7 was far from what most of them had seen and experienced in their religion. They had grown up constantly being judged for their actions with little mercy for mistakes. Jesus declared that only those who chose to show mercy would receive mercy in return. Obviously, they would receive mercy from God when they chose to be merciful, but a merciful person will also receive mercy from others in return. Mercy does not mean that a person will never face consequences for their sin, but it offers forgiveness and many times will not give someone what they might deserve. It understands that we are all humans and that we all make

mistakes at times and it chooses to withhold judgment even though judgment is deserved (vs 7).

A person who is pure in heart will also be blessed by receiving eternal life. They will see God for all eternity and they will see His working in their lives on a daily basis. Acting out of a pure heart meant that a person was not doing things for a show or to impress others. They followed God because they loved Him and wanted to live their lives for Him. They did not base their good deeds on what other people would think about them, but chose to do right because of their pure heart of love for God (vs 8).

Another action that will lead to blessing is the making of peace. Because God is a God of peace, it is those who seek peace that will be called the sons of God. Scripturally, we see that God is not for peace at all costs. He did not seek peace and let unrighteousness continue without punishment. The idea of seeking peace is one of attempting to unite two sides together under righteousness. Conflict is a result of selfishness, often by both parties. Those who seek peace are choosing to put their personal plans and desires aside in order for conflicts to be resolved. It is realizing that God's ways and desires are far more important than theirs and they choose to give up their "rights" at times in order to solve problems. At the same time, we understand that peace does not come by giving up what is right and allowing wrong to prevail (vs 9).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you known for showing mercy? Yes, there are times where judgment has to take place and people have to face the consequences for their sin, but mercy should have a predominant part in your life. Mercy should especially be offered for those who are repentant and seeking mercy, realizing that what they had done was very wrong. There will be times when you will need mercy, and, when you show mercy, mercy will often be shown to you.

Do you follow God out of a pure heart or do you do what you do based on what others might think about you? It is easy not to serve God out of a pure heart, but to get caught in the trap of doing things just to please others or earn favor with men.

Are you known for attempting to solve problems or are you a person who causes problems to become greater? God doesn't like conflict because conflict is from selfishness. Though conflict can't always be avoided when you stand up for what is right, in many cases peace can and will prevail. Peace is often the result of choosing to put your desires aside.

Who are blessed (vs 7)?

What will they receive (vs 7)?

What does it mean to show mercy?

Describe a time in your life where people failed to show mercy to you.

Describe a time in your life when you failed to show mercy to others?

Why is showing mercy to others so important?

How do you know when you should show mercy and when you should show judgement?

How can you set up your life to help you become a person who shows mercy on a regular basis?

Who is blessed (vs 8)?

What do you think it means to be pure in heart (vs 8)?

****Scripture reveals the only way to truly have pure hearts is to have them cleansed by the blood of Jesus. The idea of a pure heart would be the idea of a sincere heart.*

What do you think it means that they will see God (vs 8)?

****It was thought that the religious leaders in those days were the ones closest to God, but Jesus was declaring the opposite. Those who would have a relationship with God were the ones who would seek after Him out of a pure desire for Him.*

What do you think it means to be a peacemaker (vs 9)?

Would you describe yourself as a peace maker? Why or why not?

How can you set your life up in a way that helps you live as a peace maker on a daily basis?

“Great Is Your Reward”

Study: Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 2:22-23

Reading: Romans 8:31-39, II Corinthians 11:16-33

Memory: Psalm 51:17

I love the game of hockey and the great opportunity I had to play it for almost 20 years on a Bible college club team with college students who were planning to serve God with the rest of their lives. One of the things that I enjoyed more than the game itself was the ability to invest in the lives of those that I played with. As we played, I tried to emphasize the importance of focusing on the task in front of us as a team rather than getting distracted by the little things that come along throughout a game. There were times in our games when opponents would use their sticks to trip us, they would elbow us when the refs weren't watching and a myriad of other things that we might call “dirty” play. Learning to respond rightly to this helped prepare those guys who were planning to serve God to deal with things that take place in the real world. I viewed hockey as a training ground for life and saw how important it was to learn to rejoice in the little persecutions of a hockey game. Learning this in a game would help those in life when the real persecutions of life come their way.

Today, we are going to see the profound teachings of Jesus on persecution.

What Does the Bible Say?

One of the most challenging beatitudes is the one that Jesus declared last. He declared that those who are persecuted for doing what is right will be the ones who will be blessed. This seems like it couldn't be true because most people base their level of happiness by how situations in life are turning out for them. It is often difficult to understand how a person who is suffering for doing what is right can really be happy. Yet, we see examples of this from the writing of the Apostle Paul and from the disciples of Jesus as Acts 5:41 states, “Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.”

This persecution can come in several forms and on several different levels. It could display itself in hatred towards you which often will lead to a barrage of verbal attacks. These verbal assaults are launched to be

extremely harmful to the soul of the believer, but those believers who understand the truth that Jesus was speaking choose to rejoice because they realize that their reward in heaven is just growing greater. This happiness does not always come naturally because it is often painful physically and emotionally. Jesus told us to rejoice and take our mind off the temporary things of this world when we are being persecuted. He reminds those who are being persecuted that they are in good company when persecution occurs. We uphold the prophets with great respect and admiration for their willingness to suffer for the Lord and those who face persecution with joy can know they are counted among the prophets who were counted worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 2:22-23).

All this being said, persecution is not something that you should long for or desire to go through. In I Timothy 2:2, we are told to pray “for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” Paul did not shy away from persecution, but didn't long for it either.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you fear persecution? Are you afraid of what might happen in the end times or if the United States continues to go the direction we are going? It is easy to fear heavy persecution, but you must remember the words of Jesus. Joy is not based on outward circumstances or a good economy. Joy comes as you take your mind off earthly things and focus on the eternal. Many people are frightened about end times events because they fear persecution. Though you should not desire persecution, you can't live in fear of it. Don't let the fear of being ridiculed or treated cruelly stop you from doing what is right. Don't let it hinder you from declaring the truth of the Gospel and how God has the ability to change and transform lives. Jesus challenged His followers to put this in the proper perspective and realize that eternity will last far longer than this temporal life on earth. You are reminded that your life is not about you as a believer, but about Him and what He desires.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for the persecution He has allowed in your life.
- * Ask God to help you face persecution with the right attitude.
- * Praise God because His rewards are great.

Matthew 5:10-12

Who is blessed (vs 10)?

What do you think it looks like to be persecuted for the sake of righteousness (vs 10)?

Why is it important to make sure you are being persecuted for true righteousness and not just your own opinion?

****There are some believers who will do belligerent things and bring consternation upon themselves, but justify their outcome by verses like these.*

What will those who are persecuted receive (vs 10)?

Why do you think this is the reward that Jesus declared for suffering persecution?

What other things will cause you to be blessed (vs 11)?

Why do you think Jesus added “on my account” to verse 11? (ESV)

What does this reveal about how followers of God will be treated at times?

How are you supposed to respond when you are reviled for the sake of Christ?

Why is it hard to rejoice (vs 12)?

What did Jesus say you should focus on during times of persecution (vs 12)?

How should heavenly rewards be a great motivator?

What example did Jesus give when describing persecution (vs 12)?

What does this reveal about hard times as a follower of Christ?

Why is it important not to seek persecution?

How do you respond when you are persecuted?

“Salt and Light”

Study: Matthew 5:13-16

Reading: Romans 13:1-14, Philippians 2:12-16

Memory: Psalm 51:17

When I was younger, I really enjoyed playing night games inside and outside. What I found to be the most exciting part of night games was attempting to go unnoticed by hiding in the darkness. I would always put dark clothes on and lurk around in places where there was not much light. It was amazing how close people would come to me and not see me because I was in the darkness and I blended in with everything around me.

Today, we are going to see how we are supposed to be opposite of this as believers. We are to be the light of the world who shine in the darkness rather than blend in with it.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jesus declared that His followers were to be the “salt of the earth.” Salt had two main purposes in Bible days. It was used to add flavor to food and used to help preserve food. Which use Jesus was specifically talking about here is debatable, though both applications can apply. By being salt, believers add flavor to the bland hopeless life of the world. Salt also creates thirst and the lives of believers create a thirst for God in the minds of those who don’t know God. The salt of believers can also preserve a life from evil and corruption of this world and the misery of eternal damnation. Whatever the exact meaning, the point that Jesus was making was that salt needs to be doing its job. Though pure salt does not lose its flavor, the salt from the Dead Sea would often contain other minerals and could lose its effectiveness. The only use for it then would be to be thrown on the foot paths to help kill the weeds. Jesus was challenging those who were His followers not to lose focus on their purpose in life. It did no good to claim to be a follower of God, but not actually follow God (vs 13).

The second illustration that Jesus used to describe how believers needed to live with a purpose of glorifying God to others was that of light. Jesus described how we are the light of the world that should not be hidden to anyone. This was a vivid and very real illustration for the people as they were around the Sea of Galilee. The fisherman would have easily

understood this because they would be able to tell where they were on the sea based on the lights of the cities that were on the shores and hills of the sea. Many cities were built on the top of hills in those days because the hills provided natural protection from invading forces. At night, these cities would clearly be seen from all around because their lights would show in the darkness. The same understanding applied to candles. People would not hide candles but would put them on candlesticks to provide maximum light for all those who were in the house (vs 14-15).

The application declared by Jesus was that His followers were to show that God was in their hearts. Their good works would be the evidence that God was working in their hearts and this would ultimately bring glory to God. This was much different than the Pharisees who did their works to impress others but were not truly righteous. The works that the followers of God would perform would be from the heart and would not draw attention to one's self but put the focus on God (vs 16).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you letting your light shine to others? Do others see the way you live and glorify God because of it? It is easy for believers to get caught in the religious trap of impressing others with their good deeds rather than bringing glory to God. This can occur in your life when you make choices based on what others think of you and desire from you but not seeking God's power and direction. When you do what you do out of a heart of love and obedience for God, you will shine as a light in this world because it will be evident to all that it is coming from your heart. You will not be glorifying yourself, but God will be seen through you as others will see His transforming power at work in your life. The key to being salt and light comes by submitting yourself to Him on a daily basis and letting His glory shine through you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for giving you the strength to live for Him.
- * Ask God to help you be salt and light in this world.

Thought for the day

What did Jesus say His disciples should be (vs 13)?

Why do you think He used the example of salt?

What did Jesus say salt had the ability to do (vs 13)?

What do you think are ways that you as a believer can lose your saltiness?

What did Jesus say flavorless salt was used for (vs 13)?

What point do you think Jesus was making with this illustration?

What did Jesus compare His follower to (vs 14)?

What couldn't be hidden (vs 14)?

What do people do with light (vs 15)?

What did Jesus say you should do with your light (vs 16)?

How can others see your light (vs 16)?

What is the ultimate purpose of showing your light to others (vs 16)?

What do you think are ways that your light can shine to others around you?

What are things that may hinder your light from shining?

Why is it important for your light to bring glory to God and not yourself?

****It is very easy to do things to draw attention to yourself by the good works that you do rather than exalt God. The religious leaders in the days of Jesus did do good things, but they wanted all the praise. Your good works should seek to direct attention to God.*

Describe how others are seeing good works in your life?

Are there any changes you need to make to allow your light to shine?

“Not One Jot Nor Tittle”

Study: Matthew 5:17-20

Reading: Psalm 119:89-96, II Peter 1:12-21

Memory: Psalm 51:17

What Does the Bible Say?

Because Jesus spoke out so often against the religious leaders and the religious system of that day, many people were accusing Him of trying to do away with the Law. Because He did not choose to follow all of their interpretations of the Law, they accused Him of disobedience and rebellion. Yet, Jesus declared that He did not come to abolish the law and the prophets. He loved the Old Testament and used it many times when He spoke, but He didn't twist it to fit His own purposes as the religious leaders did. In a bold but true statement, Jesus informed those who were listening that He had come to be a fulfillment of the Law. From the very first sacrifice that was offered for the sin of Adam to the time when the veil was torn in the temple when Jesus died, each sacrifice was pointing towards Jesus and the One who would permanently pay the price for all the sins of men. He was also the One of whom the prophets spent a great deal of time on as they prophesied about the Messiah and the One who would come to deliver them from their pain and agony upon this earth (vs 17).

The prophesies about Jesus were true and accurate and would all be fulfilled. Many have not yet come to pass but will still be fulfilled in the future. Jesus was so confident that everything prophesied would come true that He stated that not one little “iota” or “dot” (ESV) would fail to come true. A iota and dot were the smallest marks of the Hebrew alphabet. The point that Jesus was trying to make was that everything written in the Old Testament would be fulfilled and would be fulfilled through Him (vs 18).

In no way was Jesus de-emphasizing the law, but verse 19 reveals that He was re-emphasizing the importance of obeying and following the Word of God. Every part of it was vitally important and needed to be followed without neglecting any of it. This spoke to a major problem of the religious leaders who emphasized portions they liked, but neglected the areas they didn't care to follow. Jesus was calling His followers to a greater holiness and obedience than the Pharisees were practicing. Their righteousness was just an outward righteousness that didn't follow the whole law, but those who truly wanted to see the kingdom of God couldn't neglect any part of

the Law. Other parts of Scripture make it clear that a person can't inherit eternal life by just attempting to keep the whole law, because it can't be done. God has never sought outer righteousness, but inner righteousness that comes from humbling ourselves and allowing His righteousness to become our own (vs 19-20).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you choosing to follow the whole Word of God? Do you find yourself treating the Word of God like a buffet where you pick and choose what you want to follow and what you don't care to follow? This is much easier to do than you may realize. There are many areas of your life where it is easier to follow God. Those areas often get emphasized and the other areas where it is harder to follow often get overlooked. For instance, a woman can be disgusted with a man's desire to look at pornography and view men that struggle with this as less spiritual, while at the same time she worries about everything or gossips but thinks that what she is doing is no big deal. The man could do the same for the woman because He doesn't struggle like she does. This is why you can't compare yourself with others. You can't overlook portions of the Word of God. You must realize that every part of it is true. This means the parts you like and don't like are both from God and both need to be followed. The parts that are easier to believe and the parts that are harder to believe are all inspired and are completely true and accurate. This truth about God and His Word is hard to understand because very little of what you say will last and continue on forever, yet every one of God's Words will come true.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the great truths found in His Word.*
- * *Ask God to help you keep all the Law.*
- * *Praise God because His words will never fail.*

Thought for the day

What did Jesus not want them to think (vs 17)?

Why do you think people would have thought that?

What did the “Law and Prophets” mean (vs 17)?

What did Jesus say He had come to do (vs 17)?

What do you think He meant by this (vs 17)?

What did Jesus say would not pass away (vs 18)?

What do you think He meant by that (vs 18)?

How were the law and prophets going to be “accomplished” (vs 18)?

What did Jesus warn about doing (vs 19)?

What do you think this would look like (vs 19)?

Why would people who neglected part of the law be the least in the kingdom of heaven (vs 19)?

Who would be great in the kingdom of heaven (vs 19)?

What did Jesus say about righteousness (vs 20)?

What do you think he meant by this?

****The religious leaders thought they would be great in heaven because of how much they emphasized the law, but Jesus was declaring that the way the religious leaders lived was not good enough to get them into heaven. This was because they didn't follow the whole law. Further teaching in the New Testament reveals that the keeping of the law could never fully be done by any man and that is why all men need Christ. Jesus wasn't teaching on salvation, but was attempting to get men to understand that He was the fulfillment of the law. Instead of looking to the law to bring the hope of salvation, the people were to look to Jesus.*

Why is understanding the law and the need for Jesus so important?

“Raca”

Study: Matthew 5:21-25

Reading: Psalm 51:1-19, Colossians 3:9-11, Romans 12:9-21

Memory: Psalm 51:17

What Does the Bible Say?

In keeping with the theme that He had not come to abolish the law, Jesus presented the reason behind the commandments that God gave. God never intended His laws to become the focus of their lives, but the law was given to help people know how to love God and love others. He began by describing how the law declared that murderers will face judgment for their actions because murder was wrong. Jesus then added that inward hatred was the same as committing outward murder. Though the physical consequences of outward murder would be different than inward hatred, the reality was that in God's eyes they were both sin and both broke God's holy law. Hatred often manifested itself in insults and the putting down of other people. Jesus specifically mentioned the term “Raca” which meant “fool” or “empty headed.” This must have been a common term that was used by the religious leaders when they were putting someone else down and thought they were still righteous. Jesus was making it clear that it wasn't just the outward sins that were a violation against the holiness of God, but the inward attitudes (vs 21-22).

God has never desired outward sacrifice more than obedience and Jesus reiterated this desire by describing a person who was offering a sacrifice in the temple when he remembered that someone was angry with him over some wrong that had been done. Jesus described how God would want the person who has sinned against another to go to that person and make things right with the one that was hurt before an offering was made. This basically reveals that if your heart is not right with other humans, it can't be right with God. It is interesting to note that Jesus said you should do this if others are bothered by something you have done. This implies that even if you didn't mean to do it or if something was taken the wrong way it is still your responsibility to get it taken care of. This doesn't mean you have to have their official forgiveness before you can get God's forgiveness, because some people choose not to forgive. It is simply your responsibility to attempt to make things right (vs 23-24).

Jesus encouraged His followers to work out their problems with those

who have accused them of wrong before the problems escalate in court. If it is left to a judge, then the judge might not rule favorably and the full weight of the wrong action will be felt. This reveals the importance of taking care of problems when they happen rather than letting them fester and become bigger problems. Attempting to solve problems ourselves rather than leaving the judgement up to a third party will often bring better results than just being stubborn and not choosing to repent and seek restoration (vs 25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you have any anger or bitterness dwelling inside of you? Are there people that you have unresolved conflicts with that you have not done your part in attempting to seek a resolution? Anger, hatred and bitterness are huge problems among all men. This is because you are a naturally selfish person and you also have a God-given emotion of anger. Becoming angry at someone is not wrong in and of itself, but letting that anger grow without getting it taken care of does cause great problems. Jesus challenged all men with this teaching because He is declaring that you can't be right with God if you haven't done what is needed to be right with others. You are told that God will not accept any sacrifices you offer Him if you don't first go to others with a broken heart over how you have hurt them or caused them to sin. Again, this doesn't mean that every relationship has to be perfect because there are some people who just won't forgive, but you must do your part. If God is speaking to you today about a broken relationship where you have done something to hurt the other party, whether on purpose or not, you need to do what you can to seek out that person and ask for their forgiveness as soon as possible today.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for choosing to forgive you when you sin.
- * Ask God to reveal any areas of bitterness in your life.
- * Praise God because He is perfect in all that He does.

Thought for the day

What did Jesus quote in verse 21?

Why would this not have been new information for them?

What three things did Jesus add to what was written in the Old Testament (vs 21-22)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What does this reveal about the gravity of hatred?

What does this reveal about how dangerous insults are?

What does this reveal about calling others “fools” (vs 22)?

****It appears there were certain things that the religious leaders were allowed to say to others to show their superiority to those who were under them. One of them was calling others fools. Apparently this was an acceptable practice among the religious leaders.*

What scenario did Jesus present in verse 23?

Why do you think Jesus mentioned “if your brother has something against you” rather than “you did something to your brother” (vs 23)?

What did Jesus say you were to do before you made your sacrifice (vs 24)?

What does this reveal about the importance of right relationships with others?

What does verse 25 emphasize about making things right with others?

What reasoning did Jesus give (vs 25)?

****This could be a reference to a physical judge, but it goes beyond the earthly realm to our responsibility before God.*

What do you think verse 26 means in the context of this passage?

“Plucking Out Your Eye”

Study: Matthew 5:27-30

Reading: Ephesians 5:1-33

Memory: Psalm 51:17

When I was in junior high and my mom was gone somewhere in the daytime, my sisters would often watch soap operas on TV. I began to watch with them and found some of them quite enjoyable to watch. My parents would definitely not have approved, so we watched when mom wasn't home, or taped the episodes and watched them another time. Little did I realize at the time why my mom didn't want me watching, but now that I have grown up I can see why. Even when I flip through the TV channels in the afternoon or am in a waiting room where a soap opera is on, I see why my parents were against them. Many of them are full of sexual corruption and selfish relationships that should not be a part of the life of someone who follows Christ.

Today, we are going to read what Jesus said about the kinds of behaviors the world presents as normal.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jesus took another Old Testament command and strengthened it by declaring that adultery was more than just a physical act. Any man who chose to lust after a woman in his heart was guilty of adultery because it was the thought that counted and not just the action. As with the previous instruction about hatred and murder, physical adultery does have more long term and natural physical consequences, but in the eyes of God both are sin. This is a great challenge to all people, especially to men who are visually stimulated, to keep our thoughts pure. In this society it is very tough to avoid images of half naked people in seducing poses because they are scattered all over billboard and phone advertisements. Accidentally seeing an image is not wrong because you can't always avoid it. It becomes sin when you choose not to look away or to dwell on the images you have seen. I am not saying that it is okay to look, I am merely pointing out that you can't always avoid seeing things and it is not the accidental view that is sin, but the choice to purposefully view or prolong the view. This view often turns into lust and a desire that God has not intended for you (vs 27-28).

Though in our pagan society we brush this off as no big deal, it is a serious deal to God. Jesus told us that if our eyes are going to cause us to sin, it would be better to have our eyes plucked out than to have them indulge in sin. He declared the same thing about our hands that might cause us to sin by touching things we should not touch. Jesus was not stating that if we commit a sexual sin we would be doomed to hell, though we are told in Ephesians 5:6 that God's wrath is poured out on those who commit sexual sins. For believers, we are no longer condemned because of the work of Christ (Romans 8:1). The emphasis on judgment is emphasizing the seriousness of the matter of sexual sin and how God views it. It is a big deal to God. In fact, it is a huge deal to God and if it is such a big deal to Him, it should be to all believers as well. The fact that we are told it would be better to remove our eyes or our hands that are causing us to sin indicates that we need to do whatever it takes to remove any sexual sins from our lives and avoid them in every possible way (vs 29-30).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are there any sexual sins that you are allowing to exist in your life? It is much easier than you often realize to excuse sexual sin because we all have a natural desire for sexual things. This is not saying that sex is bad because God has designed sexual intimacy to be a wonderful and extremely enjoyable act of marriage. Yet, Satan has taken something that God has designed for good and has twisted it, knowing how much damage sexual sin does to people. It is vital to realize that sexual sin is not done with just the body, nor does it begin with the body, but begins in the mind. In this culture, you will face temptations almost every day to lust after someone other than your spouse. When these images come your way, whether on the internet, TV, in magazines or in person, you must make a choice to turn away and choose not to dwell on what you have seen. You must also determine not to go places or watch things that will possibly entice you. For women, this will mean avoiding many romance novels that vividly describe sexual scenes creating fantasies. It will mean not watching entertainment which will lead you to think about ungodly, sensual things. For men, it will mean getting filters on the internet, or choosing not to read magazines. It will mean getting an accountability partner to help you or even choosing a "dumb phone." It will mean turning away from that woman wearing a short skirt or low cut shirt. Some people may think this to be too "picky" but when Jesus talks about plucking your eye out or cutting your hand off, you start to realize that God is very serious about it.

What command did Jesus make reference to (vs 27)?

What was adultery?

What did Jesus say was also adultery (vs 28)?

What do you think lustful intent is (vs 28)?

How have you been tempted to look at others with lust?

Do physical adultery and adultery of the heart have the same consequences?

****Of course the initial answer is “no” but physical adultery always begins in the mind. Unchecked heart adultery will often lead to physical adultery. Both are very dangerous.*

How did Jesus reveal that sexual sin needs to be taken seriously (vs 29)?

****I do not believe Jesus was commanding self-mutilation, but He was presenting the great importance of choosing to remove sin or even the temptation to sin from your life. I personally believe that the temptation for sexual sin is one of the strongest temptations there is for most people. This is because God has given us a natural desire for sex. Many other sins are often acquired desires, while sex is a very natural desire since it was given as a gift by God.*

How is verse 30 similar to verse 29?

Do you think this is teaching that if you commit sexual sin that you be thrown into hell?

****Jesus is using metaphors to describe how serious this sin is and how serious action needs to be taken to prevent it. Just as with any sin, there is great forgiveness and God will completely forgive. I believe the reason He placed such seriousness on this topic is because many people in the world do not see anything wrong with sexual sins. Sexual sin was normal in the Roman society and was accepted as “no big deal.” This is the same attitude the world has to sexual sin today.*

How can you align your view of sexual sin with the way that God views it?

Memory Verses

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. 16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.