

Food for Thought

For the week of June 22, 2014

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. The Pharisees of Jesus' time were proud of their religion and certain that they were living as God wanted. Yet, in Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus compares and contrasts the standards they were so proud of keeping with God's ultimate standard of morality. Read the passage and after each of the verses listed below, write in the "moral standard" the Pharisees were practicing, followed by the "heart of the issue" they were missing.

Matthew 5	Moral standard	Heart of the issue missed
v. 21-22		
v. 27-30		
v. 31-32		
v. 33-37		
v. 38-42		
v. 43-45		

Which one or two of these issues do you see as still most commonly missed by Christians today? Are there any you need to be aware of in your life?

2. We saw this weekend that helping the helpless is one of the signs of true religion that pleases God. How do the following verses add to your understanding of what it means to help the helpless?

Proverbs 14:31

Proverbs 22:9

Proverbs 28:27

Proverbs 29:7

1 Corinthians 13:3

3. None of us want to be blinded by sin or enslaved to it, yet it happens. It's also what can leave our sacrifice to help those in need still falling short of pleasing God and living the holy life he has called us to. How do these verses help us avoid these traps and take an honest look at how we can truly live a fulfilling life that pleases God?

Psalms 139:23-24

2 Corinthians 5:16, 20

Proverbs 28:13

Can you think of ways you have built what these verses say into your life?
Are there any adjustments you need to make?

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Matthew 5:21-48

Murder

21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

25 "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Adultery

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Eye for Eye

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

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2. We saw this weekend that helping the helpless is one of the signs of true religion that pleases God. How do the following verses add to your understanding of what it means to help the helpless?

Proverbs 14:31

31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors God. [NIV]

Proverbs 22:9

9 The generous will themselves be blessed,
for they share their food with the poor. [NIV]

Proverbs 28:27

27 Those who give to the poor will lack nothing,
but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses. [NIV]

Proverbs 29:7

7 The righteous care about justice for the poor,
but the wicked have no such concern. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 13:3

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. [NIV]

3. None of us want to be blinded by sin or enslaved to it, yet it happens. It's also what can leave our sacrifice to help those in need still falling short of pleasing God and living the holy life he has called us to. How do these verses help us avoid these traps and take an honest look at how we can truly live a fulfilling life that pleases God?

Psalms 139:23-24

23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 5:16, 20

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. [NIV]

Proverbs 28:13

13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. [NIV]

Can you think of ways you have built what these verses say into your life?

Are there any adjustments you need to make?