

## ***Anger or Maintaining Peaceful Relationships***

Matthew 5:21-26 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not murder,' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be answerable to the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be answerable to the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be answerable to the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. 23 Therefore, if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 25 Come to good terms with your accuser quickly, while you are with him on the way to court, so that your accuser will not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will not be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

Jesus begins each paragraph in Matthew 5:21-48 with, "You have heard that it was said." This phrase refers to what the scribes and Pharisees were teaching the people about the law. When Jesus says, "It is written" or, "But I tell you," He is quoting scripture or teaching how to apply the Law. Jesus came to fulfill or \_\_\_\_\_ the law, not abolish it. **Matthew 5:17**. Jesus is not giving new kingdom law, but teaching who belongs to the kingdom by showing the people that they have not been living up to the demands of the law like they think they have. **Matthew 5:20**

### **Anger and Insults (5:21-22)**

As humans we tend to lower the moral and spiritual level of the law. We try to make the law attainable by lowering it to a level that we think we can achieve. Jesus moves the bar back to where it was originally set by God when the law was given, (**Matt 5:22**). The teachers of the law lowered the standard to not doing something against another person that brought a civil penalty, (**Matt 5:21**). So, if you do not murder or commit any other high crimes that would bring you before the court and you have kept God's \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus says that if you have \_\_\_\_\_ against your brother you are just as accountable to judgment before God as the one who murders. Kingdom citizens are not those who merely keep from murdering someone or assaulting someone. Jesus says that God's law is much harder than that. He lets us know that if you are \_\_\_\_\_ with your brother you will be judged. **We must guard our hearts against \_\_\_\_\_.**

Jesus goes further and talks about the fruit of anger in verse 22. If you verbally insult your brother you are just as accountable before God. We lower the law and say that we cannot physically harm another. Jesus restores God's law and says you cannot be angry with your brother and you cannot insult them. Jesus' concern is clearly about how we \_\_\_\_\_ when someone does something to us. Not murdering the other person is not the goal. Our goal is to not be \_\_\_\_\_ and lash out with words against someone. We are not allowed by God to have a selfish or malicious \_\_\_\_\_. Anger desires to harm the other person and words are often the vehicle for that harm. Jesus teaches us that our anger is what puts us in danger of the hell of fire. James made the same point. **(James 1:19–20) We must guard our \_\_\_\_\_ against insulting, slanderous, or evil words.**

Anger keeps us out of God's kingdom because anger is always a \_\_\_\_\_ concern. My rights have been violated. My feelings have been hurt. My sense of justice was violated. We want to often pretend that we have righteous indignation. But our anger is not in defense of God and his holiness. Our anger is a defense of \_\_\_\_\_, our rights, and our desires. This is not a new command that Jesus is giving but was always part of God's law. **(Leviticus 19:17–18)**

Listen to what the law says. Do not hate your brother. Do not take vengeance. Do not bear a grudge. \_\_\_\_\_ your neighbor as yourself. Murder is not the threshold of sin and it never was. Hate was the threshold. Anger was the threshold. **(1 John 3:15)**

Is this a New Testament law alone? No, **1 John 3:11 & 12** gives us the example of Cain.. He hated his brother and that is why he murdered Abel. God takes very seriously the



heart of contempt for another person. Anger is not acceptable among us. God does not look only upon the outward actions. God is looking at the \_\_\_\_\_. He knows if we have hatred, malice, and anger for another. We are liable for judgment when this is in our heart.

### God Given Solutions (5:23-26)

Jesus now gives us solutions to relationship problems and tells us the seriousness of these solutions. Verse 23 pictures a person who has come to worship God. He has traveled a great distance from home to be able to worship at the temple. Yet, if he remembers that a person has something against him, he is to leave his offering to God, go back and be reconciled to his brother first, then travel back and worship God. God cares about our \_\_\_\_\_. It is important to take care of offenses that may exist between other Christians before we \_\_\_\_\_. Worship is a sham if we hate our brother or sister in Christ. Worship is a sham if we are leaving wrongs unresolved. We are to live reconciled, peaceful lives. Notice that it does not matter what the wrong is or if you think you are justified in being upset. Go and \_\_\_\_\_ before you come to \_\_\_\_\_. External worship does not cover over the sins of mistreating one another. Reconciliation is paramount to God. This is why we are called to be peacemakers **(Matthew 5:9)**. We are supposed to intervene and help others \_\_\_\_\_ and come to peace. **We must restore broken relationships because conflict hinders our relationship with God.**

Further, Jesus warns in verse 25 to not sit back and think you are right. Go and settle matters and do not let it escalate. **Personal conflicts must be resolved** \_\_\_\_\_ before matters are made worse. Evil consequences can follow for not making peace with others. This means we must learn to take responsibility for our mistakes. We must learn to say sorry to another person. We must \_\_\_\_\_ the other person more than being right. We must \_\_\_\_\_ peace more than defending our feelings or our rights. Notice that Jesus does not say that if someone has a problem with you that you just tell them to get over it. You and I are called to take care of things by solving the

problem, not by leaving the situation unresolved. God does not want our worship if we are choosing to be angry, bitter, or hateful toward another. \_\_\_\_\_ is not a cover for our moral failure. This is the very idea that Jesus means when he quotes Hosea in **Matthew 9:13; 12:7**.

Jesus says that if we have anger for another, hate another, or say malicious, insulting words to another we are liable to the hell of fire. Jesus wants us to humble ourselves by seeing our sin and admitting our failures. The first characteristic of those who are in the kingdom of God as given in the Beatitudes. **(Mathew 5:3)**

### **Discussion and Application**

How can we keep ourselves from anger and other evil attitudes? What should we do when anger seeps in?

How can we maintain peaceful relationships with others?

## Bible Verses (NAS)

Ex 20:13 & Dt 5:17 “You shall not murder.”

Matthew 5:17 “Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

Matthew 5:20 “For I say to you that unless your righteousness far surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

James 1:19–20 You know *this*, my beloved brothers *and sisters*. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, *and* slow to anger; 20 for a man’s anger does not bring about the righteousness of God.

Leviticus 19:17–18 ‘You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may certainly rebuke your neighbor, but you are not to incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor hold any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother *or sister* is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.

1 John 3:11–12 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we are to love one another; not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And for what reason did he murder him? Because his *own* deeds were evil, but his brother’s were righteous.

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Matthew 9:13 Now go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, rather than sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” 12:7 But if you had known what this means: ‘I desire mercy, rather than sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. (NIV)

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.