

The Gospels Part 06

Salt and Light Matt 5:13-48 The Sermon on the Mount

What Scripture say is so – is so !!

We are not free to ignore it or change it.

There is much detail that Scripture does not elaborate upon.

- They are left 'vacant' since they are not necessary to the story, point or principle that God is communicating to us.
- The 'missing' detail can often be useful to our understanding of the times, and customs of what Scripture says and can be ascertained using historical information and good use of logic and God directed common sense to fill in those details.

We are free to do this so long as:

- We do not obscure God's message contained in what He has revealed to us in Scripture.
- We do not alter, revise, or explain away what Scripture does say in order to fit our "theory" into God's account.
- We recognize that anything and everything other than what Scripture actually reveals is only a possibility no matter how 'probable' it seems to be.

Salt Matt 5:13

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

The church when it is being the church as God intended it to be, is the conscience and restrainer of the world and of society.

Salt was considered a 'divine substance' by the Greeks (gk: **Theion**).

The Romans had what amounted to a limerick that went (Latin:)

'Nil utilius sole et sale' =

"Nothing is more useful than the sun and salt".

The Jews would offer salt along with their sacrifices.

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Jesus expression '**salt that has lost it's savour**' is an expression the Jews were familiar with.

Salt does not lose its flavor or it's saltiness.

It can lose its usefulness.

Christians are intended by the Lord to be the salt of the earth bringing purity to life, cleansing and preserving what is good, bringing joy, bringing out the best in others.

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Qualities of salt:

- **Pure** - whiteness symbolizing purity
 - Christians are to be examples of purity
 - Our standards before the world must never be lowered.
 - Our lifestyles are to be unstained.
 - Jas 1:27** *Be unstained from the world*
 - We are not to withdraw from the world.
 - We are to keep ourselves unstained by the world.

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Qualities of salt:

- **Preservative** - keeps things from going bad;
 - keeps putrifaction at bay
- We, like salt, are to preserve life from corruption.
 - In the presence of certain people, it is very easy to do right and be good.
 - With others, it is easy to misbehave and lower our standards.
 - Our presence must defeat corruption and make it easy for others to do and be right.

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Qualities of salt:

- **Lends flavor to other things, enhances them**
 - Christians are to be to life what salt is to food.
 - People generally connect Christianity with the opposite, that is it takes the flavor out of life.
 - Their perception is that a Christian stifles fun and freedom.
- Whatever he does and wherever He goes the Christian must diffuse and disperse the Joy he has been given.
 - Remember the Beatitudes were given so we could know how to experience Joy and Happiness that did not depend on and could not be extinguished by situations and circumstances.

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Jewish ovens (for food and bricks, etc.) were built on a thick layer of salt. The salt was an insulator that reflected the heat back into the oven making the oven more efficient and more evenly heated throughout.

After some time, the salt would lose it's insulating ability and allow the heat to pass through into the ground under the oven.

When it did, the oven was taken down and the layer of salt was removed and replaced by a new layer of fresh salt.

The old salt was used in road construction.

Even today we spray dirt roads with a salt solution to keep the dust down and form a hard surface crust on the road.

Light Matthew 5:14-16

- [14] *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
- [15] *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*
- [16] *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

In **John 9:5** Jesus claimed to be the '**Light of the World**'

Here He is teaching that those who follow Him are to be the exact same thing.

This expression was common in those days.

Israelites considered themselves to be 'a light to the gentiles'.
Prominent Rabbis were called 'A lamp of Israel'.

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As lamps we do not produce our own light.

The oil isn't ours - we are filled.

The flame isn't ours - we are lit by another.

Then and only then can we shine.

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Lights are meant to be seen.

Houses in Jesus day were dark places most having only one 18 inch diameter window in one wall.

The lamp or candle in the house was a bowl of oil in which a wick was placed in a floating block.

The wick was lit and the lamp was placed on a lampstand from which it lit up the room.

When the house was unattended, the people would remove the lamp and place it under a basket (peck size) so that a wind or draft moving through would not extinguish the flame in their absence.

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Christian life is meant to be seen.

Either secrecy destroys discipleship or discipleship will destroy secrecy.

They cannot co-exist for long.

Our light should be used to illuminate the world.

Jesus didn't say we are the light of the church but the light of the world.

It is in the world that our light is needed.

Where ever we are we should be lighting up the place with the light we received from the Lord fueled by the oil provided through His Holy Spirit.

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A light can be used as a guide

Christians should make the way clear for others, being an example that they can follow as they walk their own walk.

When a person takes a stand and leads, others will follow who, without the leader, would otherwise not have done so.

Light (our life) provides a warning marking those areas to be avoided, leading others to safety.

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Mt 5:16 says men are to see our good deeds and glorify God

There are two words for good in the Greek

Agathos = a thing of good quality

Kalos = a thing that is attractive and desirable

Jesus uses **Kalos** in this passage.

Good can either repel or it can attract.

We are to attract and not repel.

Our goodness ought to attract attention to God and not self.

Our light (our life) should never be focused on what we have done but rather what God has allowed us to do.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

[17] *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

[18] *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

[19] *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

[20] *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus lays down the eternal character of the Law;

Yet Paul says, "*Christ is the end of the Law*" **Rom 10:4**

Again and again Jesus broke what the Jews called the Law.

- He did not observe the hand washings that the Law laid down;
- He associated with recognized sinners.
- He healed sick people on the Sabbath, although the Law forbade such healings;
- He was in fact condemned and crucified as a law breaker;

But here he seems to speak of the Law with a veneration and a reverence that no Rabbi or Pharisee could exceed.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus seems to lay it down that the law is so sacred that not the smallest detail of it will ever pass away.

The smallest letter the letter which the Authorized Version calls the **jot** was the Hebrew letter '**iodh**'.

In form it was like an apostrophe ['];

Not a single letter

Not a punctuation mark,

Not a dot was to pass away from The Law

The smallest part of the letter what the Authorized Version calls the **tittle** is what we call the **serif**,

the little projecting part at the foot of a letter,

the little line at each side of the foot of; for example, the letter I.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

The Jews used the expression "The Law" in four different ways.

- (i) They used it to mean the Ten Commandments.
- (ii) They used it to mean the first five books of the Bible.
The Pentateuch literally means "The Five Rolls" was to the Jew the Law par excellence and was to them by far the most important part of the Bible.
Aka: Torah – The Books of Moses
- (iii) They used the phrase 'the law and the prophets' to mean the whole of Scripture;
They used it as a comprehensive description of what we would call the whole Old Testament, the TNK - Tenak
- (iv) They used it to mean the Oral or the Scribal Law.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

In the time of Jesus it was the last meaning, the Oral or the Scribal Law, which was commonest;

It was this Scribal Law which both Jesus and Paul so utterly condemned – Man's corruption of God's Law.

In the Old Testament itself we find very few rules and regulations;

What we do find are great, broad principles which a man must take and interpret under God's guidance and apply to the individual situations in life.

In the 10 Commandments we find no rules and regulations at all
Each one is a great principle out of which we must find our own 'rules' for living life.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

To the Jews these great principles did not seem enough.

They held that the Law was divine, and that in it God had said his last word, and that therefore everything must be in it.

If a thing was not in the Law explicitly it must be there implicitly.

They therefore argued that out of the Law it must be possible to deduce a rule and a regulation for every possible situation in life.

There arose a sect of men called the Scribes who made it the business of their lives to reduce the great principles of the Law to thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

The Law lays it down that the Sabbath Day is to be kept holy, and that on it no work is to be done. That is a great principle.

But the Jewish legalists had a passion for definition.

So they asked: What is work?

All kinds of things were classified as work.

To carry a burden on the Sabbath Day is to work.

But a burden had to be defined too.

So the Scribal Law lays it down that a burden is:

- food equal in weight to a dried fig,
- enough wine for mixing in a goblet,
- milk enough for one swallow,
- honey enough to put upon a wound,
- oil enough to anoint a small member,
- water enough to moisten an eye salve,
- paper enough to write a customs house notice upon,
- ink enough to write two letters of the alphabet,
- reed enough to make a pen " and so on endlessly.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

They spent endless hours arguing

- whether a man could or could not lift a lamp from one place to another on the Sabbath,
- whether a tailor committed a sin if he went out with a needle stuck in his robe,
- whether a woman might wear a brooch or false hair,
- even if a man might go out on the Sabbath with artificial teeth or an artificial limb,
- if a man might lift his child on the Sabbath Day.

These things to them were the essence of religion.

Their religion became a legalistic 'burden' of petty rules and regulations.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

To write was to work on the Sabbath. But writing has to be defined.

"He who writes two letters of the alphabet with his right or with his left hand, whether of one kind or of two kinds, if they are written with different inks or in different languages, is guilty. Even if he should write two letters from forgetfulness, he is guilty, whether he has written them with ink or with paint, red chalk, vitriol, or anything which makes a permanent mark.

Also he that writes on two walls that form an angle, or on two tablets of his account book so that they can be read together is guilty ...

But, if anyone writes with dark fluid, with fruit juice, or in the dust of the road, or in sand, or in anything which does not make a permanent mark, he is not guilty...

If he writes one letter on the ground, and one on the wall of the house, or on two pages of a book, so that they cannot be read together he is not guilty."

That is a typical passage from the Scribal Law; and that is what the orthodox Jew regarded as true religion and the true service of God.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

To heal was to work on the Sabbath.

Obviously this has to be defined.

Healing was allowed when there was danger to life, and especially in troubles of the ear, nose and throat; but even then, steps could be taken only to keep the patient from becoming worse; no steps might be taken to make him get any better.

A plain bandage might be put on a wound, but no ointment; plain wadding might be put into a sore ear, but not medicated wadding.

The Scribes were the men who worked out these rules and regulations.

The Pharisees, whose name means The Separated Ones, were the men who had separated themselves from all the ordinary activities of life in an effort to know and keep all these rules and regulations.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

For many generations this Scribal Law was never written down; it was the oral law, and it was handed down in the memory of generations of Scribes.

In the middle of the third century A.D. a summary of it was made and codified.

That summary is known as the **Mishnah**;

it contains sixty-three tractates on various subjects of the Law, and

in English makes a book of almost eight hundred pages.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Later Jewish scholarship busied itself with making commentaries to explain the Mishnah.

These commentaries are known as the **Talmuds**.

Of the Jerusalem Talmud there are 12 printed volumes; and

Of the Babylonian Talmud there are 60 printed volumes.

To the strict orthodox Jew, in the time of Jesus, religion serving God, was a matter of keeping thousands of legalistic rules and regulations as laid out in the Mishnah and Talmuds;

They regarded these petty rules and regulations as literally matters of life and death and eternal destiny.

God's Word had all but been codified and dissected and was relegated to a venerated but largely irrelevant place in life.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus did not mean that not one of these rules and regulations was to pass away;

He repeatedly broke them himself; and

He repeatedly condemned them.

He said that he had not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill the Law.

He came to demonstrate God's Law lived out in His life.

He came to bring out the real meaning of the Law.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

The one great principle was that in all things a man must seek God's will, and that, when he knows it, he must dedicate his whole life, to the obeying of it.

The Scribes and Pharisees were right in seeking God's will, and profoundly right in dedicating their lives to obeying it;

But, they were wrong in trying to find God's will in their man-made hordes of rules and regulations.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

When we look at the Ten Commandments, which are the essence and the foundation of all law, we can see that their whole meaning can be summed up in one word

- respect or even better, reverence.

- Reverence for God and for the name of God,
- Reverence for God's day,
- Respect for parents,
- Respect for life,
- Respect for property,
- Respect for personality,
- Respect for the truth and for another person's good name,
- Respect for oneself so that wrong desires never master us

Law Matthew 5:17-20

At one point, a scribe, a lawyer, knowing full well that he couldn't obey them all and that it would create schism and debate, asked Jesus which one of the thousands of rules was the greatest.

Jesus answered,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. Luk_10:27

These are the fundamental principles behind the 10 Commandments:

Reverence for God, and
Respect for our fellow men and for ourselves.

Without them there can be no such thing: as law,
On them all law is based.

Jesus came to show men in actual life what reverence for God and respect for men are like.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

The Greeks said,

"Justice consists in giving to God and to men that which is their due"

Jesus came to show men in actual life what it means to give to God the reverence and to men the respect which are their due.

That reverence and that respect are not based upon obeying a multitude of petty rules and regulations.

They did not consist in sacrifice, but in mercy;

Not in legalism but in love;

Not in prohibitions which demanded what men should not do,

They are based in God's instruction to shape their lives on the positive commandment to love God and love one another.

The reverence and the respect which are the basis of the Ten Commandments can never pass away:

they are the permanent stuff of man's relationship to God and to his fellowmen.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

When Jesus spoke as he did about the Law and the Gospel, he was implicitly laying down certain broad principles.

(i) He was saying that there is a definite continuation between the past and the present. The present grows out of the past.

There had to be the Law before the Gospel could come.

Men had to learn the difference between right and wrong;

Men had to learn their own human inability to cope with the demands of the law, and to respond to the commands of God;

Men had to learn a sense of sin and unworthiness and inadequacy.

Rom 5:20-21 *The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, (21) so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Law Matthew 5:19-20

[19] *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

(ii) In this passage Jesus definitely warns men not to think that "Christ is the end of the law; now I can do what I like."

Men might think that all the duties, all the responsibilities, all the demands are gone.

Jesus warns that the righteousness of the Christian must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

The motive under which the Scribes and Pharisees lived was the motive of law;

Their one aim and desire was to satisfy the demands of the Law.

The motive under which the Christian lives is the motive of love;

The Christian's one desire is to show his gratitude for the love with which God had loved him in Jesus Christ.

If we love someone with all our hearts, our minds, all our strength, we are bound to feel that if we gave them a lifetime's service and adoration, if we offered them the sun and the moon and the stars, we would still not have offered enough.

The Jew aimed to satisfy the law of God;

To the demands of law there is always a limit.

The Christian aims to show his gratitude for the love of God;

To the claims of love there is no limit in time or in eternity.

Jesus set before men, not the law of God, but the love of God.

Mat 22:37-40 (37) *And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' (38) "This is the great and foremost commandment. (39) "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*

Mar 12:29-31 (29) *Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; (30) AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' (31) "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

Luk 10:26-28 (26) *And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" (27) And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (28) And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE."*

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Law Matthew 5:17-20

THE NEW AUTHORITY

Jesus speaks with an authority which no other man had ever dreamed of assuming.

At the beginning of his ministry, after he had been teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, it is said:

"They were astonished at his teaching; - for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the Scribes" Mk 1:22

Matthew concludes his account of the Sermon on the Mount with the words:

"And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one who had authority and not as their Scribes " Mt 7:28,29

Law Matthew 5:17-20

It is difficult for us to realize just how shocking a thing this authority of Jesus must have seemed to the Jews who listened to him.

To the Jew the Law was absolutely holy and absolutely divine.

The first act of every synagogue service was the taking of the rolls of the Law from the 'ark' in which they were stored and the carrying of them round the congregation so that the congregation could show their reverence for them.

Now no fewer than 5 times: **Matt 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43** Jesus quotes the Law, only to contradict it, and to substitute a teaching of his own.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus claimed the right to point out the inadequacies of the most sacred writings in the world, and to correct them out of his own wisdom.

The Greeks defined **exousia**, authority, as "the power to add and the power to take away at will."

Jesus did not argue about this or seek in any way to justify himself for doing so or seek to prove his right to do so.

He calmly and without question assumed the right.

Jesus exercised that power even with regard to that which the Jews believed to be the unchanging and unchangeable word of God.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

The great Jewish teachers had always had characteristic phrases in their Teaching.

The characteristic phrase of the prophet was:

"Thus saith the Lord."

He claimed no personal authority at all;

A prophet's only claim was that what he spoke, God had told him.

The characteristic phrase of the Scribe and the Rabbi was:

"There is a teaching that...."

The Scribe or the Rabbi never dared to express even an opinion of his own unless he could buttress it with supporting quotations from the great teachers of the past.

Independence of thought was the last quality that he would claim.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

But to Jesus a statement required no authority other than the fact that he made it.

He was his own authority.

"You have heard it said But I say to you"

Jesus was either mad or he was unique;

He was either a megalomaniac or else he was the son of God

No ordinary person would dare claim to take and overturn the laws and traditions which, up to his coming, had been regarded as the eternal word of God.

No sooner does a man begin to teach than we know at once whether or not he has the right to teach.

Authority is like an atmosphere about a man.

A man does not need to claim it;
He either has it or he doesn't.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus took the highest wisdom of men and corrected it, because he was who he was – God in flesh, the creator, author.

He did not need to argue; it was sufficient for him to speak.

No one can honestly face Jesus and listen to him without feeling that:

this is God's last word beside which all other words are inadequate, and all other wisdom out of date.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

As startling as was Jesus' authority, the standard which he put before men was more startling yet.

- Jesus said that in God's sight it was not only the man who committed murder who was guilty; the man who was angry with his brother was also guilty and liable to judgment.
- It was not only the man who committed adultery who was guilty: the man who allowed the unclean desire to settle in his heart was also guilty.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Here was something which was entirely new, something which men have not yet fully grasped.

It was Jesus' teaching that it was not enough to not commit murder; the only thing sufficient was never even to wish to commit murder.

It may be that we have never struck a man; but who can say that he never wished to strike a man?

It was Jesus' teaching that it was not enough to not commit adultery; the only thing sufficient was never even to wish to commit adultery.

It may be that we have never committed adultery: but who can say that he has never experienced the desire for a forbidden thing?

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus taught that thoughts are just as important as deeds,

It is not enough to not commit a sin;

The only thing that is enough is to not wish to commit it.

Jesus taught that that a man is not judged only by his deeds,

A man is judged even by the desires which never emerged in deeds.

By the world's standards a man is a good man, if he never does a forbidden thing.

The world is not concerned with judging his thoughts, intents, motives or desires.

By Jesus' standards a man is not a good man until he never even desires to do a forbidden thing.

Jesus is concerned with a man's thoughts, his "want to's..."

Law Matthew 5:17-20

Three things emerge from this.

(i) Jesus' way is the only way to safety and to security.

To some extent every man is a split personality.

There is part of him which is attracted to good, and part of him which is attracted to evil.

So long as a man is like that, an inner battle is going on inside him.

One voice is inciting him to take the forbidden thing; the other voice is forbidding him to take it.

The only way to safety, Jesus said, is to eradicate the desire for the forbidden thing for ever.

Then and then alone life is safe.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

(ii) God alone can judge men.

We see only a man's outward actions;

God alone sees the secret of his heart.

There will be many men, whose outward actions are a model of rectitude, whose inward thoughts stand condemned before God.

There are many men who can withstand the judgment of men, a judgment of externals, but whose goodness collapses before the all-seeing eye of God.

Law Matthew 5:17-20

(iii) Every one of us is in default; for there is none who can stand this judgment of God.

Even if we have lived a life of outward moral perfection, there is none who can say that he never experienced the forbidden desire for wrong things.

For the inner perfection the only thing that is enough for a man to say is that he himself is dead and Christ lives in him.

"I have been crucified with Christ, It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:19-20).

The new standard kills all pride, and forces us to Jesus Christ who alone can enable us to rise to that standard which he himself has set before us.

The Morality Gap Matthew 5:21-47

Jesus addresses six errors people commonly make when applying biblical morality to their personal behavior.

Jesus removes the misconception that the 'appearance of the kingdom of God' somehow cancelled the requirements of God's law upon its citizens.

Two statements that Jesus made apply to each one of the six points He discusses.

- He began by saying that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (**Matthew 5:17**).
- And He concluded by saying, *"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (v48)*.

The Morality Gap Matthew 5:21-47

“Perfect” is the standard that God expects

-- moral and ethical perfection !!

Even if it were somehow possible to keep the Law in its entirety, perfectly, we could not do it.

Such perfection is impossible by fallen man on his own.

But...What is impossible for man is possible for God;

God has sent His Son to keep the law for us that we might inherit His righteousness.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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The Morality Gap Matthew 5:21-47

The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution to ensure that the new nation's government continued into the future in accordance with the framers' intent.

Jesus' purpose in **Matthew 5:21—47** is to ensure that God's intent for the law is maintained and clarified.

They begin **“You have heard that it was said...But I say to you...”**
(**Mat 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33- 34, 38-39, 43-44**).

Jesus points out the letter of the law as it had been repeated for centuries, and then He points out how far this traditional interpretation has missed the mark.

He illustrates what He meant when He said that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it.

He came to show through His own life and teaching what being perfect should actually look like.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

05

The Morality Gap Matthew 5:21-47

It is (sinful) human nature to want to take the path of least resistance, to do just enough to get by, to appear moral without having to do the hard work of self-discipline and self-denial and sacrifice that results in our being truly moral and ethical people.

These are Principles to apply not Rules to follow and be done with....

God expects more of us than we expect of ourselves.

The benefit to studying Jesus' words on the true meaning of morality and ethics is that they expose the rationalizing and justifying we are capable of.

What passes for morality in our standards gets a failing grade in the kingdom of God.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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What You've Heard Said About Murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

Old Testament law was clear:

“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).

Is this confusing?

Does this need clarification?

If you don't murder a person, you have not broken the law.

If you do murder a person, you have.

That was the rule but Jesus was going for something deeper

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

52

What You've Heard Said About Murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

Murder is the taking of a human life.

Jesus is suggesting there is more than one way to do this.

Attacking a person with a knife or a gun is one way,
Jesus says, Attacking someone with anger or hateful
words is another.

Angry Words may not take a person's physical life, but they
can certainly kill a person emotionally or spiritually.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

35

What You've Heard Said About Murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

Anger is a prelude to physical violence or murder.

If you are angry enough to rage at someone with hate
filled words, you might be near the tipping point.

Don't feel morally superior because you've kept the letter of
the law (the rule) and never physically murdered anyone.

Jesus said your angry or hateful words have violated the
spirit of the law (the principle).

In the kingdom of God, taking a person's emotional or
spiritual life is as bad as taking his or her physical life.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

54

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

[22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

In the Authorized Version the man who is condemned is the man who is angry with his brother "without a cause".

The words "without a cause" are not found in any of the great manuscripts, so this a total prohibition of anger.

It is not enough to not strike a man;

The only thing that is enough is not even to want to strike him;
To not even to have a hard feeling against him within the heart.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

[22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

In this passage Jesus is arguing as a Rabbi might argue.

He is showing that he was skilful in using the debating methods which the wise men of his time were in the habit of using.

In this passage there is a gradation of anger
and an answering gradation of punishment.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

In Greek there are two words for anger.

thumos, anger is like the flame which comes from dried straw.

It quickly blazes up and just as quickly burns out and dies down.

It is an anger which rises speedily and just as speedily passes.

It is like a lightning bolt...

orge, anger is described as anger becomes ingrained, deep-seated,, entrenched, ineradicable, inveterate.

It is a long-lived anger;

It is the anger of the man who nurses his wrath to keep it warm;

It is the anger over which a person broods and which he will not allow to die.

It is like a raging, out of control forest fire...

The verb used here for being angry is **orgizesthai**.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Jesus condemns all selfish anger. Such anger is forbidden.

"The anger of man, does not work the righteousness of God" Js 1:20

Paul says to put off all *"anger, wrath, malice, slander"* **Col 3:8)**

Jesus forbids the anger which broods, the anger which will not forget, the anger which refuses to be pacified, the anger which seeks revenge.

If we are to obey Jesus, all such anger must be banished from life, and especially that anger which lingers too long.

No man can call himself a follower of Jesus, and lose his temper because of any personal wrong which he has suffered.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

orge anger is liable to the judgment court.

The judgment court is the local village council which dispensed justice.

That court was composed of the local village elders,

It varied in number from 3 in villages of fewer than 150 inhabitants, to 7 in larger towns and 23 in still bigger cities.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

The Jewish teachers spoke of "oppression in words" and of "the sin of insult."

They had a saying, "Three classes go down to Gehenna and return not -- the adulterer, he who puts his neighbor openly to shame, and he who gives his neighbor an insulting name."

Anger in a man's heart results in anger in the man's speech and both are equally forbidden.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

WORDS OF INSULT

The man who calls his brother **Raca** is condemned.

To call a man Raca was to call him a brainless idiot, a silly fool, an empty-headed blunderer.

Raca is an almost untranslatable word, because it describes a tone of voice more than the specific words spoken.

It is an accent, the tone of contempt.

It is the word of one who despises another with an angry, arrogant disdain.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

There is no sin quite so unchristian as the sin of contempt.

- There is a contempt which comes from pride of birth; Class status.
- There is a contempt which comes from position and from money, and pride in material things.
- There is a contempt which comes from knowledge and intellectual snobbery.

We should never look with contempt on any man who God loves and for whom Christ died.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Jesus goes on to speak of the man who calls his brother **moros**.

Moros also means fool,

A man who is moros is the man who is a moral fool.

The Psalmist spoke of the fool *who has said in his heart that there is no God (Psalm 14:1)*.

Such a man was a moral fool, a man who lives and clutches onto his immoral life, and who (in wishful thinking) says there was no God; no one to be accountable to...

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

To call a man **moros** was not to criticize his mental ability;

- it was to cast aspersions on his moral character;
- it was to take his name and reputation from him,
- it was to brand him as a loose living and immoral person.

Jesus says that he who destroys his brother's name and reputation is liable to the severest judgment of all, the judgment of the fire of **Gehenna**.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

Gehenna is a word with a history; Often modern versions translate it hell.

The word was commonly used by the Jews

Mt 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33;

Mk 9:43, 45, 47; Lu 12:5; Jas 3:6

Gehenna is literally the Valley of Hinnom.

The Valley of Hinnom is a valley to the southwest of Jerusalem.

It was the place where Ahaz introduced fire worship of the heathen god Molech into Isarel and to whom little children were burned in the fire.

"He burned incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burned his sons as an offering " (2 Chronicles 28:3).

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

Josiah, the reforming king, stamped out that worship, and ordered that the valley should be for ever after an accursed place.

He defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, so that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech (**2 Kings 23:10**).

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

The Valley of Hinnom became the place where the refuse of Jerusalem was cast out and destroyed.

It became Jerusalem's public dump; a kind of incinerator.

Fire always smoldered in it and a pall of thick smoke lay over it.

It bred a loathsome kind of worm which was hard to kill **Mk 9:44-48**

Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, became identified in people's minds with all that was accursed and filthy, the place where useless and evil things were destroyed.

It became a synonym for Hell, the place of God's destroying power.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

Jesus insists that to destroy a man's reputation and to take his good name away was killing him just as much as ending his physical life.

The man who

- speaks with the tone of contempt,
- who denigrates another's good name and reputation may never have committed a physical murder, but he is a murderer at heart.

Forbidden Anger Matt 5:21-22

[21] Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

What Jesus is saying here is this:

IN THE OLD DAYS MEN CONDEMNED MURDER;
AND TRULY MURDER IS FOREVER WRONG.

BUT I TELL YOU THAT NOT ONLY ARE A MAN'S OUTWARD ACTIONS
UNDER JUDGMENT, HIS INMOST THOUGHTS ARE ALSO UNDER THE
SCRUTINY AND THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

LONG LASTING ANGER IS BAD;
CONTEMPTUOUS SPEAKING IS WORSE, AND
THE CARELESS OR THE MALICIOUS TALK WHICH
DESTROYS A MAN'S GOOD NAME IS WORST OF ALL.

Offering Matt 5:23-24

*[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

When Jesus said this, he was reminding the Jews of a principle which they well knew and should never have forgotten.

The idea behind sacrifice was quite simple.

If a man did a wrong thing, that action disrupted his relationship with God. The sacrifice, brought to the altar, was meant to be the means by which that relationship could be restored

It was to remind the sinner of how much God hated sin.

It was to remind the sinner that sin necessitated that a price had to be paid.

No sin can be forgiven until a sacrifice, it's debt is paid.

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death....*

Offering Matt 5:23-24

*[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

It was never the case in the Law that sacrifice could atone for deliberate, intentional sins.

- what the Jews called "the sin of a high hand."

If a man committed a sin unawares, if he was swept into sin in a moment of passion when self-control broke, then sacrifice was effective;

But ... if a man deliberately, defiantly, callously and open-eyed planned and committed sin, then sacrifice was powerless to atone.

Offering Matt 5:23-24

*[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

To be effective, sacrifice had to include confession of sin and true penitence;

True penitence involved an attempt to rectify any consequences sin might have had.

The great Day of Atonement was held to make atonement for the sins of the whole nation,

but the Jews were quite clear that not even the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement could avail for a man unless he was first attempted to be reconciled to his offended neighbor.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

[26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

The greatest of all Jewish days was the Day Of Atonement

Its sacrifices were held to atone for sin known and unknown; but even this day had its limitations.

The Talmud clearly says:

"The Day of Atonement does atone for the offences between man and God. The Day of Atonement does not atone for the offences between a man and his neighbor, unless the man has first put things right with his neighbor."

Offering Matt 5:23-24

[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

The breach between man and God could not be healed until the breach between man and man was healed.

If a man was making a sin-offering to atone for a theft, the offering was held to be completely unavailing until the thing stolen had been restored;

If it was discovered that the thing had not been restored, then the sacrifice had to be destroyed as unclean and burned outside the Temple.

The Jews were clearly understood that a man had to do his utmost to put things right in his life and relationships himself before he could be right with God.

Offering Matt 5:23-24

[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Animal and offering sacrifices were substitutionary symbols.

As the victim (the animal sacrifice) was about to be slain, the worshipper placed his hands upon the beast's head, and pressed them down upon it, as if to transfer his guilt to it.

As he did so he said, "I entreat, O Lord; I have sinned, I have done perversely, I have rebelled; I have committed ... (here the sacrificer specified his sins); but I return in penitence, and let this be for my covering."

If any sacrifice was to be valid, confession and restoration were involved.

Offering Matt 5:23-24

[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

- First, sin had to be dealt with (sin offering or trespass offering).

Trespass Offering **Lev 5:14-19; 6:1-7; 7:1-6**

Sin Offering **Lev 4; 5:1-13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22**

- Second, the worshiper committed himself completely to God (burnt offering and grain offering).

Burnt Offering **Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24**

Grain Offering **Lev 2; 6:14-23**

- Then, fellowship or communion between the Lord, the priest and the worshiper (peace offering) was established.

Peace Offering **Lev 3; 7:11-34**



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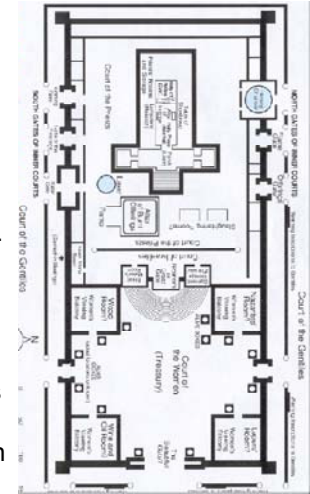
Offering Matt 5:23-24

[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Beyond that there lay the Court of the Priests into which the layman could not go.

The worshipper is standing at the rail, ready to hand over his victim to the priest; his hands are on it to confess; and then if he remembers a breach with his brother, a wrong done to his brother; if his sacrifice is to avail, he must go back and mend that breach and undo that wrong or nothing can happen.



Offering Matt 5:23-24

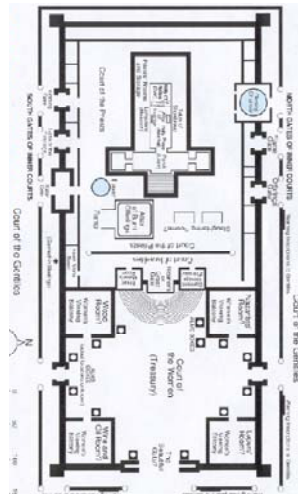
[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

The picture Jesus painted was clear to the Jews.

The worshipper did not make his own sacrifice; he brought it to the priest who interceded and offered it on his behalf.

The worshipper has entered the Temple; he has passed through its series of courts, the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women, the Court of the Men,



Offering Matt 5:23-24

[23] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Jesus is clear about this basic fact:

We cannot be right before God if we are not right with men;

We cannot hope for forgiveness until we have confessed our sin, not only to God, but also, as much as possible, to people who we have wronged and until we have done our best to remedy the practical consequences of it.

We sometimes wonder why there is a barrier between us and God. We sometimes wonder why our prayers seem ineffective.

The reason may be that we have erected that barrier through being at odds with our fellow men or because we have wronged someone and have done nothing to try to put things right.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

Jesus is telling us to get trouble sorted out in time, right away, before it piles up and becomes still worse trouble for the future.

Make the right choices while the decisions and consequences are small – delay and the problem, decisions and consequences will become large, difficult, and costly.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

Jesus describes two opponents on their way together to the law courts;

He tells them to get things settled and straightened out before they reach the court, for, if they do not, and the law takes its course, there will be still worse trouble for at least one of them in the days to come.

The picture of two opponents on the way to court together seems to us very strange, and indeed rather improbable.

In the Jesus day it happened often.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

Under Greek law there was a process of arrest called **apagoge**, which means summary arrest.

The plaintiff himself arrested the defendant.

He caught the defendant by his robe at the throat, and held the robe in such a way that, if the man struggled, he would strangle himself.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

The crimes for which such an arrest was legal were very few and the criminal had to be caught red-handed.

- thieving,
- clothes-stealing (clothes stealers were the curse of the public baths in ancient Greece),
- picking pockets,
- house-breaking and
- kidnapping (the kidnapping of specially gifted and accomplished slaves was very common).
- a man might be summarily arrested if he was discovered to be exercising the rights of a citizen when he had been disfranchised, or if he returned to his state or city after being exiled.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

[26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

It was not unusual to see a plaintiff and a defendant on their way to court together in a Greek city,

Here, Jesus would be thinking in terms of Jewish law;

This situation was by no means impossible under Jewish law.

This is obviously a case of a debt owed

If peace is not made, the last farthing – the debt plus interest plus penalty - will have to be paid

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

[26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Such cases were settled by the local council of elders.

A time was appointed when plaintiff and defendant had to appear together;

in any small town or village there was every likelihood to find them on the way to the court together.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

[26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

When a man was adjudged guilty, he was handed over to the court officer.

Matthew calls the officer the **huperetes**;

Luke calls him, in his version of the saying, by the more common term, **praktor** (**Luke 12:58-59**).

It was the duty of the court officer to see that the penalty was duly paid, and, if it was not paid, he had the power to imprison the defaulter, until it was paid.

It is likely that is the situation that Jesus was talking about

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

[26] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Jesus' advice is a piece of most practical advice.

Again and again it is the experience of life that, if a quarrel, or a difference or a dispute is not healed immediately, it can go on breeding worse and worse trouble as time goes on.

Bitterness breeds bitterness.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

If ever we are at variance with someone, we must get the situation put right straight away.

It means that we must be humble enough to confess that we were wrong and to make apology;

It means that, even if we were in the right, we have to take the first step towards healing the breach.

When personal relations go wrong, immediate action will often mend them;

but if that immediate action is not taken, they will continue to deteriorate, and the bitterness will grow and spread.

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

Jesus may also have been picturing something more eternal than day to day squabbles.

"Put things right with your fellow-men, while life lasts, for some day - you know not when life will finish, and you will go to stand before God, the final Judge of all and give an account of your actions - or inaction."

Offering Matt 5:25-26

[25] *Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

[26] *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

We are left with this basic fact

We cannot be right in God's eyes until we are right with our fellow men. How can we be at odds with men and still represent God and present Him to those very men???

"NEVER LEAVE A QUARREL UNRECONCILED OR A BREACH UNHEALED BETWEEN YOURSELF AND YOUR BROTHERS. ACT IMMEDIATELY TO REMOVE THE BARRIERS WHICH ANGER HAS RAISED. ONLY THEN CAN YOU OFFER TO GOD WHAT IS HIS DUE. DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR ANGER..."

Repentance

- I did it !
- It was wrong !
- I regret it !
- I won't repeat it !

All 4 or you haven't Repented...

Forbidden Desire Matt 5:27-30

[27] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

[28] *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

[29] *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

[30] *And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

What You've Heard Said About Adultery Matthew 5:27-30)

"You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).

The prohibition against adultery was clear in the law!

This specifically referred to a married person engaging in sexual acts with someone besides his or her spouse.

Jesus again takes the issue beyond the physical into the spiritual saying that for a man to even look at another woman lustfully constitutes the same betrayal as to engage in a sexual act with her.

It reveals the same lack of respect for that person, the same disrespect for one's spouse, and the same discontent with one's place in life.

The consummation of a sex act is just the outward manifestation of a sin that has already occurred in the heart.

What You've Heard Said About Adultery Matthew 5:27-30

We are not moral because the body is pure.

We are only moral if the heart and the mind are pure as well

1Sa 16:7 *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

Psa 19:14 *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

Psa 24:4 *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*

Forbidden Desire Matt 5:27-28

[27] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

[28] *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

The punished Premarital sex with marriage....

Rape, etc. was punished either by marriage or death.

Jewish teachers took adultery so seriously that the guilty parties, following God's direction, were punished by death **Lev 20:10**

Jesus says that not only is the act the forbidden, but also the thought is forbidden.

The one who 'fantasizes' the act is guilty in the sight of God.

Forbidden Desire Matt 5:27-28

[27] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

[28] *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Jesus is not speaking of the natural, normal desire, which is part of human instinct and human nature.

According to the literal meaning of the Greek the man who is condemned is the man who looks at a woman with the deliberate intention of lusting after her

- whether she is flesh and blood or pornographic.

The man who is condemned is the man who deliberately uses his eyes to arouse his lust, the man who looks in such a way that passion is awakened and desire deliberately stimulated.

Forbidden Desire Matt 5:27-28

[27] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

[28] *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

The Jewish Rabbis well knew the way in which the eyes can be used to stimulate the wrong desire.

They had their sayings.

"The eyes and the hand are the two brokers of sin."

"Eye and heart are the two handmaids of sin."

"Passions lodge only in him who sees."

"Woe to him who follows after his eyes for they are adulterous!"

Forbidden Desire Matt 5:27-28

[27] *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

[28] *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

In a today's world there are many things which are deliberately designed to excite desire:

TV, books, pictures, plays, dances, dress, even advertisements.

The person Jesus condemns here is

The person who intentionally and deliberately uses their eyes to stimulate their desires and fantasies.

The person who finds a strange delight in things which waken the desire for the forbidden thing.

To the pure all things are pure.

The one whose heart is defiled can look at any scene and find something in it to titillate and excite the wrong desire.

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

[30] *And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

Jesus insists that anything which is a cause of, or a seduction to, sin should be completely cut out of life.

The word he uses for a stumbling-block is the Greek word **skandalon**.

It is something which trips a man up, something which sends him crashing to destruction, something which lures him to his own ruin.

Skandalon is a form of the word **skandalethron**, which means the bait stick in a trap.

It was the stick or arm on which the bait was fixed and which operated the trap to catch the animal lured to its own destruction.

The word came to mean anything which causes a man's destruction.

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

[30] And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Behind it there are two pictures.

- a hidden stone in a path against which a man may stumble, or of a cord stretched across a path, deliberately put there to make a man trip.
- a pit dug in the ground and deceptively covered over with a thin layer of branches or of turf, and so arranged that, when the unwary traveler sets his foot on it, he is immediately thrown into the pit.

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

[30] And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

The words of Jesus are not to be taken with a crude literalism.

Jesus was saying that anything which helps to seduce us to sin is to be ruthlessly rooted out of life.

- If there is a habit which can be seduction to evil,
 - If there is an association which can be the cause of wrong doing,
 - If there is a pleasure which could turn out to be our ruin,
- Then that thing must be surgically excised from our life.

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

[30] And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Thoughts and pictures often come uninvited into our minds, and it is often the hardest thing on earth to shut the door to them.

How do we free ourselves from unclean desires and defiling thoughts?

There is one way in which these forbidden thoughts and desires cannot be dealt with - and that is to sit down and to say, I will not think of these things.

The more we say, I will not think of such and such a thing, the more our thoughts are in fact concentrated on it.

It is a law of human nature that the more a man says he will not think of something, the more that something will present itself to his thoughts.

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

[30] And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

The first way to defeat the forbidden thoughts is by Christian action.

Do something to fill life so full with Christian labor and Christian service that there is no time for these thoughts to enter in;

Think of others so much that we entirely forget ourselves;

To rid ourselves of a diseased and morbid introspection by concentrating not on ourselves but on other people.

The real cure for evil thoughts are good actions.

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

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The second way to defeat the forbidden this to fill the mind with good thoughts.

The only way to defeat evil thoughts is to begin to think of something else – dwell on good things

Php 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

Surgical Cure Matt 5:29-30

[29] *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

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2Co 10:3-6

(3) *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (4) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (5) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (6) And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.*

What You've Heard Said About Divorce Matthew 5:31-32

Divorce was not specifically addressed in the Ten Commandments
It was addressed as an adjunct to the prohibition against adultery.

Deu 24:1-4 *"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, (2) and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, (3) and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, (4) then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.*

Moses prescribed a "certificate of divorce" when a man divorced his wife as a legal form of protection for her against further exploitation by the divorcing husband.

What You've Heard Said About Divorce Matthew 5:31-32

Not addressing those technicalities, Jesus gets to the heart of the moral matter here by saying that any man who divorces his wife *"for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery"* (**Mat 5:32**).

Mat 19:4-9

(4) *And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, (5) and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL -BECOME ONE FLESH'? (6) "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (7) They "said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" (8) He "said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. (9) "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

Jesus says. "Don't talk to me about certificates and procedures, God never intended for there to be divorces - He allows it at all only because of the hardness of your hearts"

What You've Heard Said About Divorce Matthew 5:31-32

Today, Christian husbands and wives have broken their marriage covenant with the spouses of their youth (**Malachi 2:14**) without biblical grounds in deplorable numbers - a stark reminder of how easy it is to drift from God's standards when His standards conflict with our convenience or comfort.

Mal 2:13-16

(13) "This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.

(14) "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

(15) "But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.

(16) "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

From: David Jeremiah - I never thought I'd see the day

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Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

[31] *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*

[32] *But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

1. Marriage amongst the Jews

When Jesus laid down this law for marriage he laid it down against a very definite situation.

There is no time in history, until our day, when the marriage bond stood in greater peril of destruction than when Christianity first came into this world.

At that time the world was in danger of witnessing the almost total break-up of marriage and the collapse of the home.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Christianity had a double background.

It had the background of the Jewish world and of the gentile world of the Romans and the Greeks.

Theoretically no nation ever had a higher ideal of marriage than Israel had.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Marriage was a sacred duty which a man was to undertake.

He might delay or abstain from marriage for only one reason - to devote his whole time to the study of the Law.

If a man refused to marry and to beget children he was said to have broken the commandment by which God told man to be fruitful and to multiply.

If a Jew refused to do so he was said to have "lessened the image of God in the world," and "to have slain his posterity."

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Ideally, the Jew abhorred divorce.

God Himself had said, "*I hate divorce*" (**Malachi 2:16**).

The Rabbis taught:

"We find that God is long-suffering to every sin except the sin of unchastity."

"Unchastity causes the glory of God to depart."

"Every Jew must surrender his life rather than commit idolatry, murder or adultery."

"The very altar sheds tears when a man divorces the wife of his youth."

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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The woman in the eyes of the law was a thing.

She was at the absolute disposal of her father or of her husband.

She had virtually no legal rights at all.

To all intents and purposes a woman could not divorce her husband for any reason, and a man could divorce his wife for any cause at all.

Rabbinic law said, "A Woman may be divorced with or without her will; but a man only with his will."

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Jewish law complicated the matter of divorce because it was very simple to do and very debatable in its meaning.

Deu 24:1

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house."

What 'no favor in his eyes' meant and what constituted "some indecency" was a matter of opinion and much debate.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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The process of divorce was extremely simple.

The bill of divorcement was written out which simply ran:

"Let this be from me thy writ of divorce and letter of dismissal and deed of liberation, that thou mayest marry whatsoever man thou wilt."

All that a man had to do then was to hand that document to the woman in the presence of two witnesses and she stood divorced.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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In all matters of Jewish law there were two main schools.

There was the school of **Shammai**, which was the strict, severe, austere school; and

There was the school of **Hillel** which was the liberal, broad-minded, generous school

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Shammai and his school defined some indecency as meaning unchastity and nothing but unchastity – being sexually unfaithful to their own husband...

"Let a wife be as mischievous as the wife of Ahab," they said, "she cannot be divorced except for adultery."

To the school of Shammai there was no possible grounds for divorce except adultery and unchastity.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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[32] *But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

On the other hand the school of Hillel defined some indecency in the widest possible way.

They said that it meant that a man could divorce his wife:

- if she spoiled his dinner by putting too much salt in his food,
- if she went in public with her head uncovered,
- if she talked with men in the streets,
- if she was a brawling woman, a hitter...
- if she spoke disrespectfully of her husband's parents in his presence,
- if she was troublesome or quarrelsome.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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A certain Rabbi Akiba said that the phrase, "if she find no favor in his sight", meant that a man could divorce his wife if he found a woman whom he considered to be more attractive than she.

Human nature being such as it is, it is easy to see which school would have the greater influence.

In the time of Jesus divorce had grown easier and easier.

By then many girls were actually unwilling to marry, because marriage was so insecure.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Given the situation when Jesus said this, he was not speaking as some theoretical idealist; he was speaking as a practical reformer.

He was seeking to deal with a situation
in which the structure of family life was collapsing, and
in which national morals were becoming ever more lax.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Christianity would soon go out far beyond Palestine and the state of marriage in that wider world needed to be confronted by Jesus teachings.

One of the chief diseases from which ancient civilization died was a low view of woman.

The primary thing which wrecked marriage relationships among the Greeks was the fact that extramarital relationships carried no stigma whatsoever.

They were accepted and the expected thing.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Extramarital relationships brought not the slightest discredit; they were part of the ordinary routine of life.

Demosthenes wrote it was the accepted practice of life:

"We have courtesans for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately, and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs."

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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The Greeks demanded that the respectable woman should live such a life of seclusion that she could never even appear on the street alone and that she did not even have her meals in the apartments of the men. She had no part in social life.

From his wife the Greek demanded the most complete moral purity; for himself he demanded the utmost immoral license.

The Greeks married a wife for domestic security, but found their pleasure elsewhere.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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This alliance of religion with prostitution can be seen by the fact that Solon was the first to allow the introduction of prostitutes into and the building of brothels in Athens.

With the profits of the brothels a new temple was built to Aphrodite the goddess of love.

The Greeks saw nothing wrong in the building of a temple with the proceeds of prostitution.

The Temple of Aphrodite at Corinth had a 1,000+ priestesses, who were sacred courtesans.

They came down to the streets of Corinth at evening time so that it became a proverb: "Not every man can afford a journey to Corinth."

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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There arose in Greece an amazing class of women called the **hetairai**.

They were the mistresses of famous men;

They were easily the most cultured and socially accomplished women of their day;

Their homes were nothing less than salons.

Many of their names go down in history with as much fame as the great men with whom they associated.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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In Greece we see a whole social system based on relationships outside marriage;

These relationships were accepted as natural and normal, and not in the least blameworthy;

These relationships could easily become the dominant thing in a man's life.

Greek men kept their wives absolutely secluded in a compulsory purity, while they themselves found their real pleasure and their real life in relationships outside marriage.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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The second thing which made the situation in Greece even worse was that divorce required no legal process whatsoever.

All that a man had to do was to dismiss his wife in the presence of two witnesses.

The one saving clause was that he must return her dowry intact.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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The whole of Roman religion and society was originally founded on the home.

The basis of the Roman commonwealth was the **patria potestas**, the father's power;

The father literally had the power of life and death over his family.

A Roman son never came of age so long as his father was alive.

The son might be a consul; he might have reached the highest honor and office the state could offer but so long as his father was alive he was still within his father's power.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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To the Roman the home was everything.

The Roman matron was not secluded like her Greek counterpart.

She took her full part in life.

Prostitutes were held in contempt and to associate with them was dishonorable.

So high was the standard of Roman morality that for the first five hundred years of the Roman commonwealth there was not one single recorded case of divorce.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

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Then came the Greeks.

In the military and the imperial sense Rome conquered Greece;

In the moral and the social sense Greece conquered Rome.

By the second century B.C. Greek morals had begun to infiltrate into Rome, and the descent was catastrophic.

Divorce became as common as marriage.

Marriage had become nothing more than an unfortunate necessity of procreation.

Unbroken Bond Matt 5:31-32

[31] *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*

[32] *But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

We'll leave the discussion of the ideal of Christian marriage until we come to **Matthew 19:3-9**.

For now, note that with Christianity, with Jesus teachings there was introduced into the world an ideal of chastity and of marital fidelity and commitment which men had not even dreamed of.

Unless there had been prior fornication or adultery in the relationship, divorce was itself adultery – a stoning offense.

God's view of one man and one woman committing to each other in a lifelong union, cleaving to each other, being glued, bonded together, has not changed.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*

[34] *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

[35] *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

[36] *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

[37] *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

What You've Heard Said About Oaths Matthew 5:33-37

When most people read the 3rd of the Ten Commandments — *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain" (Exodus 20:7)* —

they think it refers to not using God's name as part of a curse word.

This has nothing to do with using bad language (swearing, cussing, etc.).

It condemns the one who swears something is true when it is not or who makes a promise and uses the name of God to insure his statement or even thoughtlessly invoking God in careless, casual language.

"By God..." and

"May God strike me dead if I don't...").

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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What You've Heard Said About Oaths Matthew 5:33-37

If you swore "by God" and then didn't keep your oath, you would have used God's name in vain.

You would have used the trust people have in God to get them to trust you.

You would risk making them feel negatively toward God if you failed to follow through.

The only reason oaths were necessary at all was because people weren't true to their word.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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What You've Heard Said About Oaths Matthew 5:33-37

Jesus said oaths are not necessary for people with integrity: *"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'" (Mat 5:37).*

We betray the same mistrust in people today when we say, "Do you promise...?"

Truly ethical people don't have to swear or promise.

They only say what they mean and mean what they say.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Jewish teachers had always insisted on the paramount obligation of telling the truth. They taught:

"The world stands fast on 3 things, on justice, on truth, and on peace"

"Four persons are shut out from the presence of God - the scoffer, the hypocrite, the liar and the retailer of slander"

"One who has given his word and who changes it is as bad as an idolater"

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

The school of Shammai was so committed to the truth that they forbade ordinary courteous social politeness.

For example, they forbade complementing a bride on her appearance if in fact she was plain looking.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Numbers 30.2 *When a man vows a vow to the Lord or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge he shall not break his word"*

Deut 23:21-22 *When you make a vow to the Lord your God you shall not be slack to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you and it would be sin in you*

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

In Jesus time there were 2 unsatisfactory things about taking oaths:

FRIVOLOUS SWEARING = Taking an oath when no oath was necessary or proper.

It had become common to use the statements, 'By thy life', 'By my head', or 'May I never see the comfort of Israel if...'

No oath is proper in a simple statement or conversation.

The danger to be avoided is the use of sacred language in meaningless ways.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

EVASIVE SWEARING = The Jews divided oaths into 2 classes:

If God's name was used in an oath it was believed that God became a partner to the transaction and the oath was absolutely binding.

If God's name was not used, He had nothing to do with it and the oath could be broken at will.

Evasion of a man's word, even in an oath had reached the level of a fine art.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Jesus teaching was that there was no way to keep God from being a part of every transaction of our life.

Life cannot be divided into compartments some of which involved God and others of which do not.

God does wait to be invited to be actively involved in certain areas of our life activity

But, that does not mean that He can be excluded from any.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Jesus said that in all transactions, a man's character and reputation should be such that whether he says yes or no, it is done and it is so.

Nothing more should be added or necessary.
An oath should be completely unnecessary.

This does not mean that we cannot take or be put under an oath!

It means that our word is our bond.
When we commit to something, it is a fact.
Our word should be as sure as the God we claim to represent.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

At least two groups in history have refused to take oaths of any sort.

The **Essenes** believed that to take an oath was worse than lying.
They said that 'he who cannot be believed without swearing is already condemned'.
Their life and character matched their teaching.

The **Quakers** in modern times held the same view.
While they would refuse to take an oath or swear to anything, if they said it, it was as good as done.

George Fox, an American Quaker founder, would use no word stronger than 'Verily'.

If George Fox said verily, 'there was no altering him'.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Paul on occasion put himself under oath for emphasis.

2Co 1:23 Gal 1:20

Jesus, on trial before the High Priest, under an oath of the High Priest gave testimony. **Matt 26:63**

The important point is that their word 'under oath' was no more reliable or trustworthy than anything else they ever said or did even in the most casual settings.

Truth was truth in every instance.

Yes was yes and No was no.

I Swear.... Matt 5:33-37

[33] Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34] But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: [35] Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37] But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Our obligation is to make ourselves such that men will see our transparent goodness and never feel required to ask an oath from us
and

to work to make the world of such a righteous quality that falsehood and infidelity are so eliminated that oaths will be unnecessary.

You'll Get Yours.... Matt 5:38-42

[38] Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: [39] But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. [41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. [42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

LEX TALIONIS is the oldest law in the world.

It appears in the earliest known code of laws, the Code of Hammurabi, who reigned in Babylon from 2285 to 2242 B.C.

It says: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"

It is written in much expanded detail and more graphic definitive terms.

It distinguishes between the classes, i.e. a gentleman and a poor mans loss.

The gentleman loss required payment and penalty in like kind.

The poor man's loss in monetary remuneration.

You'll Get Yours.... Matt 5:38-42

[38] Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: [39] But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. [41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. [42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

The **LEX TALIONIS** principle is - if an injury is inflicted on a person, an equivalent injury will be inflicted on the perpetrator.

In the Old Testament the principle is laid down at least 3 times:

Exodus 21:23-25

Lev 24:19-20

Deut 19:21

You'll Get Yours.... Matt 5:38-42

[38] Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: [39] But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. [41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. [42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

- 1) While at first it seems rather harsh, vengeful and bloodthirsty, it is in fact a sentence of mercy. It was instituted to limit vengeance.
- 2) It never gave a private individual the right to extract vengeance.
It was always a societal sentencing guideline for judges to use in trials to impose upon sentences on those found guilty of an injurious offense.
- 3) It was never (at least in any semi civilized society) actually literally carried out.
A money value was determined based on certain criteria was imposed upon the guilty to the benefit of the injured.

You'll Get Yours.... Matt 5:38-42

The monetary penalty in Jewish society was based on 5 assessments as laid down in the tractate **BABA KAMMA**:

- ***For injury** - The injured was looked upon as if a slave. His value before the injury was compared to his value after the injury and the difference was one part of the penalty to be paid.
- ***For pain** - It was estimated how much money would be required to get a man to willingly under go the pain involved in the injury and this amount became the second part to the penalty imposed.
- ***For healing** - The injurer had to pay all the medical bills required until a complete cure had been affected.
- ***For loss of time** - The injurer had to pay compensation for all lost income and wages during the period that the injured was unable to work and if the injured could not return to the same occupation in the same capacity a judgment of an additional compensation was made.
- ***For indignity suffered** - The injurer had to pay damages to compensate for the humiliation and indignity the injury had inflicted upon the injured.

You'll Get Yours.... Matt 5:38-42

[38] Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: [39] But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. [41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. [42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

- 4) The **LEX TALIONIS** does not represent the whole of Old Testament justice or law.
There many OT instances of more severe and more merciful judgments and conditions.

Jesus abolishes the law of limited vengeance for the Christian.
He replaces it with a new spirit of nonresentment and nonretaliation.

What You've Heard Said About Retaliation Matthew 5:38-42

Jesus turns the law around and says,

"You don't have to pay anyone back for evil done to you."

Instead of being careful to limit the judgment against an evil person, do whatever you can to avoid conflict altogether.

If someone sues you, it is better to give him what he wants than to get embroiled in a court battle.

"If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also" (Mat 5:40; 1 Cor 6:1—11)

Kingdom ethics and morality do not focus on revenge and retaliation.

In God's economy, evil is not overcome with more evil but with good (**Rom 12:21**).

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK.... Matt 5:39

[39] But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Jesus says if we are struck on the right cheek we should turn the to offer the other cheek also.

If a right handed man strikes you on the right cheek from in front of you, he must use the back of his hand.

The slap was a way of insulting another.

Jesus is probably not referring to a closed fist blow which is intended to injure.

According to Jewish Rabbinic law, to hit a man with the back of the hand was twice as insulting as hitting him with the flattened palm of the hand.

“... give him the back of your hand!”

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK.... Matt 5:39

[39] But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Jesus says if a man should direct at you the most deadly and calculated insult, you must on no account retaliate or resent it.

The Christian must learn to not resent an insult and to not seek retaliation for any slight.

- I was not invited
- Did you hear how rude they were
- Nobody told me
- If they can't do their part, I'm not going out of the way to do mine
- I wasn't thanked like the others
- Nobody recognized my effort...

HERE HAVE MY COAT TOO Matt 5:40

[40] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

The tunic or **CHITON** was a long sack like inner garment made of cotton or linen.

Even the poorest of men had a change of tunics.

The cloak was the great blanket like outer garment a man wore as a robe during the day and used as a blanket at night.

Each man would have had only one of these.

It was Jewish law that a man's tunic (under robe) could be taken as a pledge but not his outer cloak. **EXODUS 22:26-27**

A man's cloak could not be taken from him permanently.

It was his by right of law.

HERE HAVE MY COAT TOO Matt 5:40

[40] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

Jesus says the Christian is not to stand upon or demand his rights.

Many clutch their privileges and demand their rights and militantly go to law over defending them rather than suffer the slightest inconvenience or infringement of them.

- That's my decision not his.
- I have as much right to that privilege as they do.
- They don't need to take up so much space.
- I have as much right to speak as they do.
- I'm right, they're wrong

The Christian thinks not of his rights but his duties, not of his privileges but his responsibilities.

LET'S GO FOR A WALK Matt 5:41

[41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

The word used for compel is the verb **AGGAREUEIN**.

It comes from the noun **AGGAREUS** which is a Persian word for courier.

The Persians had a marvelous mail system - like the pony express.

Each road was divided into one day's journey distances.

At each stage there was lodging, food and water for the courier and his horse and fresh horses for the next days stage.

If for any reason something was lacking at a stage, any private person could be compelled to provide whatever was missing,

even to the point of carrying the messages himself for a stage, at which point he compelled another until a proper courier could again resume the duty.

LET'S GO FOR A WALK Matt 5:41

[41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

In Jesus day the word had come to mean any sort of forced service.

Being occupied by Roman, any Roman at any time could draft anyone into service as he deemed necessary.

This is what happened to Simon of Cyrene when he was compelled to carry Jesus cross to Golgatha.

LET'S GO FOR A WALK Matt 5:41

[41] And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Jesus says don't go the one mile you are compelled to go in bitterness and resentment, go 2 miles in cheerfulness and grace.

Christians are not to be always thinking of their liberty to do as they like but are to be thinking of their duty and their privilege as Jesus followers, to be of service to others.

When a task is laid on you, even if the task is unreasonable and hateful, don't do it as an imposition, a grim duty done resentfully, but rather as a service to be gladly rendered.

The Christian is not concerned to do as he likes.

He is concerned only to help
even when the demand for help is
discourteous, unreasonable and tyrannical.

CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? Matt 5:42

[42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

The Jewish law of giving is described in **Deut 15:7-11**

It lays down the responsibility to meet the needs of others and describes what is called the 7th year remission of debts.

Every 7th year all debts were cancelled and anything held as a surety was returned to the pledger.

A calculating man might refuse to lend anything when the 7th year was close at hand since the debt might be cancelled and the collateral would have to be returned before the debt was repaid.

CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? Matt 5:42

[42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

This Jewish law of giving established 5 principles to govern giving for the Jews.

- 1) Giving is not to be refused
- 2) Giving must befit the man to whom the gift is given - a man should be given what he lacks.
The giving must not only remove actual poverty but must also do something to remove the humiliation that the poverty has brought.
- 3) Giving must be carried out privately and in secret.
The highest kind of giving was when the giver did not know to whom he was giving and the receiver did not know from whom he had received. A gift given for the sake of prestige and public of self glorification was abhorred.

CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? Matt 5:42

[42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

This Jewish law of giving established 5 principles to govern giving for the Jews.

- 4) The manner of giving must befit the character and temperament of the recipient.
The manner of giving was to be as much help as the gift itself. e.g. A loan might be offered with no expectation of repayment to save the honor of the recipient if necessary.
- 5) Giving is an obligation and a privilege.
In reality all giving, even giving to others, is giving to GOD.

CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? Matt 5:42

[42] Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

There are always those who seek to receive in an effort to avoid responsibility and due to their own laziness.

Giving to such as these can be as harmful as good.

The existence of frauds does not eliminate those in real need or our responsibility to meet those needs.

A balance is required and if an error is made it should be made on the side of giving.

Better to help 10 frauds than chance refusing to help 1 man with a legitimate need.

God sees the heart and is our all sufficient source or supply.
We are His distributors – Not His warehouse managers...

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

[43] Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

[44] But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

[45] That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

[46] For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

[47] And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

[48] Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (KJV)

What You've Heard Said About Enemies Matthew 5:43-44

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (**Lev 19:18**) is a central part of the Old Testament law.

In **Matthew 22:39**, Jesus cited this as the second-most-important commandment.

Jesus points out how this Old Testament law had been reworded to suit the mores of the day:

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy' "(**Matthew 5:43**).*

The words 'hate your enemy' do not occur in **Leviticus 19:18** or anywhere else in the Old Testament.

The idea that God approved of hating one's enemy was assumed to be the flip side of the "love your neighbor".

It seemed logical and suited fallen human temperaments — so it became unofficial law.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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What You've Heard Said About Enemies Matthew 5:43-44

Jesus turns man's morality on its head and essentially says,

"In the kingdom of God we are to love our enemies as well as our neighbors."

This was a radical idea in Jesus' day, given Israel's historical enemies — Egyptians, Moabites, and other "-ites," Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans.

Many Jews — especially many of the religious leaders to whom Jesus' words were directed — considered all Gentiles their enemies.

Jews would often greet Gentile tax collectors publicly for the sake of appearance (**5:47**), all the while considering them enemies in their hearts.

When it comes to love, a truly moral and ethical person has no enemies.

From: David Jeremiah – I never thought I'd see the day

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Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

There are 4 different greek words for love:

- 1) The noun **STORGE** and the accompanying verb **STERGIN**
These words describe family love; the love of a parent for a child and a child for a parent.
- 2) The noun **EROS** and the accompanying verb **ERAN**
These words describe the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man. There is always passion in them and there is always a sexual love.
- 3) The noun **PHILIA** and the accompanying verb **PHILEIN**
These are the warmest and best Greek words for love. They describe deep brotherly love and affection for another.
HOT PHILOUNTES, the present participle is the word which describes a man's closest and nearest and truest friends.

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

There are 4 different greek words for love:

- 4) The noun **AGAPE** and the accompanying verb **AGAPAN**
These words indicate unconquerable benevolence, invincible connection with or toward someone (or something)
Positively, it describes a love that does not fail no matter how we are treated or insulted or injured. It does not allow bitterness to exist.
Negatively, it describes a love that is stubborn, holding onto something, refusing to give it up.
Joh 3:19 *"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved ^{G25} ἀγαπᾶν agapan the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*

**It is AGAPE love throughout this passage
– in its positive sense -
that Jesus is exhorting from us here.**

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

Jesus never asks us to love (**AGAPAN**) our enemies in the same way we love (**PHILEIN**) our nearest and dearest friends.

That would not be proper or possible.

AGAPE is not a feeling of the heart which we cannot help and which comes unbidden and unsought (**PHILIA / EROS**).

AGAPE describes a determination of the mind, a choice we make, whereby we achieve unconquerable goodwill even to those who hurt and injure us.

AGAPE is the power to love those we do not like and who in all likelihood do not like us.

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

AGAPE love does not permit people to do as they like leaving them unchecked.

AGAPE love often means we must punish and restrain the object of that love.

We must often correct, discipline and protect them from their own deeds.

It means that in our discipline and punishment we do not engage in a satisfaction of a self desire for revenge.

Our **AGAPE** actions are intended to make them better people.

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

AGAPE love means that we must do something for our enemies.

One of the best and first things we should do is pray for them.

It is not possible to pray **for** a person for any length of time and still hate them.

One of the surest ways to kill bitterness is to pray **for** those we are struggling to love.

The love of God can never take pleasure in the destruction of any of those he loves.

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

Jesus commandment and teaching here is first of all directed at me and at you.

Each of us must say "**THIS MEANS ME!**"

It is a commandment that can only be carried out by a Christian.

Only having experienced a personal relationship with Jesus can a person do these things with any sort of consistency.

This is the same kind of love that God extends to us.

This kind of love in our lives makes us God like.

Love Your Enemy.... Matt 5:43-48

The greek word for **perfect** is **TELEIOS**.

It has nothing to do with abstract, philosophical, metaphysical perfection.

The Greek idea of perfection is functional.

A THING IS PERFECT IF IT FULLY REALIZES THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS PLANNED;

A MAN IS PERFECT IF HE REALIZES THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE WAS CREATED AND SENT INTO THE WORLD.

Man was created to be like God, created in His image
Genesis 1:26

The one thing that will make us like God above all other things is a love which never ceases to care for men no matter what men do to it.

Jesus' exposition

The spirit of God's law requires total transparency in the life of the Christian.

The world around us may either ignore God's moral standards or comply with them for the sake of expediency or appearance, but the Christian may do neither.

We are to obey the spirit of all God's laws in order to represent Him faithfully in this world.

As Jesus put it,

"You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).