

## Matthew 5:17-48

*Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*

Matthew 5:48

PRAYER: Father, You desire for me to be holy as You are holy. Please help me to live my life as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

*Journal your prayer here:*

PREVIEW: In Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus teaches His disciples with astonishing authority, setting the level of expected righteousness to one exceeding the scribes and Pharisees.

### Matthew 5:17-48 Outline:

Jesus Fulfills the Law - Read Matthew 5:17-20

Murder - Read Matthew 5:21-26

Adultery - Read Matthew 5:27-30

Divorce - Read Matthew 5:31-32

Oaths - Read Matthew 5:33-37

Retaliation - Read Matthew 5:38-42

Love - Read Matthew 5:43-48

As Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 5-7, He often said, “*You’ve heard that it was said*” but, “*I say to you.*” He is referring to the Law and the Prophets, and even their oral traditions (where they learned these commands or sayings). When He says, “*I say to you,*” He speaks with authority, something not typically done by rabbis. Because of this, His teachings astonished His listeners. (See Matthew 7:28-29; 13:54; 56, Luke 4:22, and John 7:46.)

## Jesus Fulfills the Law - Read Matthew 5:17-20

1. The Law or the Prophets refers to the Law of Moses and the words of the prophets. What did Jesus say He had come to do with the Law and the Prophets (v. 17)? (See also Romans 10:4 and Galatians 3:24-25.)

2. PROPOUND: Explain how Jesus fulfilled the Law.

3. A jot or yod (*iota* in Greek) is the smallest Hebrew letter. A tittle is the smallest stroke in a Hebrew letter. What did Jesus say would happen before one jot or tittle passed away (v. 18)?

4. What did Jesus say was required to be called “great in the kingdom of heaven” (v. 19)?

5. PRACTICE: Jesus mentions those who are “called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Who are they, and how can we become one of them?

6. Jesus says to His disciples, “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” How can the disciples’ righteousness exceed the scribes and Pharisees? (See 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Romans 4:22-25.)

7. **PRODUCE:** A righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees is required for entrance to the kingdom of heaven. Explain *righteousness* in your own words.

## **Murder - Read Matthew 5:21-26**

8. Jesus refers to the sixth commandment: “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). What two things does He equate with murder (v. 22)?

9. As Jesus equates these two angers of our heart with murder, He says we should be reconciled with our brother who has something against us. What actions does He say we should take to be reconciled (vv. 23-26)?

10. PROPOUND: What did the gift being brought to the altar represent?

11. PROCEED: What did Jesus mean when He said, “Agree with your adversary quickly” (Matthew 5:25)? What might be the results if we don’t do so?

## **Adultery - Read Matthew 5:27-30**

12. Jesus refers to the seventh commandment: “You shall not commit adultery” (v. 27). What does He equate with adultery?

13. When Jesus says we should pluck out our eye and cut off our hand, what do you think He is referring to?

14. PROCLAIM: Jesus said adultery can be committed in the heart. Why is it important to guard our hearts? (See Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:21.)

## **Divorce - Read Matthew 5:31-32**

15. Jesus points to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 when referring to the divorce allowed by Moses (v. 31). Read Mark 10:2-12. Why does Jesus say Moses allowed divorce?

16. What exception does Jesus make for divorce (v. 32)? (See also Malachi 2:16.)

17. PROPOUND: What is meant by, “It is more profitable that one of your members perish, than for your body to be cast into hell”?

18. PROPOUND: What does a man commit when he marries a divorced woman?

19. PROMOTE: Share with the group what God’s attitude toward divorce is. When is divorce acceptable?

## Oaths - Read Matthew 5:33-37

20. Jesus refers to Leviticus 19:12 and passages like Numbers 30:2 that explain what was required before swearing an oath. What does Jesus say about swearing an oath (v. 34)?

21. Instead of swearing an oath, what should we do to let people know we're serious (v. 37)? (See also Ephesians 4:15 and 1 John 3:18.)

22. PROPOUND: What does "let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'" mean?

## Retaliation - Read Matthew 5:38-42

23. Jesus refers to the *lex talionis* (in Latin), or the law of retribution: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (see Exodus 21:24). Rather than retribution, what does Jesus say we should do in each situation?

24. Instead of taking things into our own hands and seeking retribution, what do the following passages say we should do? (See Proverbs 20:22, Romans 12:17, 1 Corinthians 6:7 and 1 Peter 3:9.)

25. PROPOUND: The commonly used phrase, “going the extra mile,” comes from Matthew 5:41. What does this literally mean?

## **Love - Read Matthew 5:43-48**

26. Jesus refers to Leviticus 19:18 (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”) and to the oral traditions of the Pharisees (“And hate your enemy”) (v. 43). What should we do to our enemies (v. 44)?

27. Jesus says that doing good for our enemy, loving those who don’t love us (v. 46), and greeting those who aren’t our brethren (v. 47) make us sons of our Father in Heaven (v. 45). Although these seem challenging, we are commanded to be as perfect as our Heavenly Father (v. 48). (See also Leviticus 11:44; 19:2, James 1:4, and 1 Peter 1:15.) How can we achieve this perfection? (See John 17:17, Romans 12:1-2, and Ephesians 1:4; 5:1.)

28. PROTECT: Meditate on the command Jesus gave in Matthew 5:48: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” How can we obey this command? (See 2 Timothy 2:21 and Hebrews 9:14.)

29. PROPOUND: What does Jesus mean when He says, “that you may be sons of your Father in heaven”? (v. 45). (See also Luke 6:35-36.)

PROCESS: Review what you’ve learned about Jesus’ expected righteousness (see Matthew 5:17-48). Be ready to share your lessons with the group.

PRAY: Father, I cannot achieve a righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees without Your Spirit. Please help me to live out the Sermon on the Mount.

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