

Message Guide

Sermon on the Mount

Living Truth Ministries

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Message Guide

These Message Guides may be a little different from those that you have used before.

The purpose of these Notes is not an in-depth study of the scriptures used, but rather to assist you or your Study Group as you reflect on the message given by Charles

We present questions in order to stimulate discussion. Sometimes we will give you the answer ... sometimes not. At other times we will present a statement or a theme for your consideration.

As you allow the Holy Spirit to guide the direction of your study and discussions we pray the flexibility of this Message Guide will help you as you delve more deeply into Charles' message, and that you will unearth more lessons from the Lord than may not have been immediately obvious.

Sermon on the Mount
Part 1
'Matching the Inside with the Outside'
Matthew 5:17 - 20

Message Guide & Questions

1. The teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount goes beyond the law. What is that deeper place that Jesus is probing?

2. Why it is important that we go beyond 'obeying the law' to 'having the right attitude'. Is immorality the biggest problem?

3. What is the danger of AMORALITY?

4. Governments and Organizations are governed by laws which are easy to legislate and measure, but Jesus teaches something different and more difficult to get hold of -
 He goes, Beyond Laws to _____
 Beyond Conduct to _____
 Beyond Rules to _____
 Beyond Externals to _____
 It penetrate deep into _____

5. In the Beatitudes (Ch. 5:1-16) Jesus teaches concerning the CHARACTER of a Disciple; in the Sermon On The Mount (Ch. 5:17- Ch. 7) He talks about the _____ of a Disciple.
 What is the relationship between these two aspects?

6. Why would Matthew 5:20 have been so controversial?

7. **External** is about what we ____. It concerns our _____ & _____
Internal is about what we _____, it concerns our _____ & _____

8. Compare the Righteousness of the Pharisees & Scribes with the Righteousness of Jesus as seen in Matt. 5:21 & 22; 27 & 28; 31 & 32; 33 & 34
What are the practical ramifications of this?

9. This “Inside – Outside” Tension continues through the Sermon on the Mount.
What lesson must we learn from the following verses?

Matthew 6	v.1 – 4	Giving
	v.5 – 8	Praying
	v.16 – 18	Fasting
	v.19 – 24	Storing up treasures
	v.25 – 34	Worrying
Matthew 7	v.1 – 5	Judging others.

10. Who are the Pharisees of today? Be very careful how you answer this!

11. To summarize:

a. There has to be _____
before there can be _____ in behavior.

b. Christian living is not just _____.
It is living with a _____ that God puts within us.

Sermon on the Mount
Part 2
'Fulfilling the Law'
Matthew 5:17 - 20

Message Guide & Questions

1. As a recap from the first study, what is the thrust of the Sermon on the Mount?

2. What do you think the disciples were expecting to hear when they gathered to listen to Jesus? What DID they get?

3. Starting at verse 17 Jesus made the declaration that He had come, not to abolish the law, but rather to fulfill it. Charles breaks it down into 3 parts. Do you know what these are?
1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

4. To better understand the **Purpose of the Law**, read 1 John 3 v.4; & Romans 3 'v.23 If everyone who sins breaks the law, and if sinning is to come short of the glory of God', What does that tell us about **The Law of God** and the **Glory of God**?

5. What is the EFFECT of the Law?

6. Why would God want to expose our failure to us?

7. Now recall the last study. God wants to deal with the _____

8. If "*Jesus did not come into the world **just** to save us from our sin*", what other purpose was there? Read and consider Romans 8 v.3 – 4

9. Does this mean that we can be perfect? Read 2 Corinthians 3 v.17 – 18

10. How do we measure that growth?

Final Thoughts

What Jesus is showing us is that the Law needs to be relocated!
Previously it was written on tablets of stone;
But now it should be written in our hearts and minds.

Sermon on the Mount
Part 3
'The Christian & Relationships'
Matthew 5:21 - 30

Message Guide & Questions

1. As a recap of the first two studies –
1. What is the thrust of the Sermon on the Mount?
 2. Other than coming to provide us with a means to have our sins forgiven, for what other important reason did Jesus come?

2. Discuss Matthew Chapter 7 verses 21 & 22. What can we discern from these?

3. The purpose of the Law is to

The Effect of the Law is to

4. Along with dependence on God we need _____

5. What is Jesus telling us in Matthew 5:21 – 22a

6. What is Jesus telling us in 22b?

7. Is all anger wrong? Explain.

8. Anger is a _____

9. Anger is usually channeled _____

10. What are the 3 things we can do with anger?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

11. What is Jesus telling us to do in Matthew 5:23?

12. What are the 4 stages does Jesus say we need to go through in order to mend a broken relationship? Read and consider Matthew 18 v.15 - 17

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Final Thoughts

Our relationships with each other is a reflection on our relationship with God. When asked by an expert in the Law, "What is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus answered in Matt. 22 v.37 - 40

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Life is all about relationships.

More important than the accumulation of materials things is the building of good relationships. These feed and satisfy the soul in a way that material things never can. The Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments – simply put

Loving God and Loving People

The evidence that we truly love God is shown in the love that we have for people.

Read and consider 1 John 3 v.14 – 15 and 1 John 4 v.20 – 21

Pray: Is there anyone you need to get right with?

Are you angry with someone?

Is someone angry with you?

Have you destroyed anyone with your words?

Is there a broken relationship?

Spouse, ex-spouse, children, parents, friend, colleague?

With God's grace allow yourself to be the one to initiate the healing of the relationship!

Sermon on the Mount
Part 4
'Christians & Sexual Behaviour'
Matthew 5:27 – 30

As this is a delicate subject you should deal with it sensitively, but honestly.

Message Guide & Questions

1. To recap from our previous study –
 - a. His presence turns commands into _____
 - b. The key is our _____ on God which requires _____

2. Also in our previous study we saw how Jesus went beyond “Do not murder”, to the cause of murder which is _____.
Now Jesus, in dealing with our sexual relationships in “Do not commit adultery”, to that which leads to adultery _____.

3. Do you recall the 3 aspects that Charles deals with?
 - a. Sex as an expression of _____
 - b. Sex as an expression of _____
 - c. Sex as an expression of _____

4. When considering ‘Sex as a expression of Love’ what are the 3 positives that we learn from Genesis 1:27 – 28a and Genesis 2:18

5. What is the Apostle Paul’s instruction regarding marital relations in 1 Cor. 7:3

6. From this we need to be clear that there are 3 kinds of sexual relationships that are **outside the will of God.**
 - a. _____

 - b. _____ - _____

 - c. _____

7. Read Matthew 5:28. What does this mean? What precisely IS Lust?

8. How do we keep our sex lives clean and holy?
Read Matthew 5:29 – 30. What is Jesus actually saying?

9. What is the most important sex organ in our bodies?

10. Just as **Sexual Delight** is God's desire for us – (it being a Divine Creation; Divine Command; Divine Concern) then **Sexual Discipline** is also God's Desire for us, and that we bring our body _____.

11. What lesson do we learn from Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Proverbs 25:28?

12. If discipline itself will not make us holy, what will?

Final Thoughts

How does 'Dependence on God' and 'Discipline of the Body' go together?

They NEED EACH OTHER!

Discipline is not to get Holiness in, but to let God out
so He can express Himself through a body that obeys orders.

Remember what Jesus said. "I have come to fulfill the Law."
Commands have become Promises.

Sermon on the Mount
Part 5
'Christians & Divorce'
Matthew 5:31 – 32; 10:3-10

As this is a delicate subject you should deal with it sensitively, but honestly.

Message Guide & Questions

1. To recap from our previous study – In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus contrasts a series of ethical issues where He begins by saying “You have heard it said” and then He either quotes the _____ or the way the _____ had interpreted it. And having quoted that to them, He then says, “But I say unto you”, and gives _____ statement.

2. Jesus here is not revising or rewriting the Law; so what IS He doing?

3. Why is Divorce such a difficult, yet important, subject to address?

4. In Matthew 19 the Pharisees asked Jesus about _____ but He talked about _____ Why?

5. Charles presents us with 3 issues –
 1. Marriage is a C _____
 2. Divorce is a C _____
 3. Divorce is a P _____

6. The starting point in marriage is not that it is a _____ but that it is a _____ Read Genesis 2:24 What *is* marriage and what is it *not*?

7. Since our starting point is, Divorce is _____
What does God say unambiguously in Malachi 2:15-16 about divorce?

8. Jesus concedes that divorce does take place. How is 'Divorce a concession?'

9. How can we explain Matthew 19:7 – 8? What was Jesus response to their question?

10. In what way was Divorce a means of protection?

11. Without being judgmental, consider why is it that the divorce rate in the church is the same as in the world? What are the consequences – especially for the children growing up in broken homes?

Final Thoughts

**All marriages can survive!
God is committed to them!**

- * WORK them through.
- * Don't be afraid to argue.
- * Spend good time together.
- * Have fun Together. Laugh together!
 - * Cry together.
- * Respect each others weaknesses.
- * Draw out each others strengths.
 - * Tell each other the truth.
- * Say sorry often. Give time for hurts to heal.
 - * Surprise each other.
 - * Don't dominate each other.
 - * Get help when you need it.
- * **Gird it all with utter dependence on God!
He is committed to your marriage.**

*If divorce becomes the only way out –
someone's heart is **hard**,
and has chosen to **remain hard**.*

Sermon on the Mount Series
Part 6
'Christians & the Truth'
Matthew 5:33 - 37

Message Guide & Questions

1. To recap. In the Sermon on the Mount every issue that Jesus raises sets his people apart from the norm. So far we have learned that we are to :-

- * Handle _____ differently Matthew 5 v.21 – 26
- * Treat _____ differently Matthew 5 v.27 – 30
- * Approach _____ differently Matthew 5 v.31 – 32

It is not that we are to be simply _____ than others, but we have new resources by the _____
_____ Read Ezekiel 36 v.27

This is what the Gospel is all about. If our hearts remain untouched, our behavior will remain untouched.

2. How does this issue of 'Christians and the Truth' relate to what we have considered previously?

3. Charles presents 3 issues for our consideration :

- 1. Truth IN C _____ N
- 2. Truth as C _____ R
- 3. Truth as C _____ T

4. Consider the days in which we live. How we are affected by the Internet and TV etc.?

5. Read Proverbs 18 v.21. What are the positive and the negative powers of the tongue?

6. Following the same pattern here in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says in verse 33, "You have heard it said"
How does Jesus respond? What is He doing?

7. Think through and consider what are the implications of taking an oath.

8. ***The measure by which we tell the truth is probably the most important thing about us.*** Truthfulness of what we say depends on the truthfulness of our character.

Read and consider John 8 v.44

What is often used as a "clever? way of lying?

9. In Proverbs 6 v. 16 – 19 there are 7 things that are DETESTABLE to God, two of which are concerned with lying. What are they?

10. Now read Revelation 21 v. 8. What is the specific punishment is meted out to liars on the Day of Judgment?

11. We all know that Jesus is the _ _ _ _ _ John 14 v.6

If lies are the native language of Satan, what is the native language of God?

Then read Psalm 15 v. 1 and 2

12. Remember that the theme of the Sermon on the Mount is that what goes on **outwardly** is merely a symptom of the **inward**.

Murder is a symptom of anger = state of heart

Adultery is a symptom of lust = state of heart

Divorce is a symptom of disloyalty = state of heart

What does this tell us about taking oaths in order to be believed?

-
13. With a transformed heart, Commitment to God is a Commitment to _ _ _ _ _
But how does this work practically? Read and consider Matthew 6 v.17 - 18

Final Thoughts

The rest of us neither need or want to know everything about you,
so honesty needs to be balanced with discretion.

Telling the truth reflects our character.

If we are committed to God then we must reflect His character.

So our normal state should be to not allow Satan a foothold in our lives,
and our native language should be that of the Truth.

- * What we **see** is who you **are**.
- * What you **promise** is what you **fulfill**.
- * What you **say** is what you **mean**.

Sermon on the Mount
Part 7
'Christian Justice & Love
Matthew 5:38 - 48

Message Guide & Questions

1. To recap from our previous studies on the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 has a series of 6 statements that follow a formula. Can you remember that formula?

2. Reading Matthew 5:38 – 48 can you identify the last 2 statements that we are going to deal with here?

3. Read Exodus 21 v.23 – 24, Leviticus 24 v. 19 – 20 and Deuteronomy 19 v.21. Jesus accurately quotes the Law of Moses but in this passage of scripture He apparently says 'don't do that, - DO THE OPPOSITE!' How can we reconcile this apparent contradiction?

4. The Mosaic Laws are the principles by which crime and punishment were to be addressed.
There are many in our society today who feel that the weakening of these principles has weakened our society. Do you agree / disagree?

5. So what is the problem Jesus addresses in Matthew 5?

6. What is the danger of taking Romans 12:17 and Romans 13:1 – 5 out of it's context?

7. Read Matt. 5:43 – 47. How had the people totally and maliciously (perhaps even deliberately) misinterpreted these verses?

8. So, if some one hits you and you offer the other cheek, what is the spirit behind your response? - - - -

If someone wants your tunic, and you give him your coat, what is the spirit behind your response? - - - -

If you are forced to go one mile, but go two instead, what is the spirit behind your response? - - - -

9. Does this mean that Christians allow themselves to be trampled on?

What about our 'Rights'?

What is our biblical RESPONSIBILITY?

Final Thoughts

What were you and I made for?

We are created in the image of God; that is, God's moral image. As the defining statement of God's moral character found in 1 John 4:16 states,

*"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.
Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him."*

So as we are created to express the character of God,
so all our actions and reactions must be characterized by LOVE.

Maybe some of us need to radically rethink
our priorities, outlook, perspective and relationships.

Especially with those we don't like.

Especially with those who seem demanding of us.

Especially with those who would do us harm.

**The Sermon on the Mount is about being radically different to the world,
by being radically true to the Character of God.**

Sermon on the Mount
Part 8
'Christians and Society
Matthew 5:13 - 16

Message Guide & Questions

1. What are the two metaphors that Jesus uses to describe Christians?

2. In what environment is 'Salt' significant?

In what environment is 'Light' significant?

3. In the same way that describing Christians as the 'light of the world' implies 'darkness', so, being the 'salt of the earth' implies a world in decay. The Bible describes this process of decay as being in a state of perishing. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3 and 2 Thessalonians 2 v.9 - 10. When does this "perishing" take place?

4. Can you think of 2 errors that Christians often make in our relationship to the world?

5. So how are we to conduct ourselves? Read and consider John 17 v.15 & 18

6. Broadly speaking, by what 2 ways can we infiltrate the world?

- a. -----
- b. -----

7. It is important to understand that the issues that Jesus is dealing with in Matthew 5 are not corporate issues, but rather 'individual' issues. Remember from previous studies Jesus is dealing with personal issues such as A _____, L _____, H _____ & T _____, and loving those who hate you.

8. Read Matthew 5 v.14 – 16; John 9 v.5 and John 1 v.4
Who is the LIGHT?
-
-

Final Thoughts

Read together Matthew 5 v.16
Recognize the source – God at work through you.

For this reason we have to die to every personal agenda.
It is only HIS life for His program for HIS agenda.

Salt is negative in that it prevents decay.
Light is positive in that it reveals the life of God.

This is the Christian Life.
Philip Keller in his book 'Salt for Society' [Word Books] says,
"Either our lives are counting for good and for God,
or they are making an impact for the enemy.
The way we live, the things we say,
the attitudes we entertain, the style we adopt
..... are continuously producing either positive or negative results in society.
Our lives, whether we are aware or not,
either count FOR God or AGAINST Him.
There simply is no middle ground."

The Challenge to us is – are we functioning? Or are we fooling around?

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

This Leader's Guide is prepared to help the Study Group Leader to keep the discussions moving along. Maybe your people will come up with different answers, or perhaps they will need a little prompting from you.

Remember, you want to encourage your people to fully participate. This is not a 'teaching session' by the Group Leader, but rather a discussion group. This may at first seem like a contradiction, but you will need for the Lord to give you wisdom to keep the discussions 'on track' whilst also allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your path.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Sermon On The Mount

Part 1

'Match the Inside with the Outside'

Matthew 5:17 - 20

1. Jesus is probing the actual 'life' of a person by going under the surface of the letter of the Law; beyond our 'actions', but most importantly to our ATTITUDES.

This makes the teachings of Jesus extremely relevant to our day.

2. The most insidious problem is not immorality – but rather AMORALITY.

MORALITY is defined as 'a universal code of behaviour', so

IMMORALITY is a 'violation of the code of behaviour', but

AMORALITY is far worse in that it is to '*have no recognized universal code of behaviour.*'

3. Because there is no 'universal reference point' no one now dares to say that certain things are actually "wrong"; instead we say that people have made "wrong choices".

4. He goes beyond - Laws to **LIFE**; Conduct to **CHARACTER**; Rules to **RIGHTEOUSNESS**: Externals to **INTERNALS**. **into the human heart!**

5. **CONDUCT.**

Teaching on CHARACTER must come before teaching on CONDUCT because

1. Jesus is our SAVIOUR before He is TEACHER.

2. Jesus changes what we ARE, before changing what we DO.

3. INNER TRANSFORMATION precedes OUTWARD BEHAVIOUR.

We will never evolve from 'right conduct' to 'right character' – the process is the reverse. The right fruit derives from the right root – not the reverse.

When we go to Him just as we are, He goes to the root of our sin and deals with that first – then comes the change in character. Read Phil. 2:14. He implants new desires and new direction.

6. **The Pharisees** were strict conservatives. A Holiness movement. They were renown for moral strictness; observing the law in all its facets from tithing to the clothes they wore and the food they ate.
The Scribes were the teachers of the law. It is reasonable to suppose that if they taught it, they kept it – or at least tried to.

But Jesus taught that we have to **EXCEED THAT** or we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

* The Righteousness of the Pharisees & Scribes was EXTERNAL – it has to do with what we DO.

* The Righteousness of Jesus is INTERNAL, and has to do with what we ARE.

7. **External** is about what we **DO**. It concerns our **ACTIONS & CONDUCT**
Internal is about what we **ARE** , it concerns our **ATTITUDES & CHARACTER**
8. By now there should be a clear understanding that wants us to go deeper than just 'living by the rules'. He is putting 'a new heart' in us. Read Ezekiel 36 v.27.
This is the gospel! It works in the deepest recess of the soul!
9. It is not the externals; it's the internals. It's not what you do; it's what you are. It's not your actions; it's your attitude. It's not your conduct; it's your character. This is Jesus drilling under the law to what it's really all about.
10. There are within our churches today –
 - * Liberals who deny the fundamentals of scripture.
 - * Biblical Conservatives – people with a high view of the authority of scripture; they know right from wrong; they have a concern for holiness.

If we are thinking of these people we are missing the point.

Read and consider Matthew 7 v.3

Read and consider Matthew 7 v.21

We DO NOT have the role of being the policemen of the church.

11. a. There has to be INNER TRANSFORMATION before there can be OUTER CHANGE in behavior.
- b. Christian living is not just LIVING BY THE RULES. It is living with a NEW HEART that God puts within us.

The new heart does not judge others, but seeks to follow the Lord as in 1 Samuel 16 v.7. Read & consider

Summary

Christianity should not be a stepping stone to something else such as forgiveness, peace or miracles.

Jesus is a means to these but our true desire should be to

Know God deep in the core of our being!

The Sermon on the Mount strips away the externals
and leads us into that deeper relationship with God..
That ought to be where we want to be.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Sermon on the Mount

Part 2

'Fulfilling the Law'

Matthew 5:17 - 20

1. Jesus takes the disciples [and us] beyond the externals and directs us to the internal truths. Read Psalm 51 v.6
2. They were expecting more good news; more of the 'blessed are they"
They did NOT expect Jesus to deliver probably the most discouraging words ever to be spoken by Him.
3.
 1. The **PURPOSE** of the Law
 2. The **EFFECT** of the Law
 3. The **FULFILLMENT** of the law.
4. 'The Law of God' and the 'Glory of God' are the SAME THING.
The purpose for humans beings is that people will see God through us But if we have fallen short of the Glory of God then people cannot see Him.
If the 'Law of God' equals the 'Glory of God' then"
The Ten Commandments were given to reveal what God is like so human beings know what they are to be like – made in His image.
They are not an arbitrary set of rules.
The Purpose of the Law is to reveal the Character of God.
5. The EFFECT of the Law is to reveal the failure of humanity.
Read Romans 7 v.7 & Romans 3 v.20
6. Not to humiliate or embarrass us; but to clean up and change us.
Good News begins with a recognition of the **Bad News**.
In the incident of the Golden Calf, God was not shocked or surprised; God did not learn anything new about man - Man learned something new about himself.
- .7. God wants to deal with the INTERNALS.
The EFFECT of the law is reveal to us the extent by which we have fallen short of the Glory of God. Only when we accept the diagnosis will we ever be willing to accept and experience the remedy.
We usually want the side-step the diagnosis in favor of an easy quick-fix band aid.
God loves us far too much to allow that.
8. *"Jesus did not come into the world **just** to save us from our sin."*
That is wonderful, but it is only a means to an end.

Jesus came to fulfill the law! Why? so that –
What was a COMMAND under the old covenant is a PROMISE under the new covenant

Read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, but read them as Ten Promises!
This is the new covenant that Jesus spoke of at the Last Supper.

9. No! It is a 'transformational process from one degree of glory to another'.
It is not past tense!
It is not future tense!
It is a present continuing tense!
10. Not by 'externals' such as bible knowledge, attendance at meetings, or even through our service; but rather, **how much of Jesus is revealed in our life!**

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Sermon on the Mount Series

Part 3

'The Christian & Relationships'

Matthew 5:21 - 30

1. 1. Jesus goes beyond the external, and delves into the internal.
2. Jesus came to FULFILL the law, not to abolish it!
2. These people displayed all kinds of **spiritual activity**; but it originated **in themselves**, not from **the life of God within them**. They were good at the external, but it was not coming from their internal relationship with God.
3. The purpose of the law is to reveal the character of God.
The effect of the law is to expose the failure of humanity.

The indwelling presence of God turns COMMANDS into PROMISES.

4. Disciplined Living

Discipline is not to get godliness in our lives. That was the expectation and downfall of the Pharisees; you cannot become the right person by doing the right things.

Godliness derives **FROM** the 'life of God' operating within us.

Disciplined Living enables the Spirit of God **within us** to be released **through us** in a body that **responds and obeys**.

The process is not working 'from the outside in', but from the 'inside out'.

Read Philippians 2 v.12 & 13

5. Jesus goes beyond the act of murder, to ANGER which causes murder.
6. "Raca" in the Aramaic language that Jesus spoke is a 'term of contempt' which is an insult to a person's intelligence. To say "you fool" is to insult that person's character. These may only be verbal – but they are far reaching.
7. Not all anger is wrong. Read Psalm 85 v.4 – 6 and Mark 3 v.5.

When God's purposes are thwarted, prevented or resisted He displays anger, but this is 'righteous anger' which is legitimate.

The anger being dealt with here is DESTRUCTIVE anger

8. Anger is a POWERFUL EMOTION that usually comes from not getting ones own way. It is clearly seen in children's tantrums
9. Anger is usually channeled TOWARDS OTHER PEOPLE
10. a. **Express it.** Lash out! Is it right to say "By getting the feelings out you will feel better" ?
 b. **Suppress it.** Or Repress it. Repressing it simply puts it into DENIAL. By pushing it down into our subconscious we think and hope it has gone, but it hasn't. We think we have it under control, but we don't. It is sure to resurface in some 'Freudian slip', unguarded comment. Suppressed and Repressed anger will just get churned up causing a person to become bitter, withdrawn, cynical and skeptical. Read and consider Hebrews 12 v.15
 c. **Confess it.** Recognize your feelings - Be honest about them. Bring them into the open.

This again is what Jesus is talking about here – bringing things into the open - External!

11. The FIRST STEP is to get right with whomever your anger is directed to; whoever you have an 'issue' with.

It is not a question of who is right or wrong – it may be the other person or it may be you – but PUT IT RIGHT. NOW!!! Leave what you are doing and YOU be the initiator for reconciliation.

12. 1. v.15 Go and show him/her their fault – just between the two of you.
2. v.16 If step one fails, take one or two witnesses.
3. v.17a If step 2 fails you have to take it to the leadership of the church.
4. v.17b This is the final level to which the process may go.
 If the person refuses to listen to the leadership of the church you DO NOT THROW THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH OR HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH THEM.

How do we treat pagans? We want to win them to Christ – not reject them! We need to understand that the person who reaches step 4 should be treated as someone 'outside of Christ' in need of being 'brought to repentance'. We are not to 'have nothing more to do with them' as some people have erroneously interpreted this. In treating them as a pagan we must remember that we are to win pagans to Christ – not reject them.

Such a person has not lost their salvation. But has **lost conscious fellowship with God** and is **in need of repentance and restoration with God** and the fellowship of His church.

Campbell Morgan says,

“Any church of Jesus Christ is weak in the proportion in which its members allow false pity or sentiment to prevent their being faithful to this great work of attempting to show an erring brother his fault, that they may be restored.”

Leader’s Message Guide & Answers

Sermon on the Mount

Part 4

‘Christians & Sexual Behaviour’

Matthew 5:27 – 30

As this is a delicate subject you should deal with it sensitively, but honestly and directly. Do not allow the discussion to get into that of specific sexual behaviour. Stay focused.

1. His presence turns commands into PROMISES.
The key is our DEPENDENCE on God which requires DISCIPLINED LIVING.

Remember - Discipline is not to get godliness in our lives. That was the expectation and downfall of the Pharisees; you cannot become the right person by doing the right things.

Godliness derives **FROM** the ‘life of God’ operating within us.
Disciplined Living enables the Spirit of God **within us** to be released **through us** in a body that **responds and obeys**.

The process is not working ‘from the outside in’, but from the ‘inside out’.
Read Philippians 2 v.12 & 13

2. In our previous study we saw how Jesus went beyond “Do not murder”, to the cause of murder – to that which leads to murder - **ANGER**
Now Jesus, in dealing with our sexual relationships in “Do not commit adultery”, to that which leads to adultery - **LUST**.
3. Sex as an expression of **LOVE**
Sex as an expression of **LUST**
Sex as an expression of **LIFE**
4. Genesis 1 v.27 - Sex is a Divine Creation
Genesis 1 v.28a - Sex is a Divine Command
Genesis 2 v.18 - Sex is a Divine Concern

The early church made many edicts forbidding sex - It was banned on:

Thursdays - the day of Christ’s arrest
Fridays - the day of his death

Saturdays - in honour of the Virgin Mary
Sundays - in honour of departed saints
Wednesdays on most weeks for a variety of reasons.

But that is not all

It was also required to abstain for 40 day fast periods –
before Christmas,
before Easter,
before Pentecost,
and also on Feast Days and Days of the Apostles

It is estimated that out of the entire year only 44 days remained for marital sex.
No wonder Christians developed a paranoid fear of sex.

5. It may seem a little cold to call it a 'marital duty', but nevertheless, it is to be an integral part of the relationship; nurtured, developed and built in marriage.

6. The 3 kinds of sexual relationships that are **outside the will of God** are -

a. PREMARITAL Sex is meant to be the consummation of the total relationship, and that only takes place when there has been a **leaving and cleaving** in its entirety. Sex is not a recreational sport – it is God's wedding present.

b. EXTRA-MARITAL Marriage is an **exclusive** and **permanent** relationship until death parts.

c. HOMOSEXUAL Some struggle deeply with same-sex attraction, and we must deal with it with compassion and understanding, but **every reference to homosexual activity in Scripture is negative.**

7. Be careful with this.

'Lust' is not simply 'sexual desire'. He is NOT saying 'anyone who looks at a woman **with sexual desire** has already committed adultery with her in his heart'.

We all recognize sexual attraction [sexual chemistry], however,

LUST is the selfish intention to satisfy ones own desires.

If you have time, read 2 Samuel 13 v.1 – 15. Here you will see that lust causes frustration and even illness; involves lies deception; and leads to hatred of the object of the lust.

When the sexual relationship is an expression of love it is NEVER DEMANDING. It is 'giving to the other' whose first desire is to please rather than satisfying oneself.

Lust is the reverse of that – it pleases itself.

8. This does not mean the literal cutting off or gouging out body parts. If you cut the hand off a thief you just end up with a one-handed thief.

In relation to our sex drive, suppressing it is not the answer. It is controlling it that He talks about.

As we have seen with all of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is showing the need to go deeper.

9. The most important sex organ in the body is the BRAIN. As we feed the brain – so we are.

Sin is not 'out there' but 'in here'. However, it has never been more of a problem than it is today, because never have stimulating visuals been more available than today.

Consider these appalling facts about pornography.

- * It is a \$57 Billion dollar world-wide industry.
- * 25% of all search engine requests [by computer] are for pornography.
- * 47% of Christians said that pornography has become a major problem **in the home.**
- * This is not just a male problem [stimulated by vision]. Of all visitors to porn websites 73% are male, 27% female.

10. We need to have CONTROL OF OUR BODY.

We need to cut off or gouge out those areas of our life that would bring sexual temptation into our brains [and hearts]

11. The body is a wonderful servant; but a terrible master!
Teach your body to be your servant; not your master!

12. Discipline will release the life of God in us.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Sermon on the Mount Series

Part 5

'Christians & Divorce'

Matthew 5:31 – 32; 19:3-10

**This is a delicate subject. Deal with it sensitively, but honestly and directly.
Stay focused.**

1. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus contrasts a series of ethical issues where He begins by saying "You have heard it said" and then He either quotes the **LAW OF MOSES** or the way the **PHARISEES** had interpreted it. And having quoted that to them, He then says, "But I say unto you", and gives **HIS OWN** statement.
2. Jesus is going to the very heart of it; to the cause, not just the effect.
Not just murder [effect] but to anger [cause]
Not just to adultery [effect] but to lust [cause]

One is external the other is internal.
One is about activity the other is about attitude.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is about having a changed heart not about keeping a set of rules.

3. Divorce is a painful fact of life. The reality is, many marriages have become a place of torment involving psychological and/or physical abuse. It is not just an academic/doctrinal issue; it is deeply personal and painful.

It used to be that divorces were rarely found in Christian evangelical circles, but to our shame that is no longer the case.

George Barna has written, "*We rarely find substantial differences between the moral behavior of Christians and non-Christians. We would love to be able to report that Christians are living very distinct lives and impacting the community, but In the area of divorce rates they continue to be the same.*"

Many Christians have evidently rejected Biblical teaching about love, sex, marriage and divorce ... and reaping the consequences. We have bought into the myth that marriage is a convenience we can opt into at will, and opt out of when the going gets tough.

Christians no longer have the moral authority or right to say anything to the world about marriage.

4. In Matthew 19 when the Pharisees asked Jesus about **DIVORCE**, He talked about **MARRIAGE**.

To properly understand what Jesus taught about divorce, we have to understand what is true about marriage.

5.
 1. Marriage is a COMMITMENT
 2. Divorce is a CONCESSION
 3. Divorce is a PROTECTION
6. The starting point is that marriage is not a CONVENIENCE It is a COMMITMENT.

Marriage is a life-long permanent commitment.

For better or for worse.

For richer or for poorer.
In sickness and in health.
Until death separates.

Marriage is a DETERMINED COMMITMENT to seek the others good; to cherish, shelter, protect, nurture, edify and love.

Marriage is not a convenience; but a DIVINE ORDINANCE.
It is not a mixture of physical desire, vague sentimentality plus social security; like a provisional sexual union to be terminated when the love dissolves, or grows stale; and then move on to another.

7. Divorce is **not the will of God!**
In Malachi 2 v. 16 God says, "I hate divorce."
8. We come back again to the thrust of the Sermon on the Mount whereby Jesus says "You have heard it said ..." following it with "but I say to you"

An in-depth study of exactly what the Old Testament says about divorce shows that the 'grounds for divorce' then are much the same as there are now, that being that 'the one engaging in illicit sexual activity is breaking the marriage by their activity.'

For those who held to the Hillel view, which were many, many of the Jewish people, marriage had become treated very lightly.

Then – as now – people were constantly seeking to lower the bar on what are the grounds for divorce by muddling the interpretation.

Jesus is merely reaffirming and reinforcing the Biblical grounds for divorce.

Breaking of the sexual union is the only grounds Jesus gives for divorce. There is a sacredness to the sexual union, and its centrality to marriage, and its need to be protected.

9. Jesus does not try to side-step a difficult question.

He acknowledges that Moses allowed divorce because the people's hearts were hard; but He comes right back at them by reminding them that it was not that way in the beginning, and it is not to be that way in the future.

Regardless of what they had 'heard' before, Jesus says, "I tell youetc." Matthew 19 v.9

Remember, He did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it!

10. In the days of Moses divorce was considered such an abomination to God that the penalty for it was death. Read Deuteronomy 22 v.22. So when we see that 'Moses permitted divorce' it must have been for reasons other than sexual indiscretion.

We can only speculate on what these other reasons were, but it was not a sexual issue. Remember that Jesus said in Matthew 19 v.8 that Moses allowed the men to divorce their wives because their [the men] hearts had become hard.

The times were chaotic. As the men were treating their wives as chattels, as their own personal property, like cattle, so they were divorcing for trivial reasons to be rid of them. Moses tried to regulate divorce as a means of protecting the women.

Obviously it wasn't working so again, here is Jesus saying that weakening the law is not the answer.

Sermon on the Mount Series

Part 6

'Christians & the Truth'

Matthew 5:33 - 37

1. * Handle ANGER differently Matthew 5 v.21 – 26
* Treat SEX differently Matthew 5 v.27 – 30
* Approach MARRIAGE differently Matthew 5 v.31 – 32

It is not that we are to be simply MORE DISCIPLINED than others, but we have new resources by the PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST.
Read Ezekiel 36 v.27

2. The issue of 'Christians and the Truth' is related to what we have considered previously because it has to do with our RELATIONSHIPS with other people. Adultery involves lies and deception; divorce involves breaking your word to remain in the marriage 'until death do you part'.

When Jesus speaks about truth and speaking truthfully, He goes to the very heart of so much else in our lives that come out of that root character of honesty and truthfulness and integrity.

3. 1. Truth in COMMUNICATION
2. Truth as CHARACTER
3. Truth as COMMITMENT

4. The point you want to draw out is that despite all of the technological advances today through the Internet and 24 hour news on the Radio and TV etc. the actual information we receive is shallow, superficial and sensational, designed to grab our attention; interspersed with 15 second commercials designed to influence us.

In this scenario accuracy is secondary and SPIN DOCTORING has become an art where communication is not framed according to its TRUTHFULNESS, but rather, its EFFECT,

5. Words can make you **laugh** and **cry**
With words we **encourage** and **discourage**
With words we can **build up** and **tear down**
Words can **uplift** and **condemn**
With words we can **refresh** and **intimidate**
Words can **build marriages** and **destroy marriages**

Words can **develop friendships** and **break friendships**

Words, whether written or spoken, have **POWER**

6. Jesus again says, “ But I tell you”
He is again going further and deeper in showing us how our conduct should be different from the world around us.
7. Oath taking is not intrinsically wrong, but it implies that when such an oath is declared it means then you really are telling the truth but what does that imply about other times? You may not have realized this but:-

Oath taking is itself a confession of our dishonesty!

[If I swear an oath you know I am really telling the truth;
if I don't swear an oath, who knows?]

Jesus is saying let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'

Tell the truth at ALL times.

This leads us to Truth as Character!

8. The devil's native tongue is to lie and deceive.

It may seem clever, but to ask questions that carry implications that blacken somebody's character is still a lie.

To cast doubt on truth, is to lie!

Even if in doing so you are not actually 'telling a lie', if your intent is to cast doubt and deceive, it is the same as lying.

9. In Proverbs 6 v. 16 – 19 there are 7 things that are DETESTABLE to God; a lying tongue and a false witness who pours out lies
10. Notice it says here “all liars” treated on the same level as murderers and the sexually immoral.

In order to serve our self-interest society has watered down the need to tell the truth, but Jesus says simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and you 'No' be 'No'. Why?

**Because anything beyond this comes from the evil one.
When you lie you are speaking the devil's native language!**

11. We all know that Jesus is the TRUTH. John 14 v.6

If lies are the native language of Satan, TRUTH is the native language of God.
Because Jesus is TRUTH He only speaks truth from His heart – and we are called to do the same.

The native language of our heart should be Truth!

12. Taking oaths in order to be believed is a symptom of dishonesty = state of heart!
It shows our true character.
13. Our commitment to God involves a commitment to TRUTH.

It is not always appropriate to always be totally transparent.
It is obvious in Matthew 6 v.18 – 18 Jesus is suggesting a kind of deception, but it is not born out of self-interest – in fact the very opposite is true.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Sermon on the Mount

Part 7

'Christian Justice & Love'

Matthew 5:33 - 37

1. "You have heard that it was said....." quoting either an OT scripture or a popular interpretation of it.
:But I say unto you" Jesus gives another perspective.

Jesus is going behind the effect to the cause, to the reason.

Therefore :-

Do not murder?	Deal with the anger that causes murder.
Do not commit adultery?	Deal with the lust that leads to adultery.
Do not divorce?	Deal with the hardness of heart and lack of Commitment that leads to divorce.
Keep your oaths?	Don't even make oaths – let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No'.

2. a. Is about eye for eye and tooth for tooth - Justice [revenge]
b. Is about love your neighbor - Love
There is a clear progression from one to another.

3. Moses Law says :-
Exodus 21 v.23 - 24 *'Take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand, for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.'*

Leviticus 24 v. 19 – 20 It is repeated here, 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth', but then adds 'fracture for fracture'.

Deuteronomy 19 v. 21 Goes repeats the above, but goes even further when it states "show no pity".

It is very clear; there is no room for ambiguity.

However, **Jesus says the opposite**, by saying, in Matt. 5:39, "*Do not resist an evil person.*"

But then Jesus goes even further by saying, 'if someone hits you, let them hit you again [do not resist]; if someone wants you tunic, give him more – give him your coat also; if he forces you to go one mile, go two; if you are asked for anything, don't refuse them.

It is always important to read scripture in context, and in this case consider 2 important questions.

- a. What did **Moses** mean when he said “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” etc?
- b. What did **Jesus** mean when He challenged that?

4. X X X X X

5. The problem was that people were taking the legal principles of ‘eye for eye’ etc. and, taking the law into their own hands, using them to gain revenge.
6. Turning the other cheek and not repaying evil for evil does **NOT** mean allowing people to get away with doing evil. A careful examination of Romans 13 v.1 – 5 shows us that everything should be done in the context of everyone – criminal and victim - submitting themselves to the governing authorities.

In other words – **Do not take the law into your own hands.**

- | | |
|--|------|
| * Do we believe in Justice? | YES! |
| * Do we believe in Law Courts? | YES! |
| * Do we believe in the legitimacy of the police force? | YES! |
| * Do we believe in the legitimacy of the military? | YES! |
| * Do we believe in vigilantes? | NO! |
| * Do we believe in terrorism as a means to right wrongs? | NO! |
| * Do we believe it is legitimate to take the law into our own hands? | NO! |

The tough challenge for us today is that when dealing with those who commit crimes against us, or who endanger our society, or who act destructively, our attitude is not just a legal one – but should be characterized by LOVE

This brings us to the second part **Love & Generosity** in verses 43 - 48

7. The command to ‘love your neighbor as yourself’ did not mean that conversely it was OK to hate your enemy.

Jesus points out in verse 45 that *God is as generous to the evil and unrighteous, as He is to the good and righteous – **and so must we!***

If the **LAW** is the **STRUCTURE** of society – and we believe in the rule of law; then **LOVE** should be the **LUBRICATION** of society – **all** our dealings with **ALL** people should be on the basis of **LOVE**.

8. So, if someone hits you and you offer the other cheek, what is the spirit behind your response? **LOVE!**

If someone wants your tunic, and you give him your coat,
what is the spirit behind your response? **LOVE!**

If your are forced to go one mile, but go two instead,
what is the spirit behind your response? **LOVE!**

9. Does this mean that Christians allow themselves to be trampled on? **NO!**

Do we have **rights**? You bet we do! **LAW** upholds our rights!

Do we have **responsibilities**? You bet we do! **LOVE** fulfills our responsibilities!

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

Sermon on the Mount Part 8 'Christians and Society' Matthew 5:13 - 16

1. Salt and Light.
2. Salt is significant in an environment of decay.
Light is significant in an environment of darkness.

Jesus is speaking about us as having an influence in the Dark and Decaying society in which we live.

You may want to share this funny story It does have a point.

In a 'Peanuts' cartoon, Peppermint Patty is talking to Charlie Brown saying, *"Guess what! The first day at school, and I got sent to the principle's office. It was your fault Charlie Brown!"* To which Charlie replied, *"My fault? How could it be my fault? Why do you say everything is my fault? She said, "You're my friend, aren't you? You should have been a better influence on me."*

Although Peppermint Patty is clearly trying to pass the buck here, there is something to what she is saying. Could it be that the World could say to the Christian Church, *"Hey! We are in a mess, and you carry some responsibility for this!"*

3. The scripture is very clear that this is not a future state, but a present state.
"Perishing" is a process, as when rubber perishes or metal rusts.
4. a. We **ISOLATE** ourselves from the world.
We keep away from the world and build walls of protection as we withdraw from the world.

Should we be separate from **worldliness**? **Yes** – Pride. Lust, greed etc.
Should we be separate from the **world of people** **No!**
- b. The other error is that we **INTEGRATE** ourselves with the world.

We become so like everyone else that we cease to be different. We become

Indistinguishable by adopting business ethics that are corrupt; we adopt sexual ethics that result in the church divorce rate being no different to that in the world; our attitude to telling lies is no different than the world.

Can you think of any other areas that Christians have become indistinguishable from the world?

If we are not different we are not being Christian!

5. The Lord wants us to **INFILTRATE** our perishing world!
Jesus did not pray for isolation for His disciples, but that they would be protected from the evil one. “So, My prayer is not that You take them out of it; My prayer is actually that We send them into it – infiltrate.”
6. a. **Corporately** - consider ways in which this is done.

Organize and campaign for a better world.
Expose, condemn and criticize things that are not of God.
There are no shortage of Christians to lobby against non-Christian legislation.

However, we have to be very careful here because, despite the attractiveness of this, there are two **Scriptural Reservations**.

1. We do not find any of this activity in the New Testament.

Never do we find the Apostle Paul or Peter or Jesus himself commenting on the corrupt government of the Roman Empire.

- * They did not send up resolutions to the Imperial court.
- * They did not organize petitions or political campaigns.

2. The primary function of the church is to preach the Gospel.

The alternative to ‘perishing life’ is **eternal life now!**

This is our primary function!

Jesus was a FRIEND of sinners – not an EXPOSER of sinners!

Yes – He did expose the religious hypocrisy of those who should have known better, **but He did not rant and rail against the evils of society. Why?**

Read John 12 v.47

Judging the world is not conducive to saving it!

That does not further the purposes of Jesus Christ!

- b. **Individually** - You, Peter, you Mary, you James, you Martha, you George, you Sally. Forget about everybody else. Forget whether you are part of some mass movement. You are the salt of the earth.”

7. Anger, Lust, Honesty & Truthfulness, and loving those who hate you.

WE cannot legislate these issues, or plan corporately, and yet they are of immense importance as they determine what kind of parent/neighbor/colleague we are; how we behave at work and other places.

Ask yourself – are others better people because of OUR influence.
Like grains of salt in a putrid environment each has its influence.

To encourage you, please remember that it is not a command ...”you are [to be] the salt of the earth.” But rather a promise “you ARE [with God’s help] the salt of the earth.” Be mindful of ALL that verse 13 says.

8. WE are not the light. We are just the conduits through which the light of God shines into the world. [see ‘Final Thoughts’]