

Questions

1. What was a key difference between the Pharisee's handling of God's Law and God's desire for man's handling of His Law?
2. In what ways are you often tempted to focus more on appearances and external obedience than on the desires and motives behind your actions? What's a verse that helps you think more carefully about this matter?
3. How would you help a young believer better understand Matthew 5:20 and Matthew 5:48? What about an unbeliever who thinks that such verses mean he or she has no hope? How do we, as believers, guard against simply dismissing Matthew 5:48 as hyperbole, and not taking it seriously?
4. We sometimes talk about sinful anger and righteous anger. The latter may be justified, but the former is always sinful. What might be an example of righteous anger? Under which category does most of your anger fall?
5. What are some common ways that you do what Jesus warned against in Matthew 5:22?
6. What's the tone Jesus set when He illustrated the need for peace and reconciliation in Matthew 5:23-26? Does that tone describe how you pursue peace and reconciliation? Why or why not?
7. Is there a fractured relationship in your life where you can still pursue peace and reconciliation?

For further reading: *Anger: Calming Your Heart* (2019) by Robert Jones.

A Small Book about a Big Problem: Meditations on Anger... (2017) by Edward Welch

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The King's Manifesto

The Sermon on the Mount

Everyone Who is Angry

Matthew 5:21-26

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September 5, 2021

In Matthew 5:21-26, Jesus began His condemnation of those who taught that outward appearances were more important than cultivating a heart of devotion to the Lord. He did so with six examples based on Old Testament commands. The first of those examples addressed man's battle with the emotion of anger.

The rabbis who taught God's Law focused almost entirely on externals, while God was concerned about man obeying from the heart.

What Jesus told the crowd in Matthew 5:48 was another way of saying what God had told His people more than a thousand years earlier (Leviticus 19:1-2).

Jesus exposes our tendency toward being concerned mostly with outward conformity that looks good to others. "I've never murdered anyone."

Jesus explains or teaches what righteousness looks like that exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus examines the internal heart obedience and honor that God's righteousness actually demands of us. "Are you angry with someone? Have you mocked someone?"