

Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Murder and Anger are Subject to Judgment

 Over the next 24 verses, which span this StudySheet and the next, Jesus will teach by making provocative statements that question perceptions of behavior and interrelationships.
As chapter 5 concludes Jesus provides a summary to His statements and implied questions. Please keep these verses 44-48 (↓) in mind as you answer the questions in this StudySheet.

Matthew 5:44-48 [The Message (MSG)]

⁴³⁻⁴⁷ “You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the supple moves of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. gives his best — the sun to warm and the rain to nourish — to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.

⁴⁸ “In a word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

Q1. If you live by the Law, will you “*be subject to judgment*”? Why?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17 [NIV-1984]

"You shall not murder.

 In verses 21, 27, 33, 38, and 43 Jesus repeats the phrase “*You have heard that it was said*”. Jesus is referring to the Ten Commandments and other teachings within the first five books of the Old Testament.

The Pharisees and teachers (scribes) of the law interpreted, for example, the Commandment “You shall not murder” at face-value in that a person should never, ever take a person’s life. Period. They would self-righteously claim that they had never murdered anyone – “I have never broken the Commandment!” (The irony. Within three short years, they will have Jesus killed.)

However, Jesus will teach that God will judge (discernment + consequence or punishment) the motives behind our thoughts. Even though we have never physically killed anyone, have we harbored murderous thoughts against

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

someone? Have we ever caused such deep emotional pain in someone that we hurt them spiritually?

While we seek forgiveness from God for sins we have committed, do we keep festering emotions locked-up within our heart; raging emotions directed at someone because they insulted us, betrayed us, hurt our pride, physically injured us, hurt someone we loved, stole from us, or lied about us? Do we want revenge? “Yes! I want him/her to feel my pain!”

Jesus will teach that as we seek forgiveness from Him, we, too, should strive to forgive others [[Matthew 5:23-24](#)] and to seek God’s help to instill a forgiving spirit within us. A spirit that no longer pursues revenge, but delights in the peace only God can give. Is it hard? Absolutely! Belief in Christ Jesus and His saving grace is not for wimps. Jesus declared, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” [[John 16:33](#)] Jesus has overcome the world! He is the victor! Our Savior ran the race and won!

This does not mean that we forget the hurt, but it does mean that we learn from the experience, and that our murderous motives for revenge are slowly replaced by forgiveness in which we seek changes within the wrong-doer: a changed heart, an empathetic awareness of the brutal hurt they caused us, and a personal vow to themselves to never hurt another person – like they hurt us. While we may never see the fruit of our prayers marked by changed behavior in the perpetrator, we must trust that the Lord ([Proverbs 3:5-6](#)) will cause change in the person.

Numbers 35:31 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Moreover, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall be put to death.

Genesis 9:6 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

“Whoever kills a human being will be killed by a human being [[judgment](#)]. This is because God made humans in his own image.”

²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca', is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Q2. ① When we speak to another person, do our words matter? ② Do we say things that we regret?

① Do our words matter? Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

② Do we regret? Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Q3. If I called someone a “fool”, did I do something wrong?

I I N ___ ___ L ___ ___ D HIM/HER.

1 Peter 3:9 [NIV-1984]

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Luke 6:31 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

“Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

Matthew 7:12 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

“Do for other people the same things you want them to do for you. This is the meaning of the law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets.

Q4. *But anyone who says, 'You fool!':* If we call someone a “Fool!”, do we say it in anger or affection?

What is the motive for calling a person a “Fool!”? Anger? Affection? Other?

Q5. Why is stating “You fool!” something for which we will be punished?

 **Definition:** *raca* (ˈrɑ:kə) adj

(Bible) a biblical word meaning 'worthless' or 'empty' [from Aramaic].

© 2014, HarperCollins Publishers. Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/raca>, accessed: 02/09/2026.

 **Raca:** This is a Syriac [a language in ancient Syria] word, expressive of great contempt. It comes from a verb signifying to be empty, vain; and hence, as a word of contempt, denotes senseless, stupid, shallow-brains. Jesus teaches here that to use such words is a violation of the spirit of the sixth commandment, and if indulged, may lead to a more open and dreadful infraction of that law. Children should learn that to use such words is highly offensive to God, for we must give an account for every idle word which we speak in the day of judgment [[Matthew 12:36](#)]. [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_timothy/2.htm, accessed: 02/10/2026.]

 **Definition:** foolish (foʊˈlɪʃ) adj.

1. Lacking or exhibiting a lack of good sense or judgment; silly: a foolish boy; a foolish purchase.
2. Capable of arousing laughter; absurd or ridiculous: a foolish grin.
3. Embarrassed; abashed: I feel foolish telling you this.
4. Insignificant; trivial: foolish little knickknacks.

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 **Definition:** fool (foʊl) n.

1. One who is deficient in judgment, sense, or understanding.
2. One who acts unwisely on a given occasion: *I was a fool to have quit my job.*
3. One who has been tricked or made to appear ridiculous; a dupe: *They made a fool of me by pretending I had won.*
4. Informal A person with a talent or enthusiasm for a certain activity: *a dancing fool; a fool for skiing.*
5. A member of a royal or noble household who provided entertainment, as with jokes or antics; a jester.
6. One who subverts convention or orthodoxy or varies from social conformity in order to reveal spiritual or moral truth: *a holy fool.*
7. A dessert made of stewed or puréed fruit mixed with cream or custard and served cold.
8. Archaic: A mentally deficient person; an idiot.

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1 Peter 3:9-12 [The Message (MSG)]

Summing up: Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. That goes for all of you, no exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless — that's your job, to bless. You'll be a blessing and also get a blessing. Whoever wants to embrace life and see the day fill up

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

with good, Here's what you do: Say nothing evil or hurtful; Snub evil and cultivate good; Run after peace for all you're worth. God looks on all this with approval, listening and responding well to what he's asked; But he turns his back on those who do evil things.

Q6. ***But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell:*** Is calling a person a "Fool!" a kind of evil that deserves special judgment (a special punishment)?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Matthew 12:31 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

[Jesus taught:] So, I tell you, people can be forgiven for every sin they do. And people can be forgiven for every bad thing they say. But if anyone speaks against the Holy Spirit, then he will not be forgiven.

Q7. ***But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell:*** ① Is Jesus specifically calling out the "You fool!" epithet, or is He using "You fool!" to represent all hurtful, insulting names and phrases that we can use to disparage another? ② Might the "You fool!" epithet represent all manner of sins like spoken words (or silence) or actions (or inaction)?

① "You fool!": Specifically? Or representative? Thoughts?

② Does "You fool!" represent sins in general? Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Q8. What would be some words that describe "offering your gift at the altar"?

①

③

②

④

Matthew 22:36-38 [NIV-1984]

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

³⁷ Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

 Commandments 1-4 detail how we are to worship and honor the Lord.

Deuteronomy 5:7; Exodus 20:3 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[Commandment #1 (↓) from the Deuteronomy passage.]

“You shall have no other gods before [or besides] me.

Deuteronomy 5:8-10; Exodus 20:4-6 [The Message (MSG)]

[Commandment #2 (↓) from the Deuteronomy passage.]

⁸⁻¹⁰ No carved gods [idols] of any size, shape, or form of anything whatever, whether of things that fly or walk or swim. Don't bow down to them and don't serve them because I am God, your God, and I'm a most jealous God. I hold parents responsible for any sins they pass on to their children to the third, and yes, even to the fourth generation. But I'm lovingly loyal to the thousands who love me and keep my commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:11; Exodus 20:7 [The Message (MSG)]

[Commandment #3 (↓) from the Deuteronomy passage.]

No using the name of God, your God, in curses or silly banter; God won't put up with the irreverent use of his name.

Q9. (Verse Deuteronomy 5:11 ↑) ① In everyday conversation, is it okay for us to say “Oh, my God!”? ② What should we say or do if we hear other people exclaim “Oh, my God!”?

①

②

 This commentator finds it ‘interesting’ that people in everyday conversation will exclaim “Oh, my God!” or “Jesus!” or other names associated with God the Father Almighty or Christ Jesus, but they will never exclaim “Mohammad!” or “Buddha!”.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Exodus 20:8-11 [The Message (MSG)]

[Commandment #4 (↓) from the Deuteronomy passage.]

¹²⁻¹⁵ No working on the Sabbath; keep it holy just as God, your God, commanded you. Work six days, doing everything you have to do, but the seventh day is a Sabbath, a Rest Day — no work: not you, your son, your daughter, your servant, your maid, your ox, your donkey (or any of your animals), and not even the foreigner visiting your town. That way your servants and maids will get the same rest as you. Don't ever forget that you were slaves in Egypt and God, your God, got you out of there in a powerful show of strength. That's why God, your God, commands you to observe the day of Sabbath rest.

Q10. Is the attitude (motives) of our worship important to God?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

Q11. *And there remember that your brother has something against you:* Who might be responsible for the ‘reminder’ about ‘your brother’?

 H Y S T

Q12. *First go and be reconciled to your brother:* Why is it important to God that we resolve conflict before worship? (Hint: see Matthew 22:37 ↑)

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Q13. (Verses 25 & 26) What did Jesus want us to learn from this teaching?

 “The sixth commandment of the Ten Commandments is clear enough: You shall not murder. Jesus, though, has elevated the commandment by revealing God’s intent for the hearts of His people: Don’t even be angry with your brother, and don’t in your anger call him a fool. Otherwise, you are liable for hell (Matthew 5:21–25 ↑).

“Jesus is showing that God expects His disciples to live for God in both their actions and in their attitudes. Anger is not exactly the same thing as murder, but it is just as much a sin. With that kind of standard, none of us can expect to be righteous enough for the kingdom of God.

“Christ’s final example was someone taken to court by an accuser; the wise thing to do when sued is to make every effort to make peace before the judge gets involved. Otherwise, the guilty party risks being thrown in prison for the wrongdoing. Jesus’ spiritual application is that a prison of sorts — hell — should be avoided at all costs by not wronging anyone or causing them to wrong us by provoking their anger.

“Now He adds, solemnly, that someone who is thrown into prison will never get out until they have paid the last penny in restitution for their wrongdoing. Coming up with cash from prison is difficult. Instead of risking it, Jesus tells His listeners to make things right [seek forgiveness] with everyone as quickly as possible.” [© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-26.html>, accessed: 02/12/2026.]

 Some commentators opine that verse 25 suggests that the Judge is God and the prison is Hell. This commentator

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

does not agree with that imagery, because verse 26 seems to provide hope (“until you have paid the last penny”), however small, for repayment or forgiveness in this life.

The Great White Throne Judgment dismisses any hope by stating, “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. [Revelation 20:12]”. And the final verdict, the ultimate punishment: “If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:15]”. It is absolute. At this point, there is no hope of reconciliation.

With the death of our physical bodies, the Heavenly books that contain our motives, thoughts, actions, inactions, words said and those not said, and sins done in public and those done in private – in other words the complete biography of our entire lives in this world – are closed. At the same time our spirits/souls are freed from our flesh-and-blood containers, and Believers are ushered into the presence of the Lord Jesus; nonbelievers and ‘fence-sitters’ join their like-minded associates in Hell where they will experience untold misery and separation from the unfathomable love and companionship of the Lord God Almighty and His Son Christ Jesus.

 A nonbiblical story – perhaps, you may have heard a version of it:

A politician died. His soul appeared before the pearly gates where he was greeted by Saint Peter. The politician breathed a sigh of relief and muttered, “Wow! I made it!”

Saint Peter said, “Welcome! We do not see many politicians here. Before you are allowed to enter, you must spend a day in Hell and a day in Heaven, and then you will be asked to choose where you would like to spend eternity.”

The politician said, “Okay, I know I will choose Paradise, but I’m up for the challenge.”

Saint Peter ushered the politician over to an elevator door that slid open. He entered, the door closed, and the politician felt weightless as the elevator began its descent . . . down . . . and down it went. Finally, the elevator began to slow, stopped, and the door slid open.

He cautiously stuck his head out the door and he saw a large party, reminiscent of a campaign rally, so colorful, so much energy, so much fun. From what he had heard about Hell when he was alive, this was disturbingly awesome! He approached the party and spotted Satan – he cannot be missed. Then, he spotted a number of old friends – and everyone appeared to be having the time of their lives. They ate exquisite foods and drank the best wines he had ever tasted.

The marvelous day ended so quickly; it seemed to him that he had just arrived and in a blink of an eye it was time for him to go. He entered the elevator, albeit reluctantly. While the elevator was ascending, he thought about the great time he had, and said to himself “I cannot remember ever experiencing such a wonderful celebration. It Was. Incredible!”

The doors slid open and he was greeted by Saint Peter, who said, “Now, we would like you to experience a day in Paradise.”

The politician spent the day sitting on clouds, playing the harp, and worshipping in a vast cathedral. He was surprised to find that he had the talent to play the harp and a voice that sounded pleasant when he sang. It was peaceful, and love was all around.

The day ended and he appeared before Saint Peter, who asked, “Now that you have experienced a day in Heaven and a day in Hell, in which place would you like to spend eternity?”

The politician thought and finally said, “Hell was fun! It wasn’t at all what I had been taught . . . I’m going to select Hell.”

The politician immediately found himself in Hell. One moment he was looking into the piercingly blue eyes of an obviously disappointed Saint Peter, and in the next . . . he started to cough, a deep, dry cough that came from deep within his chest. He looked around. He was immediately appalled at the gray choking atmosphere, the sickening heat, and the sight of his friends dressed in dirty, torn, disheveled clothing, slumped over rocks that they were hammering to no apparent purpose. All he heard was coughing and the clanging of hammers. No conversation. No camaraderie. No banter. No chatter. Endless. Pointless.

The politician was stunned. He looked at Satan and exclaimed, “What happened!?!?!? When I was here, this place was grand and my friends were well-dressed and happy!”

Satan replied, “Two days ago, we were campaigning. Today you voted.”

 You the student may wonder why this nonbiblical story is included within this study. While this story is not Biblical, it does illustrate that some nonbelievers in the secular world believe in judgment, or karma (cause and effect, or ‘what goes around, comes around’), or good and evil, or Heaven and Hell, or even the existence of Satan.

Therefore, by praying a quick ‘arrow’ prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance and for the person, with whom you are conversing, to have a receptive heart, the Believer can open-up a conversation about Heaven and Hell. Simple

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

questions. Listen to their answers. Their answers will shape follow-up questions. And perhaps the nonbeliever will begin the journey to make a profound decision – a simple decision to just believe and accept the saving grace of Christ Jesus – which is the only way to enter Heaven; not by works to be good enough, but by faith because Jesus did the work for us as a final sin sacrifice, once for all.

By the way, you might ask, “Why ask questions? Why not just tell them the Truth?” Good question.

When Our Lord began a conversation with new people – potential believers – He began the conversation with a provocative question (or statement) and then He might follow-up with another question or a challenging statement. Jesus wanted to cause the person to question the status quo and to open themselves up to new ideas. We must meet them where they are, before they are willing to join us where we are.

John 4:5-12 [NIV-1984]

⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"
⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

[And the conversation simply blossomed from Jesus' first question: "Will you give me a drink?" And many villagers from Sychar came to believe!]

Matthew 8:23-26 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus even asked questions of His disciples.]

²³ Then [Jesus] got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴ Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

²⁵ The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" [The question from these experienced sailors/fishermen was implied: "Won't you save us from this terrible storm?"]

²⁶ He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

Matthew 9:27-30a [NIV-1984]

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

²⁸ When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

"Yes, Lord," they replied.

²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; ^{30a} and their sight was restored.

Matthew 11:7-10 [NIV-1984]

⁷ As John's [the Baptist] disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written: " 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

John 3:1-5 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus began His conversation with Nicodemus by making a provocative statement that evoked questions.]

¹ Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

³ In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit [born again]."

Lust and Adultery are sins

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'

Q14. **Do not commit adultery:** Why did God give humankind this law?

Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 [NIV-1984]

"You shall not commit adultery.

 **Definition:** adultery (ə-dül'tə-rē, -trē) noun

Consensual sexual intercourse between a married person and a person other than the spouse.

American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2016 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/adultery>. Accessed: 02/15/2026.

 **Do not commit adultery:** Next to the duty of respecting a man's life ["Do not murder"] is placed that of respecting his domestic peace and honour. Adultery is an invasion of the household, a destruction of the bond which unites the family, a dissolution of that contract which is the main basis of social order. It was forbidden by all civilised communities, and in uncivilised ones frequently punished with death. The Mosaic [of Moses] enactments on the subject are peculiar chiefly in the absolute equality on which they place the man and the woman. Adulterers are as hateful as adulteresses, and are as surely to be put to death ([Leviticus 20:10](#); [Deuteronomy 22:22-24](#); etc.). The man who acts treacherously against "the wife of his covenant" is as great a sinner as the woman who breaks the marriage bond ([Malachi 2:14-16](#)). There is "no respect of persons" and no respect of sexes with God. [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/20-14.htm>, accessed: 02/15/2026.]

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

Q15. **Do not commit adultery:** Throughout early human history, women did not have many, if any, legal rights. Daughters were considered property of the father and then, when grown, his daughter became her husband's property. So, does this commandment provide women with additional protection?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

.....

.....

 “As he did before, Jesus will point out that it's not "good enough" to simply avoid physical sin. What we think in our hearts leads to what we do with our bodies—so honoring this commandment means something more than not having sex outside of marriage. God's intent is for people to control what happens in their hearts and minds well before the opportunity for physical adultery becomes available.” [© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-27.html>, accessed: 02/16/2026.]

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Q16. **Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully:** How do you define “lustfully” (ogle)?

.....

.....

Q17. **Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully:** ① Is this gender-specific? ② Or do women lust?

① Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

.....

② Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

.....

Q18. **Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully:** Does this mean that I should quit my job, because men and women work together?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

.....

.....

 **Definition:** lust (lʌst) n.
1. intense sexual desire or appetite.

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

2. uncontrolled or illicit sexual desire.
3. a passionate or overwhelming desire or craving (usu. fol. by for): a lust for power.
4. ardent enthusiasm; zest; relish: a lust for life.

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<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/lust>. Accessed: 02/16/2026.

 **Definition:** ogle (ō'gəl, ô'gəl) *n.*

A sustained look or stare, especially a desirous one.

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 **Definition:** leer (lir)

To look with a sidelong glance, indicative especially of sexual desire or sly and malicious intent.

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 When this commentator studied these verses and the meaning behind them, I was struck by the number of synonyms in the English language that are similar to “lustfully”; words such as covet, ogle, leer, stare, drool, smirk, leech, eye-up, make sheep’s eyes, desire, give a lewd look, and on and on. It is almost as if society attempts to minimize the harm of “lust” by using words that mask that harm — putting ‘lipstick on a pig’.

Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21 [NIV-1984]

[The last commandment]

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

 **Definition:** covet (ˈkʌv ɪt)

1. to desire wrongfully, inordinately, or without due regard for the rights of others: to covet another's property.
2. to wish for, esp. eagerly.
3. to have an inordinate or wrongful desire.

Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/covet>. Accessed: 02/16/2026.

 “Who could be so righteous?”

“In part, Jesus is pushing that very point: that nobody is righteous enough. All are sinful. At the same time, He is showing the expectation Christians ought to have for their inner, private lives. Christ is leaving no room for legalism or technicalities — He is defining sin as something which begins and continues in the heart.

“Despite common misunderstanding, Jesus is not saying that all attraction is immediately sinful. The phrase used in Greek here is *pros to epithymēsai autēn*. This strongly implies something deliberate: an intentional, considered choice. “Noticing” that someone is attractive is not a sin; looking with sexual intent, fantasizing, or leering — what in English might be called “ogling” — certainly is. This phrase implies someone engaging their imagination in lust.

“Some scholars suggest this phrase can also imply an additional possibility: looking at a woman in order to get her to lust. This would infer seduction: looking — or behaving — towards that person in a way that tempts them to inappropriate actions or thoughts. Whether that is the literal intent of Jesus' words here, the concept fits in the scheme of His overall point. The desire for adultery, even if it fails to succeed, is just as much a sin as accomplishing it. In either case, it's still about what is going on in the person's heart and not just the action.

“Modern readers should also note that while Jesus phrases this — and other statements — using references to men and women, the spiritual principles apply to both sexes. [© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-28.html>, accessed: 02/16/2026.]

2 Samuel 11:1-5 [NIV-1984]

¹ In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, [King] David sent Joab out with the king's men

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her.

The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.)

Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

Q19. *Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully:* As you read 2 Samuel 11:1-5 (↑), who is at fault:

① King David or ② Bathsheba?

① David: Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

② Bathsheba: Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)



King David was beloved by his subjects, but David was flawed. In the first twelve words of this passage, we read that King David should have gone to the battlefield to support his subjects (his soldiers) as they laid-down their lives in a war he considered important: "*In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war . . . David remained in Jerusalem*". Yet, King David remained at home in comfort, sleeping in his bed, with plenty to eat, with any number of servants waiting to satisfy his every whim.

2 Samuel 11:2 (↑) states that David got up from his bed – meaning it was later in the night and dark (not black of night, but probably deep dusk – it was difficult to read by flickering candle light). His imposing palace overlooked all the surrounding land, including the village that housed the families of those who served him in the palace, as well as the soldiers in his armies and wealthier farmers.

Homes in the villages were generally constructed with flat rooftops surrounded by a parapet (a low protective wall along the edge of the roof) that extended their living spaces. The low wall provided privacy – where a family could bathe or sleep in the coolness of the night – free from the stares of people on the street or the surrounding rooftops of other homes. Before starting her bath, Bathsheba may have looked around and found no one standing on the palace walls or on other parapets. She was safe in her concealment. Her modesty was intact. Yet, unbeknownst to her, the King couldn't sleep, went out on the castle roof, and noticed her.

King David should have recognized his obligation to his subjects, averted his eyes, and walked to another part of his palace. Yet, he gawked at the woman, noted her beauty, engaged his lustful thoughts, and commanded, "Bring the woman to me!"

Devoted subjects could not refuse their king. Bathsheba could not say "no!". So, this sin of adultery was on King David, not Bathsheba. King David looked, then he looked again, he lusted, he acted, he sinned (raped), and then sinned some more (he caused her husband Uriah to be killed). His 'little' act of lust led to some atrocious sins for which God judged!

Today, we still ask, "What was the woman wearing?" "What did she do to provoke (or entice) the man?" We never seem to get around to the more important questions: "Why didn't the man respect the woman's boundaries?" "Why didn't the son's parents teach their son to respect boundaries?"

Q20. (Personal not to be discussed in a group) Did you change your answer to the previous David/Bathsheba question?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Proverbs 5:3-14 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

[King David's son Solomon is considered the author of Proverbs.]

³ The words of another man's wife may seem sweet as honey.

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

- Her words may be as pleasant as olive oil.
4 But in the end she will bring you sorrow.
She will cause you pain like a two-edged sword.
5 She is on the way to death.
Her steps are headed straight to the grave.
6 She gives no thought to life.
She does not know that her ways are wrong.
7 Now, my sons, listen to me.
Don't ignore what I say.
8 Stay away from such a woman.
Don't even go near the door of her house.
9 If you do, you will give your riches to others.
And the best years of your life will be given to someone who is cruel.
10 Strangers will enjoy your wealth.
And what you worked so hard for will go to someone else.
11 You will groan at the end of your life.
Then your health will be gone.
12 Then you will say, "I hated self-control!
I would not listen when I was corrected!
13 I would not listen to my teachers.
I paid no attention to what they taught me.
14 I have come very close to being completely ruined
in front of a whole group of people."

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Q21. *If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away:* Does Jesus really want me to destroy my eye, because I simply saw a man/woman?

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

Q22. *If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away:* Does Jesus really want me to destroy my eye, because I stared at (or ogled) my friend’s wife, or my friend’s husband?

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)



“In this verse, Jesus uses a common technique. This is formally named hyperbole [hy-per-bō-lee], or ‘exaggerating for effect.’ When a mother says, ‘I’ve told you a million times,’ or a manager says, ‘we’re going to blow up our business model,’ those are examples of hyperbole. Those who hear or read those words understand them to be non-literal and meant to make a point about the situation at hand.

“What’s interesting about this statement is that Jesus is already overturning cultural assumptions. Saying lust is adultery of the heart, and anger is murder of the heart, would seem extreme and unsettling to His audience. At first, some might have wondered if Jesus really meant this as a literal, physical command. Quickly, though, it becomes obvious — especially in context with His other teaching — that this is not meant as a literal command.

“However, Jesus is making an important point about how dangerous our thoughts and desires can be. Being led by our urges, rather than keeping our desires under control, is a path to destruction. In that vein, He says that it’s worth losing an eye rather than letting that eye drag someone into sin, and by extension into hell. Jesus will make a similar comment about a person’s hands ([Matthew 5:30](#) ↓). The immediate context of this remark is the idea of lust: ‘looking’ at someone with sexual intent.

“Where Jesus is certainly not exaggerating is the idea that ‘looking with lustful intent’ is enough to earn someone hell. God’s will for His people is that they do not engage in lust. The kingdom of heaven requires righteousness that is perfect ([Matthew 5:20](#) ↑), just as God is perfect. A major aspect of Jesus’ gospel is that nobody can be righteous enough on their own to earn a place in the kingdom of heaven. His mission on earth included dying on the cross as the final blood sacrifice for sin. Without that covering and being declared righteous by God through faith in Christ, nobody will be saved ([Romans 3:21–31](#)).” [© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-29.html>, accessed: 02/17/2026.]

Q23. *If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away:* Adultery is defined as “Consensual sexual intercourse between a married person and a person other than the spouse [ibid. ↑]”. Lust is defined as “intense sexual desire [ibid. ↑]”. BRIEFLY, are teenagers bound by the same expectations (or rules, e.g., adultery) as husbands and wives? [Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”]

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Q24. *If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away:* In both verses 29 & 30, Jesus prescribes horrendous, life-altering solutions for sin. What is Jesus teaching, with these severe examples of hyperbole?



I'm fairly certain that chapters have been written about the meanings and implications behind these examples that Jesus shared with His audiences and Matthew then recorded for the rest of us.

Like an attorney in a court of law, Jesus is building a case in which the objective is to be righteous (sinless) before God. In these verses Jesus is describing how a person remains sinless. Do not sin. How is a person to be righteous? Do not sin. And following the Law is not enough, a person's motives also accuse.

The people in Jesus' audiences were under the Law, including the Ten Commandments, the Torah, the sacrificial system, Jewish traditions, and so on. (Jesus had not yet been crucified.) Jesus pointed-out that lust for a friend's spouse is adultery, and to eliminate that sin a man should "gouge out his eye". Or a person suffers from kleptomania – it is best to cut-off a hand than to steal (sin). Jesus' suggested remedies are harsh! Terrible! But . . . separation from God is worse. Sin separates the sinner from God. Only by obeying the Law each and every minute of each and every day, can a person remain righteous.

God does not measure a person's worth by wealth, or by gender, or by goodness. He does not measure goodness by comparing a person's behavior to a neighbor, or a grade based on a curve. A person's righteousness is not based on personal feelings of justice. God grades on a pass/fail basis: did the person sin, even once in their lifetime? Then, the person earns a 'fail' grade and is unrighteous, a sinner. Period. No excuses. No arguments. No deflections. He is a sinner. She is a sinner. There is no hope for those under the Law.

Sin is serious business and guarantees judgment!

As we students continue our study of the Gospel of Matthew, we will read that Jesus continues to press His case and will provide the solution to sin. He will argue that He is the only way to the Father. Faith, belief in Him, will cleanse a Believer from the sins they committed in this life and they will appear righteous (sinless) before the Father.



An analogy.

I died, and I'm standing before the Judge – the Lord God Almighty. The prosecuting attorney is Satan and, while he paces back-and-forth before the Judge's bench, he lists every one of my sins in excruciating detail emphasizing the hurt I had caused to friends, Believers, acquaintances, and people I had said I'd loved. I am standing, downcast, and feeling deep, sorrowful shame as I listen to all of the sins I had committed; the people I had hurt; the people to whom I had failed to minister or to share the Gospel of Salvation; and the impact and consequences of my words, actions, and inactions upon those people. I am in anguish – weeping – over the pain I caused. Eventually, Satan completes his recitation of the list of my sins, and rests his case.

The Judge turns to my attorney Christ Jesus and asks Him for my defense.

Christ Jesus simply states, "My Father, the list of charges, the sins, is accurate. The defendant is guilty. The defense rests."

The Judge then states, "My judgment is just. The defendant sinned. The consequence for sin is death. Are there any last words?"

Christ Jesus quietly addresses the Judge, "I know this person by name. Through my crucifixion, I paid the penalty for this person's sins. Please free this person."

The Judge turns to me and I see in His eyes such a deep, unbounded, everlasting love. He looks deeply into my

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

eyes and says, "My judgment is final. My judgment is true. I have adopted you as My child. Your sins are forgiven. You are free to go."
[As retold by Galen Watje, 07/20/2023]

Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Divorce and Adultery

³¹"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'

Q25. *A certificate of divorce*: What rights did women generally have at this time in history?

Q26. *A certificate of divorce*: Why might God have instituted "a certificate of divorce"?

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 [NIV-1984]

[The author of the Books of the Torah, which includes Deuteronomy, is generally attributed to Moses. Deuteronomy is thought to have been written about 1400 years before Christ Jesus was born.]

¹ If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, ² and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, ³ and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, ⁴ then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

 "God seems to allow the practice of divorce for Israel in [Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#) (↑) if a man decided he found something 'indecent' about his wife. Jesus will say later in Matthew that God only allowed this (through Moses) because Israel's men were stubborn: 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.' ([Matthew 19:8](#)). Culturally, a certificate of divorce provided protection for a woman. It gave her legal standing to remarry. . . The man's legal standing to remarry was simply assumed.

"It's likely Israel's religious leaders permitted the practice of men giving their wives certificates of divorce for little or no reason. Jesus cites the teaching of these leaders, which falls far short of the Old Testament law."

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Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Q27. (Verse 32) If you were a self-righteous Pharisee, how might you have responded to Jesus' statement?



The Pharisees didn't like Jesus' teachings. They questioned Him as if they have the authority to question the Lord; their exchange is recorded in Matthew 19, which we students will discuss at a future time. Additionally, Mark recorded in his Gospel this parallel exchange:

Mark 10:2-12 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

² Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick him. They asked, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?"

³ Jesus answered, "What did Moses command you to do?"

⁴ They said, "Moses allowed a man to write out divorce papers and send her away."

⁵ Jesus said, "Moses wrote that command for you because you refused to accept God's teaching.

⁶ But when God made the world, 'he made them male and female.' ⁷ 'So, a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife. ⁸ And the two people will become one body.' So, the people are not two, but one. ⁹ God has joined the two people together. So, no one should separate them."

¹⁰ Later, the followers and Jesus were in the house. They asked Jesus again about the question of divorce. ¹¹ He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her. ¹² And the woman who divorces her husband and marries another man is also guilty of adultery."

Q28. (Verse 32) Do you think that the Jewish religious leaders ① taught God's intent for marriage? ② Or did they teach a watered-down, perverted version?

① Godly marriage? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

② Perverted version? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Q29. (Verse 32) If God provided additional protection to women in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (↑), what does verse 32 provide?



"Jesus once again demonstrates God's true and original intent. In this case, God means for marriages to be for life. Rather than agreeing that marriages can or should be dissolved for petty reasons, Christ describes divorces motivated by something less than sexual immorality to be invalid. That's not to say this is the one and only reason of any kind that might justify a divorce. The primary point is that a man may not legitimately divorce his wife unless

Lesson 7: Matthew 5:21-32

she violates the marriage through adultery or some other sexual immorality.

“Because the divorce is invalid, the man is guilty of causing his wife to commit adultery when she remarries another man. In the same way, a man who marries a woman whose divorce was not for a valid reason also becomes guilty of adultery. From Jesus' view, false divorces — no matter how legal the religious leaders say they are — lead to more and more adultery. He was shockingly clear about the penalty for adultery and lust ([Matthew 5:27–30](#)).

“Jesus' teaching here is not simply a reflection of some obscure, fussy rule. It's because God instituted marriage, and deeply values it for its own sake. Marriage is not only the fundamental relationship of every culture; it is meant to be a representation of Christ and the church ([Genesis 2:24](#); [Ephesians 5:25–33](#)).” [© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-32.html>, accessed: 02/21/2026.]

Genesis 2:20^b-25 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

^{20b} But Adam did not find a helper that was right for him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to sleep very deeply. While the man was asleep, God took one of the ribs from the man's body. Then God closed the man's skin at the place where he took the rib. ²² The Lord God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then the Lord brought the woman to the man.

²³ And the man said, “Now, this is someone whose bones came from my bones. Her body came from my body. I will call her ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of man.”

²⁴ So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife. And the two people will become one body.

²⁵ The man and his wife were naked, but they were not ashamed.

Revelation 19:6-9 [NIV-1984]

⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

⁹ Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

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