

Matthew 5:21-26 ENCORE

- 1) Read Matthew 5:21a; what did Jesus mean by this statement?
- 2) How important are human interpersonal relationships to God?
- 3) God wants His people to be problem solvers; do you agree? Why or why not?
- 4) Read Matthew 5:21-22 which is worse in God's eyes murder or sinful anger?
- 5) How is sinful anger like murder in your relationships?
- 6) Read Matthew 5:23-24; which is more important to God; your giving or solving relational problems?
- 7) If you are a good giver or you serve a lot does that excuse you from solving problems?
- 8) "Solving problems is an act of worship" do you agree? Why or why not?
- 9) How many of these statements are biblical ways to deal with problems:
  - "It really doesn't bother me that much"
  - "I just let things blow over"
  - "We usually just get over it"
  - "Let sleeping dogs lie"
  - "I don't want to make waves"
  - "She is so thin skinned anyway"
  - "If I talk to her she will just get angrier"
  - "Nothing I say will make any difference"
  - "The situation is hopeless"
  - "I just smile and pretend everything is ok"
  - "I could never forgive them"
  - "They offended me; I'll never talk to them again"
  - "He hurt me and I want him to hurt"
  - "The other person will never hear my side anyway"
  - "It was all his fault, if he wants to reconcile he has to come to me"
  - "That's the kind of thing pastors and deacons do"
- 10) How might you justify disobedience in the area of problem solving?
- 11) "Problems are for solving" how can you make that statement part of your life?
- 12) Discuss the process (Matthew 18:15)
  - a) Go to your brother
  - b) Clearly frame the offense "tell him his fault"
  - c) Seek repentance "If he hears" – indicates repentance and willingness to change.
  - d) Extend forgiveness "you have gained your brother." See also Luke 17:3-4
  - e) Press on to restoration – the relationship is as it was before the sin.

## **Matthew 6:1-18 LA**

**Monday (Matthew 6:1-4)** This verse introduces the section on the forms of religious righteousness and applies to each of the three illustrations in 6:2-18. The story is told of an eastern ascetic holy man who covered himself with ashes as a sign of humility and regularly sat on a prominent street corner of his city. When tourists asked permission to take his picture, the mystic would rearrange his ashes to give the best image of destitution and humility. A great deal of religion amounts to nothing more than rearranging religious “ashes” to impress the world with one’s supposed humility and devotion. The problem, of course, is that the humility is a sham, and the devotion is to self, not to God. Such religion is nothing more than a game of pretense, a game at which the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day were masters. Because their religion was mostly an act, and a mockery of God’s true revealed way for His people, Jesus’ most blistering denunciations were reserved for them. – John MacArthur

**Tuesday (Matthew 6:5-8)** No religion has ever had a higher standard and priority for prayer than Judaism. As God’s chosen people the Jews were the recipients of His written Word, “entrusted with the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2). God spoke directly to Abraham and to many of his descendants, and they had spoken directly to Him. No other people, as a race or as a nation, has ever been so favored by God or had such direct communication with Him. Of all people, they should have known how to pray. But they did not like every other aspect of their religious life, their praying had been corrupted and perverted by rabbinic tradition. Most Jews were completely confused about how to pray as God wanted. – John MacArthur

**Wednesday (Matthew 6:9-13)** God’s supreme purpose for prayer, the purpose beyond all other purposes, is to glorify Himself. Although nothing benefits a believer more than prayer, the purpose in praying must first of all be for the sake of God, not self. Prayer is, above all, an opportunity for God to manifest His goodness and glory. An old saint said, “True prayer brings the mind to the immediate contemplation of God’s character and holds it there until the believer’s soul is properly impressed.” Jesus affirmed the purpose of prayer when He said, “And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified” (John 14:13). – John MacArthur

**Thursday (Matthew 6:13)** Temptation is a common experience of every human being, Christian or not. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that temptations are “common to man.” How we deal with the battle of temptation is a mark of the genuineness of our faith or our lack of it. The trails that the Lord allows into our lives to strengthen us can also become temptations. They can be solicitations to evil rather than a means to spiritual growth. Every difficult thing that comes into my life either strengthens me because I obey God and stay confident in His care and power, or leads me to doubt God and disobey His Word. Every trial has the potential to become a temptation. The difference is how you respond to it. – John MacArthur

**Friday (Matthew 6:14-15)** God ties His forgiving you to how you choose to forgive others. Wow! That puts some serious consequences on our actions. It is like God is saying to us – if you will not forgive others why should I forgive you? Jesus taught this in other places, like in Matthew 18:22-35, where He explained that we have been forgiven so much that we should always forgive others. The apostle Paul gave us the command to forgive one another just as God has forgiven us in Christ (Ephesians 4:32). This is very serious indeed!

**Saturday (Matthew 6:16-18)** This passage is yet another about hypocrisy in religion. Fasting was never meant to be a sign to others that you are super-spiritual. In fact if you were really doing it for the right reasons no one else would need to know about it. Fasting is a good thing to do, but it is only helpful and useful if you do it for the right reason, so that you can draw near to God, and to assist you in prayer. The summary for this week would be something like this; God is not impressed by your religious shows; He wants your whole heart!