



## **“God’s Word and Your Heart”**

Matthew 5:17-30

**Big Idea:** Knowing and doing God’s Word is the key to being salt and light for Jesus.

Truths about God’s Word and your heart:

**God’s Word is the key to being salt and light for Jesus because Jesus is the who, what, and why of Scripture (17-18).**

Take a minute to go back and to read through Matthew 5:1-12. Jesus’ words in these verses were radical. His concept of blessing didn’t line-up with the world’s concept of blessing. In fact, His concept of blessing didn’t even seem to line-up with the concept of blessing that the religious leaders of the day taught and followed. The disciples must have thought that they were hearing a call that was brand new and that must be a replacement for everything that they had heard before. Perhaps to be salt and light in the world, preserving God’s design for life and revealing God’s truth to the world, the disciples would have to forget about everything that came before Jesus, starting from scratch with what was new. It’s possible that these were some of the thoughts that were going through the minds of the disciples, but what’s not possible is to ignore that Jesus didn’t ignore the critical and continuing role of God’s Word in the lives of the disciples. God’s Word wasn’t being replaced. God’s Word was being fulfilled in Jesus and by Jesus! Jesus was the who, what, and why of the Old Testament, and Jesus made it clear that God’s Word in the Old Testament was still God’s Word that day — and still today! For followers of Jesus, God’s Word in its entirety is the key to being salt and light for Jesus because Jesus is the who, what, and why of Scripture.

1. Today, there are some people who look at the Old Testament as irrelevant and outdated. Why? Is there anything wrong with this view of the Old Testament based on the words of Jesus in these verses? Discuss.
2. What does Jesus mean in saying that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament?
3. What is the “all” to be accomplished?
4. How should these words of Jesus impact the way that we read and understand the Old Testament?

**When it comes to God’s Word, you are called to not just share God’s Word but also to do God’s Will (19-20).**

Jesus reinforced the importance of God’s Word in the lives of the disciples in a simple way: He taught them that God highly valued obedience — great and small — in the lives of His children. He promised them that those who obeyed and taught others to obey God’s simplest commands would be greatly honored in the Kingdom of Heaven. He went on to tell them that if their righteousness did not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, that they would never enter the Kingdom of Heaven! But how could that be possible? How could they exceed the righteous of the Pharisees who tried to obey the law and the hundreds of rules that they added to the law? Of course, they couldn’t apart for God’s grace in Jesus Christ, but Jesus’ words in verse 20 can be understood in relationship to what He said in verse 19. The problem

with the Scribes and the Pharisees was that they taught the commands of God, but their hearts were far from surrendered to doing the Will of God. They taught God's Word, but they didn't do God's Word as God had designed and desired. In fact, the religious leaders led others not to do God's Word because of their witness in their words and actions. In other words, Jesus was telling His disciples that teaching God's Word must line-up with a life that lives in obedience to God's Word.

1. In verse 19, how does Jesus emphasize the importance of studying and knowing God's Word?
2. Why does Jesus connect teaching and doing in verse 19? Why does Jesus connect teaching and doing with leading others to do the same?
3. Jesus said the words in verse 20 before the disciples understood the Gospel, so how did they understand these words of Jesus?
4. How can your small group help each other teach and do God's Word on a week-to-week basis? Discuss a plan to do this in the coming week, reteaching what you've learned today.
5. In what ways do you need to "do" what God's Word is teaching you today?

### **In doing God's Will, the motive of your heart matters most to God (21-30).**

Because God's Word had been misunderstood, abused, and wrongly taught by the Scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus began to show His disciples how the Old Testament was still God's Word for them today and how the heart is at the heart of understanding and obeying God's Word in their lives. The first two illustrations do exactly this, dealing with the issue of murder and adultery, which are both included in the ten commandments. In both cases, the point Jesus makes is that the motive of the act matters most to God! Even if someone doesn't or hasn't committed the act of murder or adultery, if they desire it in their hearts, then they are guilty before God. In other words, living in obedience to God isn't about someone blindly following a bunch of rules; rather, obedience is about someone desiring to live for God to glorify Him through willing obedience to Him. There are some implications that flow out of these illustrations, including the following two. First, *our heart towards others impacts our worship to God* (23-24). Jesus made it clear that our relationship with others affects our relationship with God and His acceptance of our worship to Him. So we need to get things right with others so that we can be right with God. We also need to get things right with others because getting things right with others allows for grace instead of justice in our relationships with others (25-26). Second, we need to *deal with sinful heart issues in a final way in our lives* (29-30). Jesus used hyperbole to make the point that because sin is serious and because sin seriously damages our relationship with God and with others, we need to deal with sin in a way that doesn't leave any room for sin to win. Cut sin off; throw sin away; and eliminate the things that contribute to sin in our lives.

1. Discuss the implications of what Jesus lays out in these verses? How does this change the reality of sin in your life? How should it impact the way that we view sin and guilt?
2. Have you ever experienced or are you experiencing a disconnect in your worship because of an unresolved issue with someone in your life? If so, share? If this is happening now in your life, pray for that situation with your group. In relationship to the person you're in conflict with, send that person a text now or make plans to meet and to talk with them later this week.
3. In verses 25-26, Jesus' advice lays out the path to grace in our relationship with others, which is often much better than getting justice — what we deserve — from others. Is there anyone you need to extend grace to this week?
4. Make a list of sinful heart issues that a lot of people struggle with in life. As a group, discuss strategies for cutting off, throwing away, and eliminating these heart issues. Pray for one another that Jesus will have victory over these things in your lives!