

Matthew 5:21-32
Murder, Divorce, Adultery

Warm Up

Why is it that our most popular TV shows, films and even theatre, centre themselves around the darker side of human behaviour? What does that say about us?

Background and context

NB: Please note this study is written without contact with Derek Page who preached on it on Sunday.

Jesus goes straight for the heart in this section. He deals with human behaviours and reveals that their origins are in our mind, therefore we need to control our minds if we wish to control our actions. In Jesus' day divorce was easy: a simple certificate, written and handed out. If your wife burnt the toast or made your eggs too runny, then divorce her! Jesus challenges this attitude.



Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity

READ Matthew 5:21-31. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. Jesus uses the phrase 'you have heard that it was said..' What was He referring to? Can you find these references? Have a go. Don't be afraid to Google!
2. Murder is a dreadful crime, but what does Jesus say about the actions and thoughts prior to murder? Where does murder originate?
3. **Read v23-26.** How are we to prevent murderous thoughts developing in our mind?
4. Why might restoring relationships be a problem for some people?
5. **Read v28.** Is this a prohibition on admiring or fancying another person? What if you are single? What does this verse mean in practice?
6. **Read v29-30.** I am not sure Jesus wants us to self mutilate, so how are we to interpret these verses?
7. **Read v31-32.** What is Jesus getting at here? Should we take this literally? How does it compare to Mark 10:1-12 and Luke 16:18.

Discipleship and Application



8. It seems Jesus wants us to focus on the inner life we lead, not just the outward life. How can we improve our inner conversations and thoughts?
9. Jesus often spoke figuratively (v29). How can we be clear on what Jesus means when He teaches in such mixed ways?



Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.