

Matthew 5:33-48
Honesty, Generosity and Love

Warm Up

What was the playground promise you made to prove you told the truth? Did it work? Were you always truthful? What was the worst act of revenge you did as a child? Maybe on a sibling?

Background and context

Jesus teaches us six things that lead to perfection and make us more righteous than the Pharisees. The first three; seeking peace, purity, and faithfulness in relationships were dealt with last week. The next three focus on honesty, generosity and love. In truth these teachings reveal how imperfect we are and how much we need the Holy Spirit to change us. They reveal our natural inclination to lie, be vengeful and be limited with our love to others. They are hard hitting teachings.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



READ Matthew 5:33-48. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. Look up these verses. Exod 20:7 Deut 6:13 Lev 19:12 Num 30:2. What do they suggest about the seriousness of a vow or oath?
2. What does it say about human nature if we have to make an oath in order for someone else to be sure we will keep a promise?
3. A simple yes or no is what Jesus wants from us. How can we ensure that others see us as trustworthy and reliable? Why is it so important to Jesus?
4. **Read v38-41.** Retaliation and revenge are not options for us. How should we react when we are the victim? Why does Jesus want this reaction from us?
5. Why is selfless generosity such a challenge for many people? Even Christians!
6. If we are to hold loosely to possessions and wealth, what should we value?
7. **Read v42-48.** Why is unlimited love for others something we should aim to achieve?
8. How can we overcome our natural desire to love only those who love us?

Discipleship and Application



9. Without embarrassment to others, who are the people who you completely trust to be honest? Why?
10. What do you need to do to rid yourself of the selfish desires for revenge we may harbour? Even if we never act on them.



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.