



# Kingdom Culture

Sunday, February 21, 2021 – Bruce Enns

“Loving those close to you” (Matthew 5:21-32)

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

(These are to be used personally, with family, or with your Small Group)

The Sermon on the Mount is a radical invitation into kingdom living - this is the nature of what life in the kingdom looks like. The SOM is filled with imaginative insights about such things as anger, divorce, truth-telling, enemy-loving, praying and materialism. Here in this text, we are called to go deeper into the things within us that destroy our relationships - such as anger, lust and legalism. God has greater desires for us in our relationships, to experience far more in His kingdom culture.

1. What are the things that make relationships so meaningful and important? What are some of the things that make healthy relationships difficult? What do you long for more of in your relationships with people who are close to you? Why is it sometimes the hardest to love those who are closest to you?
2. **Read Matthew 5:17-48.** Notice the six 'antithesis' statements as examples that follow out of what Jesus says in vs. 17-20. **Read again vs. 17, 20, and 48.** What do these verses mean in light of this passage and what Jesus is teaching?
3. Focusing on the first 'antithesis' teaching (vs. 21-26), what does Jesus point to that lies beneath the surface of murder? How has anger played a role in your life? Is reconciliation something we experience or pursue? How does this section point us to the 'ministry of reconciliation' that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21?

4. The second 'antithesis' teaching is vs. 27-30. What is the sin that underlies and leads to adultery? Why does Jesus use such exaggeration in response to this? How does this heighten the sin of adultery to a new level? What are some implications and applications for our lives today? How does James 1:13-15 help us to understand the implications of this text?
5. The third 'antithesis' teaching is vs. 31-32. **Read also Matthew 19:1-12 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-17.** What are the 'exceptions' taught in these passages? Divorce and remarriage are some of the most challenging issues for the church, and so grappling with these texts and questions is not easy. We often focus on what is 'allowed' in terms of divorce - but what is God's ultimate desire for marriages?
6. **Read Jeremiah 31:31-33** in a couple of translations. How is this prophetic text being fulfilled in this teaching of Jesus from our text today?

### **Next Steps**

Take time to pray for those that are close to you, who are struggling with anger or lust and the destructive path that this can lead to. Pray that you may also love them well as you deal with these things in your own heart. Pray for healthy, fulfilling marriage relationships and for healthy, fulfilling lives for those who are single as well. Use Galatians 5:13-18 as a prayer guide to experience this freedom in the power of the Spirit.