

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 71-Our Attitude Behind Our Actions

Sunday AM-June 14, 2026

This study guide explores the teachings of Jesus Christ regarding the internal motivations that drive human behavior. Based on Matthew Lesson 71, this document analyzes how the "spirit of the law" takes priority over the mere "letter of the law." It focuses on the transition from external religious performance to internal heart transformation, emphasizing that God looks at the heart rather than just outward appearances.

Study Quiz: Short-Answer Questions

1. According to the lesson, what is the difference between the "letter of the law" and the "spirit of the law"?
 2. Why did Jesus Christ tell His followers that their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees?
 3. How does the document describe the "negative" and "positive" aspects of God's law?
 4. What was the purpose of the story about the drill instructor and the soldier who was smiling?
 5. According to the teaching on Matthew 5:21–22, how can a person be guilty of murder without actually killing someone?
 6. What is the ultimate goal or "end" of the law, according to the Westminster Catechism mentioned in the text?
 7. Why is God the only one who can truly judge a person's character?
 8. The lesson mentions a sign on a broken clock that said, "Don't blame the hands; the trouble lies deeper." What does this represent in a person's life?
 9. Since no human is perfect, how does a believer meet the divine standard of being "perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect"?
 10. What does it mean for the righteousness of Jesus Christ to be "imputed" to a believer?
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Answer Key

1. The "letter of the law" refers to the literal, functional rules that demand obedience or result in death. The "spirit of the law" refers to the internal heart attitude and the life-giving transformation that God truly desires.
 2. The scribes and Pharisees focused only on outward legalism and looking good to other men, which Jesus Christ called hypocritical. He taught that true entry into the kingdom of heaven requires a heart that is actually changed on the inside.
 3. The law is negative because it prevents us from doing certain sins, but it is positive because it leads us to have right attitudes. It encourages believers to hunger for righteousness, be merciful, and be pure in heart.
 4. The story illustrates that doing something "good" or "right" just to glorify oneself is the wrong motivation. The drill instructor punished the soldier's pride to show that the focus should not be on self-satisfaction.
 5. Jesus Christ taught that the law applies to the heart; therefore, anyone who is angry with his brother without a cause or harbors hatred is in danger of judgment. This means that internal hatred is viewed by God as the root of murder.
 6. The end of the law is not to justify the individual or make them look good, but to glorify God. Mankind's primary purpose is to reflect the glory of the Creator through their spirit and desires.
 7. God is the only judge because He is the "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Unlike humans, who only see outward actions, God sees the secrets and hidden motives within every person.
 8. The clock represents a person's life, where the "hands" are the outward actions and the "works" inside are the heart. It teaches that behavior will not truly change until the internal heart trouble is dealt with first.
 9. A person cannot reach this standard through their own efforts because there is "none righteous." Instead, they meet the standard through faith in Jesus Christ, who met the law's requirements perfectly.
 10. To be "imputed" means that Jesus Christ's perfect righteousness is credited to the believer's account. When God looks at a believer, He does not see their sin, but rather the perfect righteousness of His Son covering them.
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Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the religious life of the Pharisees with the "internal righteousness" that Jesus Christ describes. Use examples from the text regarding murder and adultery.
2. Discuss the role of Jesus Christ as both a "Lawgiver" and a "Redeemer." Why are both roles necessary for a person to reach the "Divine Standard"?
3. Analyze the statement: "The law is a signpost." How does the law force an individual to seek Jesus Christ according to the principles discussed in the lesson?
4. Explain the importance of "User Neutrality" in God's judgment. Why does the text argue that justifying oneself before men is an "abomination" to God?
5. Reflect on the concept of "Revival" as mentioned in the concluding remarks of the service. Why is the "exposition of sin" necessary for a community to experience spiritual purity?

Comprehensive Glossary

- **Abomination:** Something that causes distrust or hatred; in a biblical sense, something that is extremely offensive to God's holiness.
- **Adoration:** Deep love and respect; worship directed toward God.
- **Catechism:** A summary of religious doctrine often used for teaching, such as the Westminster Catechism mentioned in the text.
- **Conformity:** Compliance with standards, rules, or laws; acting in accordance with the letter of the law.
- **Covenant:** A formal, solemn, and binding agreement; specifically, the "new covenant" established by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- **Discerner:** One who can see or understand things that are hidden; used to describe how God's word judges the heart.
- **Exposition:** The act of explaining something in detail or revealing the true nature of a thing, such as exposing sin.
- **Hypocritical:** Behaving in a way that suggests one has higher standards or more noble beliefs than is actually the case; being a "phony."
- **Impute:** To attribute or credit something to a person; specifically, how Christ's righteousness is given to believers.
- **Legalistic:** Strictly adhering to the literal interpretation of the law rather than the religious or moral spirit behind it.

- **Millennial Kingdom:** A thousand-year period of reign mentioned in biblical prophecy and the subject of the evening teaching.
- **Pharisees:** A group of religious leaders in ancient Israel known for their strict, often external, observance of the law.
- **Redeemer:** A person who saves others from sin, error, or evil; a title used for Jesus Christ.
- **Scribes:** Scholars and copyists of the law who, along with the Pharisees, were often criticized by Jesus Christ for their focus on external rules.
- **Sermon on the Mount:** A famous collection of teachings by Jesus Christ found in the Gospel of Matthew, focusing on the ethics of the Kingdom of God.
- **Transfigured/Transformed:** A complete change in form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state; a heart change.

Greek Terminology

In the study of Matthew 5:21–22, a specific Greek-derived term is used to illustrate the severity of internal anger and verbal insults.

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Raca [¹]	<i>rah-kah</i>	An Aramaic/Greek term of contempt meaning "empty-headed" or "worthless."

[¹]: This word appears in Matthew 5:22 to describe an insult that places the speaker in danger of the council, highlighting that God judges the insults we throw at others.