

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 77

Sunday AM-August 9, 2026

The Sermon on the Mount represents a pivotal moment in the ministry of Jesus Christ. During this teaching, He addressed the questions of those who wondered if He was the promised Messiah and what the standards of His kingdom would be. Many people assumed that the scribes and Pharisees—the religious leaders of the day—represented the highest level of righteousness possible. However, Jesus Christ clarified that His message did not change or destroy the law of Moses but fulfilled it. He taught that for anyone to enter the kingdom of heaven, their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20).

Jesus Christ explained that the religious leaders had actually lowered God's standards to make them easier to follow, creating a system of self-righteousness. To correct this, He began a series of illustrations to lift the standard back to its original intent. He shifted the focus from outward behavior to the condition of the human heart. In the passage concerning adultery, He demonstrated that God's law is not just about physical actions, but also about the thoughts and desires that occur deep within a person.

Quiz: Reviewing the Standards of the Kingdom

1. What specific curiosity did the people of Galilee have regarding Jesus Christ as He performed miracles and taught them?
2. How did Jesus Christ describe His relationship to the law of Moses in the Sermon on the Mount?
3. According to the teachings of Jesus Christ, what was the primary problem with the way the scribes and Pharisees practiced the law?
4. In Matthew 5:20, what is the requirement regarding righteousness for those who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven?
5. Why did Jesus Christ use the examples of anger and lust to illustrate His points about the law?
6. According to the text, what is the underlying principle or "sacredness" protected by the 7th commandment?
7. How does Jesus Christ define committing adultery in the heart according to Matthew 5:28?
8. Why does the text suggest that cutting off an arm or plucking out an eye is a better alternative than sinning?
9. In what way has modern society changed the view of sex and marriage compared to the design God intended?
10. What is "situational ethics," and how does it affect a society's understanding of right and wrong?

Answer Key

1. The people were curious about whether Jesus Christ was the Messiah who would bring God's kingdom. They wanted to know if His standards matched what Moses had taught and how He viewed the law of God.
2. Jesus Christ stated that His message was the same as the message given by Moses. He explained that He did not come to change, destroy, or alter the law, but rather to fulfill it.
3. The scribes and Pharisees had lowered the law of Moses to their own design. They created a standard they could keep easily, which allowed them to convince themselves they were righteous when they were actually falling short of God's absolute standard.
4. Jesus Christ taught that a person's righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. Without this higher level of righteousness, He stated that it is impossible to enter the kingdom of heaven.
5. Jesus Christ chose anger and lust because they are powerful experiences that reach deep into the human experience. These two temptations cut to the core of a person and clearly illustrate the basic sinfulness of man.
6. The underlying principle of the 7th commandment, "You shall not commit adultery," is the sanctity and sacredness of marriage. Marriage is described as the basic unit of life.
7. Jesus Christ taught that anyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. This shows that sin is a matter of the heart's desires, not just physical actions.
8. The text explains that sin is so dangerous that it is better to lose a part of the body than to let that part lead the whole person into sin. This emphasizes that sin is found in what a person feels and thinks, not just what they do.
9. Modern society has turned sex into something public, using it in mass media and advertisements to sell products. This contrasts with God's design, where sex is intended to be a personal, special, and unique discovery within marriage.
10. Situational ethics is a philosophy where right and wrong are viewed as relative rather than absolute. It suggests that a person should do whatever feels good as long as it supposedly does not hurt anyone else.

Essay Questions for Further Reflection

1. Discuss why Jesus Christ argued that His teaching was a return to the original law of Moses rather than a new set of rules.
2. Analyze the difference between "outward righteousness" (behavior) and "inward righteousness" (the heart) as presented in the Sermon on the Mount.

3. Explain the relationship between the 6th commandment (murder) and the 7th commandment (adultery) based on the principles of the heart that Jesus Christ described.
4. Describe the impact of a "virtueless society" on the frequency and visibility of temptation in modern life.
5. Evaluate the claim that self-righteousness is destroyed when God's absolute standards are properly understood.

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Adultery	The act of being unfaithful to a marriage partner; Jesus Christ expanded this to include lustful thoughts in the heart.
Exonerate	To clear someone from blame or the guilt of a sin; the text notes that external good behavior does not exonerate a sinful heart.
Lust	An intense or unbridled sexual desire; a thought or look that initiates temptation within the heart.
Messiah	The "Anointed One" or Savior; the title the people of Galilee were curious to apply to Jesus Christ.
Monogamous	The practice of being married to or having a sexual relationship with only one person at a time.
Pharisees	A prominent religious group in Jewish society known for their strict adherence to a lowered, self-made version of the law.
Righteousness	The quality of being morally right or justifiable; Jesus Christ demanded a righteousness that exceeded external ritual.
Sanctity	The state of being holy or sacred; used to describe the divine importance of life and marriage.
Scribes	Scholars and teachers of the Jewish law who often worked alongside the Pharisees.
Situational Ethics	A moral system where the "right" action is determined by the specific circumstances rather than absolute moral laws.
Standard	A level of quality or attainment; Jesus Christ sought to lift the moral standard back to God's original intent.