

## Matthew 5:17-26

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders

will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

### Community Group Study 4 July 2010



#### Introduction

What is the significance of the law to a Christian? Is it something that we need to follow to the letter or is it something that Jesus has made irrelevant by his death?

Laws and rules may dictate our actions but have no ability to change our hearts.

The passage tells us that anger and malice towards other people condemns us to the fire of hell. Why is God so concerned about how we treat other people? Man – every man and woman – is created in His image. When we offend or hurt others we are in effect despising the image of God.

Yet even these actions must flow from true reconciliation and note mere works-based conformity to the law.

To paraphrase Spurgeon: All of us are good only because we reflect God's grace. Without it we are darkness itself. Therefore we must cry to God to always be with us.

We must let our hearts be changed, looking to fulfill the law by seeking God. Michael Eaton wrote: when we walk in the spirit deliberately, we fulfill the law accidentally."

#### Discussion

>>How should we feel about people who are "technically legal but morally wicked"?

>>Share examples in which you live in a way that is "technically legal" but morally wicked"

>>In what manner should we obey the law?

>>What does it mean for our view of other people that "man is created in the image of God"?

#### Explanation

>>Why was the law given?

>>Is God pleased when we obey the letter of the law?

>>What does God want from us in terms of the law?

>>How does Jesus fulfill the law?

#### Application

>>How do we apply the fact that true obedience to the law is achieved through the pursuit of God?

>>Think of people whom you have despised and repent of it.

>>Think of people whom you have something against, or who may have something against you. Ask God to move you with love for them and go immediately and reconcile with them.