



Mind Blown Lesson 2: Anger, Murder, Adultery and Lust!

[**Reader:** group leader] We're in the second lesson of a series on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6 and 7). Jesus was the preacher of that sermon, and He said some pretty mind-blowing things. In the first study we read how Jesus said the whole Old Testament centered around Him. Imagine some preacher telling you that in this day and age. Your reaction might be something like that of the kids in this video whose parent hadn't told them the identity of Darth Vader.

[Watch Mind=Blown Star Wars Video](#)

In this lesson, we'll see what Jesus has to say about murder, anger, adultery and lust. Hint: It's not just going to be mind-blowing; it's going to be completely counter-cultural!

But first, let's be a little counter-cultural ourselves and open in prayer. [Leader prays.]

Part 1: MURDER, HATRED, REVENGE AND ANGER

[**Reader:** person with the longest hair]

Here's what Jesus' had to say about murder in the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the alter in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the alter. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.” Matthew 5:21-26 (NLT)

Jesus begins: “You have heard it said.” Then He adds to it. He takes the moral law (don’t murder) way beyond what the Mosaic law said.

Question: Most people feel morally superior to those who have committed murder. According to Jesus, how does God’s standard of morality and righteousness differ from ours?

[Watch Video: What does Jesus say about hate?](#)

[**Reader:** person with the shortest hair]

Jesus said, *“So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the alter in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the alter. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.”*

- Christians don’t give sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem—but what are some situations in our own lives to which we can apply the same principle?

[**Reader:** person with the longest hair]

Jesus said, *“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.”*

- Earthly judicial systems may or may not work exactly like this—but what does this passage tell you about God’s judicial system? Do you think it’s possible to “pay the last penny” for everything you’ve that done is morally wrong, according to Jesus’ standard?

[**Reader:** group leader]

In lesson one, we learned that Jesus didn’t come to destroy the law of God, but to fulfill the law of God. By upholding the letter of the law, He reveals the spirit of the law. He works back to the heart of issue:

To have your heart right with God and other people, we need to love one another.

It’s not enough that we don’t commit murder. Jesus traces murder to it’s root cause: hatred, desire for revenge and anger. Starting with Cain killing Able and working up through history to murders committed today, the root cause is the same:

Jesus is saying that anyone who lets anger stay in his or her heart could commit murder.

- Do you find this teaching hard to believe? Why or why not?

[**Reader:** person who most recently went swimming]

Desmond Tutu said, “There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

This is what Jesus is teaching. He uses hyperbole to say that it’s *never* OK to harbor hatred or vengeful thoughts because they cause much worse problems downstream.

Earlier in this lesson we read about Jesus telling people to put off giving a sacrifice to God if they needed to get right with another person. Rob King’s friend, Philip Moore, has a good method for keeping himself right with others. If he senses there was a problem between him and someone else, he’ll do a “circle back.” He’ll go back to that person and say something like this, “Hey I just wanted to circle back with you. We had this conversation—is everything okay with that? Are we okay?”

[**Reader:** group leader]

- What are some things that might keep you from “circling back” to someone you feel you might have offended or who offended you?
- What do you think the benefits of circling back might be?
- If you’re pretty sure circling back won’t restore the relationship, is the circle back worth doing? Why or why not?

[**Reader:** person with the shortest first name]

Romans 12:18 says, *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* (NIV).

Here are some ways to live at peace with others:

- Keep short accounts with one another.
 - Talk honestly with one another with love.
 - Work toward peace, but don’t be afraid of confrontation.
 - Skip the drama.
 - Be willing to go as far as is within your power.
- Would anyone like to share an experience from his or her own life about how someone reached out to you to make living in peace possible? How did this change your relationship?

Part 2: ADULTERY AND LUST

[**Reader:** group leader]

After preaching that people who hate have the heart of murderers, Jesus goes on to another hot-button topic: adultery. Here are the next few verses from the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Matthew 5: 27-30 (NIV)

This cuts deep. During the next discussion, let's remember that our purpose isn't to judge or embarrass each other but to study what Jesus has to say about adultery and lust.

[Watch Video: Adultery and Lust](#)

[**Reader:** person with the longest first name]

Adultery in Scripture means having sex with anyone that you're not married to. That's very counter-cultural in our times, even for people who believe in committed relationships. Having sex outside of marriage to discover whether you're "sexually compatible" is not scriptural.

God took care of whether two people are sexually compatible when He made us in the beginning. He created sex. He made it precious and valuable—a picture of intimacy for eternity.

[**Reader:** person with the longest last name]

In many of our practices, we have made sex vulgar, but that's not how God meant it to be.

Jesus reminds us that sex is so precious that it should only be experienced in marriage—when two people have made a lifelong commitment to one another.

It's common now to go from one lover to the next, but everything God tells us is motivated by His love for us. He wants us to live full and complete lives.

Jesus goes even further than telling us not to have sex outside of marriage. He says looking at a woman with lust is also adultery. (We can assume that Jesus would be equally severe about looking at a man with lust.)

[**Reader:** Group leader]

- Without going into details about your thought life, describe in one or two words how Jesus' statement about lustful thoughts makes you feel about your ability to follow His teaching. Remember, just one or two words.

[**Reader:** the youngest person in the group]

Our culture is obsessed with sex. Commercials for toothpaste, cars, deodorant, and more suggest that using their product will make you more sexually attractive. The media rarely promotes an idea that honors a committed relationship or tells the truth about how harmful it is to have casual sex. Here are some ways you can counteract the messages our culture sends us, and practice clear thinking about sexuality in light of Jesus' teaching:

- When you watch commercials, ask yourself whether the sales pitch implies that the product will make you more sexually attractive. If so, is the claim reasonable?
- When you read or watch entertainment media, ask yourself, "What is the underlying attitude toward sexuality? Does that attitude match Jesus' teaching?"
- When you hear or read a news story or opinion piece that involves sexuality, compare it to what Jesus teaches.

[**Reader:** the oldest person in the group]

A graduate student in Film Studies (age 22) wrote the following:

"I decided that when I have sex for the first time, I want it to be special and I will wait until my wedding night. A lot of my friends have casual flings, and I've noticed that the ones who jump into bed with someone too soon are the ones who often get hurt the most when the relationship flounders. People may be surprised that I'm still a virgin in my 20s because there's such pressure on young women to 'enjoy themselves' and apparently feel liberated by having lots of lovers. Because of my choices, I've never had to worry about sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy or any of the other troubles which can go hand-in-hand with casual sex, but it has not been easy."

[**Reader:** group leader]

- Sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies are more easily avoided now than they were in Jesus' day. Does this change the importance of following Jesus' teaching? Why or why not?

[**Reader:** person who most recently celebrated their birthday]

Jesus is concerned with what's going on in our hearts and wants us to be free.

A pastor was asked, "What's the difference between admiring the beauty of someone and lusting?" His answer: "About two seconds." Our thoughts are slippery in this way.

Dealing with our thought lives, including pornography, isn't a matter of being strong. It's a matter of understanding our weaknesses and not putting ourselves in situations where we'll be tempted.

If we don't expose ourselves to certain things, we won't struggle with the thoughts they arouse. One way the evangelist Billy Graham avoided temptation was by never letting himself be in a car or office alone with a woman except his wife. He followed this precaution even in his 70s. When his secretary was in his office with just him, he kept the door open.

In Matthew 5: 29 and 30, Jesus said, "*If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. ... And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away*" (NIV). Jesus was being hyperbolic to emphasize that dealing with temptation may involve difficult decisions and actions. Gouging out your eye or cutting off your hand won't keep you from lust—that's not what Jesus really wants us to do—but He may be asking you to take other actions or develop other habits that may seem excessive to those around you.

- What is your opinion about limiting your activities (avoiding certain movies, avoiding certain parties, limiting the types of things you read, and so on) to avoid lustful thoughts? How do you determine whether or not to expose yourself to something?
- In avoiding temptation, does everyone need to limit their actions in the same way or avoid their exposure to the same things? Why or why not?

[**Reader:** group leader]

In our culture, pornography has become more accessible—and a greater problem—for both men and women. In light of Jesus' teaching, if the only way you can avoid pornography is to throw your laptop into the Ohio River, do so! But before you go that route, consider the following:

Things you can do to deal with the temptation of lustful thoughts and the special problem of pornography:

- Admit to yourself and before God that you have a problem.
- If you're struggling, find a Christian brother or sister (brothers find brothers and sisters find sisters) for prayer. James 5:16 says, "... confess your sins to each other and and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

- Make yourself accountable to a Christian brother or sister. (There are websites designed to help you link with a friend who receives updates on every site you visit.)
- Keep your computer in a public place so you can't view inappropriate websites secretly.
- Remember that Jesus forgives. If you stumble, go back to Him.

[**Reader:** person who got up earliest this morning]

God wants to have a personal, meaningful heartfelt relationship with each of us. When He tells us things about anger, murder, lust and adultery, it's for our good—for our freedom. So He warns us of these things, but Scriptures doesn't leave us there.

No matter where you are or what you've done, we have an advocate in Jesus, and we can be redeemed as we repent to Him.

Here's the scriptural evidence from both the Old and New Testaments:

- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* I John 1: 9 (NIV)
- *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.* Isaiah 1:18a (KJV)
- *And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.* Ezekiel 36:2–27 (NLT)

[**Reader:** group leader]

- According to these verses, is there any sin that God will not forgive us if we turn to Him?
- According to Exekiel 36:2–27, what does God offer beyond forgiveness?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus set a standard for righteousness that no-one can hope to achieve. Then He tells us that we deserve “judgement,” “the fires of hell” and “hell” if we don't measure up. That's mind-blowing! Jesus wants us to know just how bad our situation is. But Scriptures (including the Old Testament Scriptures, which Jesus endorsed) tell us that we can be forgiven and go on to live better lives.

There's no better deal. You can be redeemed, forgiven and washed. You can walk anew with Him. How? He gives you the gift of the Holy Spirit, which lives inside of you, and yearns to do the things of God. Jesus says He'll help you do what you couldn't do otherwise.

[**Reader:** group leader continues]

Action step 1: If you've never reached out to God before or acknowledged your need to do so — and if you want to change that — say so to God. You can do this silently or aloud. Then tell a Christian you trust about your decision so you can receive prayer and guidance.

Action step 2: Between now and the next session, ponder the following Scripture and the question that follows it:

For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. Matthew 15:19 (NIV)

- Have I built a fence of evil thoughts around my heart, and is it keeping people out and destroying my intimacy with the Father?

Action step 3: Think about the relationships in your own life. Is there anyone you need to circle back to? Talk to God (and maybe another Christian) about how you can go about this. Then do it.

Action step 4: Ask God to search your heart for anger and impure thoughts. Confess whatever He shows you and admit that you need His help. Then listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit and follow through with what He tells you to do.