

Going Deeper-A Higher Standard

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8.5-17

1. What is the moral conflict each person faces?
2. What are the differences in a mind controlled by sin and one controlled by the Holy Spirit?
3. What does it mean the body is dead because of sin?
4. What does it mean the spirit is alive because of righteousness?
5. Why is it important to recognize the ‘Spirit of sonship?’
6. Who has the ‘Spirit of sonship?’
7. How does our relationship with Christ change the believer's moral direction and code?



Moral Questions A Higher Standard

A study lesson prepared by

© Rev. Bob Highlands III - Part Two of Three

“Each person is free to accept or reject Jesus. He can accept Jesus only to the degree that he accepts and lives by Jesus’ moral teaching. A person can’t accept Jesus as God and friend on the one hand and reject his moral teachings on the other.”

-Richard Reichert

A Higher Standard

[21] **“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ [22] But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca, ’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.**

[23] **“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.**

[25] **“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into**

prison. [26] I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

[27] “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ [28] But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29] If your right eye causes you to sin, 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.

[30] And if your right hand causes you to sin, 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.

[31] “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ [32] But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

[33] “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ [34] But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; [35] or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. [36] And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. [37] Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

[38] “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ [39] But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

[43] “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ [44] But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [46] If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? [47] And if you greet only your

people?

26. Why is important for believers to deal with their enemies in this way?
27. How can being smarter than your enemies and loving them be applied at the same time in the life of a believer?
28. How does Jesus set higher standards for believers?
29. What is His ultimate goal in setting higher standards?
30. When the standards of the world conflict with the standards Jesus set how should the believer respond? Why?
31. How are the standards and morals as set by Jesus different than those set by Moses?
32. How are the standards and morals as set by Jesus different than those set by the world?

20. Matthew 5.33-37 What is the key to a person's words being the foundation of their life?
21. Why is swearing not seen as a valid response or approach to handling matters?
22. How is this exactly opposite of modern legal standards in contracts, court and business dealings?
23. Matthew 5.38-42 Jesus wants us to be smarter than our enemies. How is each example given by Jesus showing the believer how to outsmart and back their enemy down?
- ◆ Turn the other cheek:

 - ◆ Give up your cloak also:

 - ◆ Go the second mile:
24. What moral standard does Jesus set for the believer by setting this as the basis for believers in dealing with their enemies?
25. Matthew 5.43-48 Why would it be important for Jesus to say this right after showing the believer how to deal with hurtful

brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? [48] Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5.21-48

1. In Matthew 5 verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43 What Moral code is Jesus quoting from?

2. What do these verses all have in common as far as to how you know if a person is following them or not?

3. In Matthew 5 verses 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44 What does Jesus say about the old moral code?

4. How is the way Jesus approaches each of these matters different than the way it used to be thought about?

5. Note: The Old Testament Law was put in place with the express purpose to govern the nation of Israel and their interaction with each other, God and other nations. How is what Jesus is sharing different?

6. What two types of relationships is Jesus dealing with in Matthew 5.21-26?

7. What would be the equivalent of these in today's world?

8. Matthew 5.27-30 How does Jesus change the standards or morals here?
9. How does this run contrary to modern moral standards or norms?
10. Should Matthew 5.29-30 be taken literally? Explain your answer.
11. How can 1 Corinthians 12.12-20 help us understand one possible way of applying what Jesus is teaching about removing the sinful eye or hand?
12. Why is Paul's Judgment on another believer in 1 Corinthians 5.1-5 & 1 Corinthians 5.12-13 in keeping with the teachings of Jesus about removing an eye or a hand?
13. How are what Jesus says about Judging in Luke 6.37-38 different than what Paul is dealing with in 1 Corinthians 5 when he deals with a sinful person in the church?

Note: Most Bible translations show no difference in discerning (Judging) or dealing with sin and sinful life styles in contrast to refusing forgiveness (or Judging) a person's eternal soul as lost and beyond forgiveness. Discerning sin is holding up moral standards which is the responsibility of all believers and local churches, while judging the soul of others is reserved for the almighty God.

14. How does Jesus' answer to Peter in Matthew 18.21-22 help us know our responsibility in earthly Judgment?
15. How do these three verses help us to understand God's Judgment? John 5.27, 30; John 12.47-48 Matthew 25.46.
16. Back to Matthew 5.31-32 How easy was it under the Law (Deuteronomy 24.1 & Matthew 5.31) for someone to divorce his wife?
17. How is this similar to today's standards?
18. How did Jesus limit divorce?
19. How can this be applied and not violate the intent of the new standard Jesus is setting?

(Note: The word for 'marital unfaithfulness' is '*porneia*' which is about immoral acts. It is the base of the English word pornography. Many limit this to meaning physical fornication or adultery but I believe it has a wider application, especially in the context of what Jesus is saying here. It is not only the breaking of the marriage vows sexually or physically but can also include abuse, neglect and acting immorally toward the one a person is married to. Bob H.)