



Week 4 – Anger and Lust

Opening: Begin with a brief welcome and prayer to set the tone for the group time. Ask God to use His Word to reveal what is happening beneath the surface of our actions.

Overview: In Matthew 5:21–30, Jesus takes two familiar commands (do not murder and do not commit adultery) and shows that life in His Kingdom reaches deeper than outward behavior. He addresses anger, reconciliation, lust, and the seriousness of dealing with sin at the level of the heart.

Leader Note: *Considering the subject matter of this week, specifically the topic of lust, please use judgment or reach out to one of our pastors at Hope for wisdom in how to direct these conversations. This is especially true if you're in a group with both men and women. Consider splitting up to allow for more open, vulnerable, and appropriate conversation. As always, remind everyone that this is a safe space and that what you discuss as a group stays in the group, unless it needs to be elevated, by request or for someone's safety.*

Discussion Questions

CONNECT

- Which is usually easier: changing an outward behavior or changing the attitude or desire underneath it? Why?
- Why can someone look obedient on the outside while still having serious issues going on internally?
- Think about someone who commits what we would consider to be a “horrible sin” (adultery, murder, etc...). How do you think someone gets to that point?

DISCOVER

Read Together: Matthew 5:21-30

Initial observations + Interpreting Scripture:

- **Initial Thoughts:** What stood out to you from this passage or from the sermon?

Interpreting Scripture:

- What does Jesus' teaching here reveal about the kind of righteousness He is describing and wants to see in us?
- Jesus does not treat anger and murder as identical actions, but He does connect them at the level of the heart. What do anger, insults, and contempt reveal about the way we can view another person?
- Read verses 23–26 again. Why do you think Jesus places such urgency on reconciliation? What does the picture of leaving a gift at the altar communicate about the importance of making peace?
- In verses 27–28, how does Jesus deepen the command against adultery? What is the difference between experiencing temptation and choosing to look with lustful intent?
- What do verses 29–30 communicate about the seriousness of sin? Why do you think Jesus uses such extreme language to make His point?

- Across both examples (anger and lust) what pattern do you see in the way Jesus moves from outward actions to inward desires?
- Look back at Matthew 5:20. How do verses 21–30 help explain what Jesus means by a righteousness that goes beyond the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?

Personal Reflection

- Which part of this passage is easiest for you to keep at a distance because you have not committed the outward act Jesus names? How does Jesus bring that issue closer to your own heart?
- When anger settles into resentment or contempt, what usually happens to the way you think about, speak about, or treat the other person?
- What makes lust especially deceptive or easy to excuse when it remains private? How does Jesus challenge the idea that private desires do not matter?

APPLY – Let Jesus Address the Heart

Jesus calls His followers to take heart-level sin seriously rather than settling for outward appearances.

- **Move Toward Reconciliation:** *Is there a relationship where you know you need to take a first step toward peace through an apology, an honest conversation, forgiveness, or another appropriate act of reconciliation?*
- **Pay Attention to What You Feed:** *Where is anger, resentment, fantasy, or lust being entertained instead of resisted? What tends to feed those desires?*
- **Take Decisive Action:** *Jesus' language in verses 29–30 communicates urgency. What practical boundary, habit, conversation, or removal would help you stop making room for a pattern that leads you toward sin?*
- **Remember the Goal:** *The goal is not simply to appear better behaved. What would it look like for Jesus to reshape the way you see other people, relationships, sexuality, and your own desires?*

Action: What is one concrete step I will take this week to respond seriously to what Jesus is showing me?

GROUP PRAYER

- Ask for **hearts that are responsive** to Jesus. **Humility** to pursue reconciliation. **Wisdom** to establish appropriate boundaries. **Courage** to remove what feeds sins. **Grace** to become people marked by peace, faithfulness, and purity.

CLOSE

Encourage the group to reread Matthew 5:21–30 during the week and ask: “Jesus, what are You revealing about my heart, and what would obedience look like here?” Remind one another that Jesus calls His followers beyond managing appearances and into a righteousness that reaches our relationships, thoughts, desires, and choices.