

# ***Study Hints for Thinking Further***

***International Bible Lessons***

**Matthew 5:17-26**

**Sunday, November 6, 2011**

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

## **1. How might you use Jesus' teaching in these verses to help someone who thinks that if they are a Christian then they do not need to obey the law of God?**

Jesus told His disciples that they would be considered great in the kingdom of heaven if they obeyed and taught the commandments of God. True Christians will love Jesus Christ and want to obey Him; they will not be arguing about whether or not they should or "need to" obey Jesus in order to be saved and go to heaven. Jesus told His followers: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

## **2. Why might you say it is important or unimportant to teach Christians about the moral law and the ceremonial law?**

It is important because people need to know what is right and wrong, absolutely right and wrong from the revealed will of God, the Bible. Jesus' followers need to know that He will help them obey Him and do what is right in every situation. Many of the ceremonial laws show what is needed for God to be loving, just, and merciful when forgiving repentant sinners who come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Teaching both of these types of laws will help people see how Jesus fulfilled both types, and this will help them believe in and trust Jesus with their lives and their eternal destiny.

## **3. How might someone exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? Do Christians need to do this?**

If the scribes and Pharisees are not obeying God because they really love God, but for other reasons; such as, to be seen and praised by others; then those who obey God because they love God will exceed the scribes and Pharisees in righteousness. Christians who love God will obey Him because they love Him and want to glorify and serve Him with their lives; this is exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. It is not a matter of "needing to so this" in order to be saved. The saved person will want to do this because they love God and want to bring God joy by the way they live each day. The true Christian has been forgiven by God, cleansed from sin by Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit; therefore, their righteousness will exceed the righteousness of those who do not love God or follow Jesus.

**4. Why do you think the Bible condemns murder? What is the Biblical penalty for having committed murder? Why do you think killing someone for having committed murder is right or wrong?**

The Bible condemns murder because people are created in the image of God and are of great value in the sight of God. To murder someone (killing them unjustifiably without the due process of law; killing someone when the situation is not self defense; killing someone when they are not the enemy in war) is to take the life of one of God's precious children in a way that the Bible condemns. The Bible condemns murder to deter people from committing murder either in anger or after contemplating and planning a murder. The Biblical penalty for murder is death by stoning by the community, which demonstrates the sanctity of life before the community and serves as a deterrent to those who do not want to suffer the penalty of murder (it also deters the murderer from murdering again). A murderer does not need to be executed or executed by stoning. But to never execute a murderer may show disregard for the sanctity and value of human life as created in the image of God—certainly the value of the person who was murdered may be devalued by the murdered and by the failure to punish the murderer. Christians must forgive sinners, especially repentant sinners, even while they may insist that the murderer be executed. Execution sends the murderer to God for just and merciful judgment. The murderer may come to saving faith in Jesus Christ prior to execution and facing the judgment of God. Christians can pray for the salvation of the murderer before the murderer is executed.

**5. What might you say to someone who never tries to make right any of their wrongs or make amends to anyone because they believe that since God forgives them they do not need to try to make amends or right their wrongs?**

If we truly love others as the Bible commands, we will want to try to repair the damage we have done to others whenever or wherever possible. In many cases, we cannot repair the damage, but we can pray for God to bless and help the person we have harmed and also heal the damage if possible. If someone thinks that God's forgiveness is all they need, then perhaps they do not understand the love that comes to us from God to be shared after He forgives us and saves us.

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