

**Ice Breaker Question:**

What is the best advice you've heard on how to deal with anger?

**Read and discuss this week's scripture [Matthew 5:21-30].**

1. Of the Ten Commandments, the sixth is "You shall not kill" and the seventh is "You shall not commit adultery." Jesus said he came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it. How do you see him fulfilling the law here in this passage? What's different about Jesus' teaching from the basic wording of these commandments?
2. Jesus compares anger to murder. Anger in this passage could be defined as resentment or contempt. Is there someone you feel anger, resentment or contempt towards? What is a practical step you can take to change that?
3. Jesus says in Matthew 5:23-26 that broken relationships really matter, and we should settle matters quickly, especially when reconciling with others. Have you experienced a broken relationship? What can you learn from Jesus' words here how to react differently even now with that person; or the next time something goes wrong with friend or family?
4. Jesus focuses on anger and lust in this passage. What similarities do you see between anger and lust?
5. Some people describe lust as a private sin, that it doesn't hurt anyone. Can you see lust as a sin that actually harms God's community? How?
6. We live in a culture that is very permissive and sexually saturated. Lust can be fed by what we see on all forms of media, even commercials on TV or ads on the sides of our internet articles. When Jesus says it's better to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand than to go to hell, does he really mean it? How can we practice self-discipline, even self-denial, with what we see?

**Prayer:**

Praying for one another is a great way to increase community! Consider pairing up and praying for one another as you close your group time.

Keep the following prayer requests from our church family in mind as you close:

- > Prayers of healing for Karen Cunningham, Carolyn Maddox, Hadley Lehr, and Bryan Dysert.
- > Prayers of comfort for Margot Denger in the loss of her sister and for Shawn and Cara Grimes in the loss of Shawn's grandmother.

**[Leader's Notes]** As mentioned last week, if you are a mixed group, consider splitting into two groups—one for men and one for women—during discussion time. As we learned at our Leader's Gathering, groups with men and women may have difficulties opening up, especially about the topics we are discussing this week.

In last week's passage, Jesus said he came to fulfill the law and the commandments (Matthew 5:17), not to abolish them. In this week's passage, he begins to do that by going deeper in our understanding of "You shall not murder" and "You shall not commit adultery." For many Christians, it may be easy to say, "I haven't killed anyone" or "I haven't committed adultery." Yet how many of us can say, we haven't been angry or insulting or lusted after another person? Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is so revolutionary because he challenges us to be different than our culture.

**[Question 1]** In this passage, Jesus is fulfilling the law by expanding the understanding of two basic commandments. Jesus calls us to a higher calling, not just to stop at "do not murder" or "do not commit adultery" but to go much deeper. There are heart issues behind these commands, mainly anger and lust, where God can help us by changing our hearts, not only our behavior.

**[Question 2]** These Home Groups are not meant to be just study sessions but to help us change our hearts and actions. So, ask your group members how they can take a practical step, with God's guidance and help, to deal with resentment or contempt that they might currently feel.

**[Question 3]** Jesus is firm that you must deal quickly with broken relationships or with adversaries. We are to be bold and courageous in seeking reconciliation. This is not easy to do but as followers of Jesus, we can lead in seeking reconciliation.

**[Question 4]** Both anger and lust can be all-consuming and enslaving. We can let resentment fester and lust develop into a secret sin which enslaves. Both can be dehumanizing – extreme anger can destroy relationships and lust can turn people into objects. Jesus wants us to be serious in dealing with these very human struggles.

**[Question 5]** Lust can start privately but soon affect how we treat others. Lust can affect others by changing the way we view them. It can turn people into objects – instead of having real relationships with real people who are made in God's image.

**[Question 6]** While some in Christian history have practiced self-mutilation, we don't believe Jesus actually meant to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand. However, Jesus uses hyperbole to make a point: sin is so serious that we need to take drastic action – even practicing self-discipline and self-denial at times. Perhaps you put filters on your internet and cell phones to protect yourself or to protect your children. Perhaps you are called to be more selective about your entertainment choices. We are not called to be legalistic but to be faithful followers of what Jesus calls us to be.