

Relational Righteousness

Chapter 9

Audio lesson: New Testament 9



Objective: To understand how Jesus wants us to apply His teaching in our relationships.



“Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

—Matthew 5:19

Jesus continues the application of His sermon by making two important statements. The first is that He has come to fulfill the Law of God, not destroy it. The second is that the righteousness of those who follow Him should be greater even than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, the religious teachers of His time, who did not really understand the Law or why God had given it. The religious leaders had forgotten that the Law was made for people, not people for the Law. Their righteousness was all in their outward behavior, not in their hearts. Jesus’ followers would have a greater, deeper righteousness because it was from the heart.

Jesus then says that to be part of His solution, part of His answer to their questions, His disciples have to know God’s Word. After making these statements regarding the importance of Scripture in the life of a disciple, Jesus shows them how to apply His teaching in their relationships. The first relationship He addresses is the relationship with their brother, or fellow disciple. Next He teaches them the Christian response to an adversary. Then He explains how important it is for His followers to handle God’s good gift of sexuality in the ways God instructs. Jesus’ message helps us understand that the root of sin begins long before sin is committed. Jesus teaches us that we can control our passions before they influence us to disobey God.



1. True or **false**? It is not important for Christians to be righteous.
2. True or **false**? Jesus told His disciples that the Old Testament was no longer relevant to His kingdom.
3. **True** or false? Jesus' teaching did not contradict the Law of Moses.
4. **True** or false? God meant for everyone to be able to read or hear the Bible for themselves and understand it.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. When Jesus said "You have heard it said . . . , but I say to you . . . ," whose teaching was He correcting?
 - a. God the Father
 - b. Moses
 - c. The scribes and Pharisees**
 - d. His disciples
6. Why did God give us the law?
 - a. To make us miserable
 - b. Because He loves us**
 - c. So our governments could enforce His will
 - d. So we could criticize people who break the Law
7. What did Jesus mean when He said His disciples must be righteous?
 - a. Get right with God
 - b. Be right with God
 - c. Do what is right for God
 - d. All of the above**

8. How should our spiritual character affect our relationships with other people?
 - a. It should isolate us from other people.
 - b. It allows us to tell people how good we are.
 - c. We should live out our character in our relationships.**
 - d. It is completely separate and should have no effect.

9. How does Jesus want us to apply the law of God? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Remember God's purpose and intent of the law.**
 - b. Remember the law was made for man, not man for the law.**
 - c. Remember to apply God's law with God's love.**
 - d. Remember to hit people over the head with the law of God.

10. Who does God tell us to love?
 - a. Our family and friends
 - b. Other Christians
 - c. Our enemies
 - d. Everyone**

11. What is the solution when our eye causes us to sin?
 - a. Gouge it out.
 - b. Avoid society completely.
 - c. Wear a veil that covers our eyes.
 - d. Stop looking at whatever causes us to sin.**

12. If we are to be God's solution to the world's problems, how should we deal with our sexual desires?
 - a. We must learn to let God control our desires and satisfy them only in God's way.**
 - b. We must never admit that we have sexual desires.
 - c. We must satisfy our desires however we can.
 - d. We must train ourselves not to have any desires.

13. Why is God opposed to adultery?
 - a. It has very harmful effects on everyone involved, especially the children.
 - b. It tears down families.
 - c. It does not lead to satisfaction and fulfillment.
 - d. All of the above.**



Why do you think so much of Jesus' teaching is about our relationships? Do you have any relationships: brothers, adversaries, opposite sex, marriage partner, neighbors, or even enemies, in which it is difficult to maintain Christ-like character? In what ways can Jesus' teaching help you in that relationship?



Thank God that He has chosen to have a relationship with you. Ask Him to help you grow to be like Jesus so that you can show His love to other people and be part of His solution.



Going Deeper

1. In what ways was Jesus confronting the scribes and Pharisees in the six paragraphs of Matthew chapter 5 that begin with “*You have heard that it was said, but now I say to you.*”?

2. Describe the value Jesus was placing on our relationship with the one He describes as our “brother,” and why He places such great value on that relationship. _____

3. How and why did Jesus tell us to cope with the problem of sexual temptation? _____

4. What did Jesus mean when He talked about plucking out your eye if what you are looking at is causing you to sin? _____

5. Why is it important for a disciple of Jesus to have the correct approach to the Law (Word) of God? _____

6. What did Jesus teach regarding the relationship of a disciple of His to his neighbor and enemy? _____

7. Why did Jesus teach that it is so very important for His disciples to apply the blessed attitudes in all their relationships? _____
