



The Gospel According To Matthew

“The kingdom of the heavens is at hand.”
-Matthew 4:17

September 16, 2007
Group Reflection Questions

1. How do we hold anger in ways that can't be seen?
2. Why is Jesus concerned with lust?
3. Why might life be better without anger and lust?
4. Do you show anger easily? Do you hold on to anger (even if you don't show it)?
5. How do we develop a new heart?

A New Look
Matthew 5:21-32

Here in Matthew we encounter the first things Jesus tells us not to do. So what's at the top of his list? Anger. Many have read this section and simply seen a new list of commandment and thought, “Oh great, more commandments I can't keep.” I don't believe that's Jesus intention here. I believe Jesus gives a new picture of what the good life looks like. If we live in the kingdom of the heavens we can live a life that is free from anger and revenge. We can be free from lust and disgust. For the rest of this chapter Jesus deals with the creation of a new heart, not the creation of new laws.

In the hands of the Pharisees, Jesus' words would become a whole new set of laws with which they could “tie heavy loads on the people.” (Mt. 23:4) Jesus wants people with hearts that truly love—not just follow commands. We all know you can follow the letter of the law while still digging in our heels. A heart that doesn't desire revenge or lust has truly become a new creation. In this life love flows out of the heart while anger and lust are unnatural. This is why Jesus can describe his yoke as easy and his burden as light—it is a naturally good life.

