

Memory Verse

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matthew 5:14)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To understand the meaning of salt and light.2. To understand that murder begins in the heart.3. To know what it means to commit adultery.4. To recognize the importance of oaths.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is light.2. God is all-knowing.3. God searches our hearts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To illuminate the life that we have in Christ.2. To avoid immorality by fully depending on God.3. To guard our hearts.4. To be truthful.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Salt and Light
- B. Murder Begins in the Heart
- C. Adultery
- D. Oaths

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Let our light shine before men so that we glorify God when others see our good works. Let us live for God!

A. Salt and Light

Let us begin by reading Matthew 5:13–16.

1. Salt

If used wisely, salt can enhance our diet. But if abused, it can be harmful. Salt has a few functions:

- It enhances.
- It gives flavor.
- It preserves.

When used properly, salt permeates food and preserves it. Likewise, as Christians, we must be in the world but not of it. We live in the world, but must not be contaminated or influenced by its immorality and sins. At the same time, we must preserve against moral decay in our society (Col 4:6).

A Warning from Jesus

We lose our saltiness if we allow impurities into our lives. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Evil company corrupts good habits.” Disobedience, indifference to the rules in our lives, fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, or coarse jesting can also corrupt us (Eph 5:3–4). In fact, if we are not salt of the earth, then we will be thrown out and cast into the furnace of fire (Mt 13:42).

2. Light

Light has a few functions:

- It makes things visible.
- It illuminates.
- It turns darkness into light.

God is the true light (Jn 8:12). We must “let [our] light so shine before men” (Mt 5:16). To do so, we must know the truth and stand for it. We cannot simply live out our faith inside the walls of our homes and churches, as that would be like hiding a light under a basket. As the light of the world, we can warn others of danger and direct them to a safe harbor: the church. We can provide hope for those who are lost. God wants us to show the way to others as a light and be a witness for God (1 Pet 2:12).

Life Application: How do we become the salt and light of the world?

1. As "salt," we need to counter the power of sin.
2. As "light," we must not hide, but illuminate the life that we have in Christ.
3. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can continue to be God's witnesses for the lost world. When we invite others to church, preach, and live out Christ-like lives, we shine our light.

Our true value is not in what we can achieve for ourselves, but in what we can do for others. As His children, God has called us to bring His qualities to the world. If we fail to meet that expectation, we fail in our duty as Christians, and our lives become meaningless. When we worship God with pure hearts; love others as ourselves; do good without growing weary; do not compromise to the standards of this world; tell the truth; and stand up for the Lord even when no one else will, we are shining for Him.

B. Murder Begins in the Heart

Let us continue by studying Matthew 5:21–26. This passage mentions the terms “raca” and “fool,” both referring to insults we say to those who have angered us. It is commonly accepted that murder involves physically taking a person’s life and that only those who murder will face judgment. But here, Jesus teaches us that if our hate toward others becomes anger, we will face the same judgment (vv. 21–22).

1. Understanding Anger

Hatred is often born out of anger, but we must understand that anger itself is not a sin. Anger is not the same as murder; it is a response. We can be angry without sinning, unless we choose to disobey God’s word. What we do with our anger determines whether it is sinful, and unresolved anger is a sin that brings God’s judgment.

2. Understanding Reconciliation

Reconciliation is crucial in God’s eyes and should be done even before worshipping Him (Mt 5:23–24). If you know that you have caused someone to be angry, find that person and ask for an apology and forgiveness. Reconcile your relationship. Both sides are responsible for coming together. Reconciliation is never easy, but God commands it, and there is an urgency to settle matters quickly as there are consequences for leaving a broken relationship unresolved. Jesus wants us to come to repentance and to reconcile.

Life Application: Why and how must we reconcile?

Why is God teaching us about anger and reconciliation? He wants us to understand that allowing our anger to consume us can lead to hellfire. Instead of submitting to anger, we must step back and see what God wants us to do. Let us study what the Scripture teaches us about anger:

- “Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.” (Eph 4:26–27)
- “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (Jas 1:19–20)

One of the most common triggers for our anger are often the actions of our family members. In such cases, ask yourself: If my parent or sibling has something against me, then have I taken sufficient steps to reconcile, whether or not I am to blame? If not, am I willing to humble myself, talk to them, and seek reconciliation before my next prayer?

C. Adultery

Next, we will read Matthew 5:27–32.

1. The biblical definition of adultery

Adultery is committed when a married person has sexual intercourse with someone who is not their spouse. It is mentioned fifty-two times in the Bible, and is severely condemned with each mention. It creates so much damage that is difficult to undo. Not only is it extremely hurtful to the spouse, but it also robs the children of the love, joy, peace, and security that they need from a healthy marriage. Adultery devastates spouses in so many ways that families are never the same afterward.

But Jesus raises the bar higher than the physical act: if anyone looks at a woman with lust, he has already committed adultery with her. To lust after someone in your heart is already adultery, because your mind imagines the sexual acts. Adultery begins in the heart before it ever reaches the

bed, and this is a sin in the eyes of God because the mind has performed it. All lustful thoughts come from the heart, so we have to guard our hearts (Prov 4:23).

2. The consequences if a man divorces his wife

“For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph 5:5–6).

If a man divorces his wife, the wrath of God will come. Paul warned the believers that those who do what is mentioned in Galatians 5:19–21 will not inherit the kingdom of God. Further, the Bible warns that “what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mk 10:9), and “marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb 13:4).

Life Application: How can we avoid sexual immorality?

Avoiding sexual immorality is one of the biggest struggles we can encounter, especially in an age where pre-marital sex is not only accepted but encouraged. To avoid this sin, we must keep ourselves firmly rooted in our knowledge of God’s will, who desires that we be sanctified (1 Thess 4:3). Paul writes that our body is the “temple of the Holy Spirit [...] therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor 6:19–20). As His temple, we must be holy in all our conduct (1 Pet 1:16). But what are some practical ways we can avoid this sin?

1. Be careful about what we fill our minds with, for the battle begins in the mind.

Our imagination is most active when we are weak on the bed—the place where sin is often hatched.

2. Pray daily and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot defeat sexual temptation by our own strength; we must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:7–8) and God’s word to help us control our bodies in holiness and honor (1 Thess 4:3–4).

3. Never put yourself in tempting situations.

Leave and seek accountability (Gen 39:12). You cannot fight this alone. You also need a strong Christian to help you. Find someone who is trustworthy and has an ongoing and deep relationship with God, who is willing to listen to your struggles and pray with you and for you.

4. Remember our great and awesome God who died for our sins (Neh 4:14; 1 Cor 11:25)

Remember the blood He shed for you on the cross. Remember that we will need to give an account of our life when we see Him face to face on the judgment day (Rom 14:12).

D. Oaths

Finally, let us read Matthew 5:33–37.

Oaths, meant to be a solemn declaration and sign of trustworthiness, were often misused as a way to make up for a lack of personal integrity. Jesus wants us to speak the truth from our hearts. If asked to swear in court, as long as we are not trying to cover up falsehoods, we need not refuse to testify under oath, just as when Paul claimed that God was His witness (Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23; 1 Thess 2:5, 10; Phil 1:8). Even Jesus testified under oath (Mt 26:63, 64). God wants us to speak the truth. This lesson is emphasized many times throughout the Bible:

- “But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No,’ lest you fall into judgment.” (Jas 5:12)
- “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.” (Prov 12:22)

- “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev 21:8)

Life Application: How do we combat lying?

Let us read Ephesians 4:25. “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.” Paul uses a similar phrase, “put off,” in Ephesians 4:22: “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” From this, we can see that lying is one of the characteristics of the “old man” or “old nature.” Where our old selves were corrupted because of deception and dishonesty, our new selves are born in truth, righteousness, and holiness, and as such, we must strive to avoid any falsehood in our lives.

Check for Understanding

1. **How are we the salt of the earth?** We strive to lift up those around us through our speech and our good works, which are seasoned with grace. At the same time, we must preserve against the moral decay that threatens our society.
2. **What must we do to be the light of the world?** We must reflect the light of God through our actions and good works. We can direct others to a safe harbor: the church. We can provide hope to those who are lost in the dark. We must light the way for others and be a witness for God.
3. **What does the Bible teach about hatred?** Those who hate others will face the same judgment as those who murder.
4. **What must we do if we are angry with someone?** Before we can come before God, we must first reconcile with the other by apologizing and asking for forgiveness. Anger itself is not a sin, but it will become one if our anger leads us to sin.
5. **How does the Bible warn against looking at another with lust?** The Bible warns that looking at another with lust is already committing adultery, a serious sin. Thus, we must guard our hearts against such temptations.
6. **Why must our “yes” be “yes,” and our “no,” “no”?** The Bible warns against lying, as the Lord hates it, condemning liars to experiencing a second death. Rather, we must speak truthfully, as the Lord delights in those who deal truthfully.

Memory Verse

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matthew 5:14)

Meaning

We are to reflect the light of Christ so that everyone can see it in us. We are to let our light “shine” by glorifying God in:

1. Our faith—Be ready to give an account of the hope that we have (1 Pet 3:15)
2. Our speech
3. Our trustworthiness
4. Our integrity
5. Our Christ-like character: the fruit of the Holy Spirit
6. Our compassion—Lead others out of the darkness and into the marvelous light to Jesus Christ

A city that is set on a hill can be seen from afar. Truly, many of the cities of the world are located on mountaintops, and these cities can be seen from afar. This means that our actions should not be hidden. The world is looking at us, and we must be seen.

Conclusion

Light is the nature and character of God. He is light—the only source of light—and He is holy and sinless with no darkness. Without His illumination, we continue to walk in darkness (2 Cor 2:14). But if we walk with Him, we walk in holiness, righteousness, and faith.

Psalm 18:28 records: “For You will light my lamp; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.” The human spirit is the lamp of God, and God is the one who lights our lamps. In order to shine for God, our old nature must be broken first. If we truly put to death our old nature, there will be a change in our minds and deeds—especially when it comes to temptations and sin. We must nail our old natures on the cross and become the salt and light of the world.

Lesson 5 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. According to the memory verse, how are we to act as the light of the world?
We cannot simply live out our faith inside the walls of our homes and churches; we need to shine for Him in all our actions, warn others of danger, and direct them to a safe harbor: the church. We can provide hope for those who are lost, show the way to others as a light, and be a witness for God (1 Pet 2:12).
2. What is our duty as the salt of the world?
Avoid being contaminated by the world but instead enhance and flavor it with God's qualities, and preserve it against moral decay.
3. What does Jesus teach us about anger? What are the dangers of anger?
Those who harbor anger against another will receive the same judgment as murderers. While anger itself is not a sin, it can lead to the disobedience of God's will.
4. Where does adultery begin according to God? What are four ways we can guard ourselves against it?
We have committed adultery already if we think about it in our heart and mind. We can avoid immorality by knowing God's will, glorifying God in our body, putting off our old self, and being obedient and holy children.
5. What can you change about yourself in order to better reflect God's light in the world?
Personal answers. Common responses may be speech, anger, motivation, or habits involving cleanliness or time spent playing versus studying.
6. What action will you take this week or quarter to try and change this?
*Personal answers. Remind them to write down **actionable** responses, meaning something that is tangible and checklist-able (e.g., "pray for five minutes every day" versus "pray more"). Examples: Place a quarter in a jar for every swear word ("swear jar") or take ten deep breaths before speaking when angry.*