

Vows, Oaths, & Enemies

Lesson 6

Text: Matthew 5:33-48

1. Again Jesus begins with “you have heard” in regard to the Pharisee’s approach to spirituality. There is no Old Testament teaching that corresponds to what the Pharisee’s “had heard”. There are some passages that addressed vows however. See Lev 19:12, Ex 20:7, Num 30:2. What loophole were the Pharisees trying to create?
2. What is the main point that Jesus is trying to make in verses 33-37?
3. What are the practical lessons that can be taken from Jesus’ teaching here?
4. Are we really never to swear/take oaths at all as Jesus states in verse 34? Consider Rom 1:9, 9:1, II Cor 1:23.
5. Consider verse 38. What was the real reason behind the regulations for retribution in the OT if someone had wronged you? (Deut 19:20-21, Ex 21:23-24)
6. Is Jesus just issuing a doctrine of “non resistance” in verses 39-42 or is there a deeper message? Explain your answer. Can we really never do anything to restrain evil in others?
7. How are we to deal with issues of self defense or defense of the helpless in light of these scriptures?
8. Did the OT really teach the principle of “hate your enemies”? Many would point to the OT to say that the principle is there based on the wars that were declared against the pagans of that time. How would you answer that? Consider Jonah 4:9-11, Job 31:29-30)
9. Describe the type of love that Jesus is commanding in verses 44-47. Is this a warm emotional love? How do we obtain this kind of love? (Phil. 2:5ff)
10. Lets consider the topic of war. How are we to handle this as citizens of God’s kingdom? Is there ever a point where the citizenship we have in our country takes precedent over the citizenship we have in God’s kingdom?