

BBC SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE △▽◀▶ **Sermon on the Mount: Controlling the Uncontrollable 5:31-37**

How to use this guide: This fall we invite you to join our church family in digging deeper into the Scripture(s) preached each Sunday. We believe life change happens best in the context of small community where you can engage God's Word while inviting people into your life to encourage you to continue growing in Christ-likeness.

Background: Divorce and invoking the name of God to give greater credibility to a statements was common practice in 1st century Israel. Rabbis debated what constituted credible reasons to get divorced. The school of Shammai had a conservative interpretation of Deut 24:1 while the school of Hillel taught that a man could divorce a woman for just about any reason. Making oaths using God's name was such a common practice that entire sections of the Talmud were devoted to identify was an appropriate use of such an oath and what was not. Jesus speaks directly into these two areas and identifies to His followers that they are to surrender control of the uncontrollable to God.

Getting Started: Personal Study

1. Read Matthew 5:31-37 and Matthew 19:3-9.
2. How do Jesus' statements contrast with the Pharisees questions?
3. Jesus points back to Geneses (pre-fall) to show God's original design for marriage. How do marriages today come up short in representing that original design?
4. What can you do so that your marriage can begin to reflect God's original design?
5. How does divorce reveal the hardness of our hearts?
6. How might the topic of oaths and vows be connected to marriage and divorce?
7. Why was Jesus opposed to oaths?

Digging Deeper: Scripture Connections

1. God created only one Eve for Adam, not multiple Eves or another Adam. Read and interact with the following passages: Genesis 2:24; Leviticus 18:18, 22; Deuteronomy 17:17; Romans 1: 26-27.
2. What situation is presented in Deuteronomy 22:13-19 and 24:1-4?
3. Read Malachi 2:13-16.
 - I. What attitude did the people have in the worship?
 - II. What was the cause of the situation?
 - III. What is God's attitude toward divorce?
4. What is forbidden in Leviticus 19:12 and why?
5. How does Leviticus 19:12 connect with Israel's behavior in Isaiah 48:1-2?
6. What do we learn from Numbers 30:1-2 and Deuteronomy 23:21-23?
7. What counsel does Proverbs 20:25 and Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 give us?

Getting Together: Group Study & Discussion

1. Both control and faithfulness are addressed in this section of scripture. Why are these important themes for marriage and our witness?
2. What do you derive from Genesis 2:18-25 about God's purpose for marriage?
3. What are current pressures on marriage in our culture and how does scripture answer them?
4. What did people hope to accomplish when they swore by the name of the Lord or by heaven or earth or Jerusalem?
5. Have you made promises and not been able to keep them?
6. What oaths are appropriate for Christians? What oaths are not appropriate?
7. Pray Ephesians 3:14-19 over one another and ask God to strengthen one another's faithfulness to surrender control to Him for the uncontrollable things in life.