



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

### 11. Love like your Father (Part 3)

#### Read Matthew 5:33-48

1. Look up 1 Timothy 1:9-11. Paul says something surprising. He says that the law is not for righteous people but for unrighteous people! ***Looking over the previous passage on divorce and the current passage on oaths, how does Jesus treat the law of the Old Testament? What is the only law for Christians?***
2. Think about your words over the last week. ***Now, without necessarily confessing in front of everyone, spend time discussing the underlying reasons we tell lies. In other words, what is our motivation to lie (and it will definitely be different for different people)? How does all this help us obey Jesus and let our 'yes' be 'yes' and our 'no' be 'no'?***
3. ***Practically, in a busy world on a day to day basis, how do we guard our mouths and keep them pure?***
4. ***Looking over verse 38-41 discuss how the love of God for us empowers us to sit lightly to our honour, our rights, and our possessions. Have you experienced such freedom? What holds you back?***
5. Read verse 43-47. ***Discuss some of the reasons some people are hard to love. Now compare our attitude to that of God's as described in 44-45 and Romans 5:6-8. How can we change and be more like our Father?***
6. We are at the end of Matthew 5. ***Taking 5:48 as a summary statement, and looking over Matthew 5:17-48, in your own words answer someone who says, "Ok, so you say that Christianity is different to religion and there aren't any rules. How then are Christians supposed to live?"***

## Leaders Notes

1. Both laws on divorce and laws about oaths are given in the context of sin and brokenness. Laws are only there because of sin. If there was no marital breakdown and no lying, there wouldn't ever have to be laws about these things. This helps us understand how Jesus treats the law. He brings His disciples back to what we could call 'first principles'. In other words, Jesus kind of says, 'Don't worry about the laws around divorce, just stay faithful in your marriage. Don't worry about rules governing oaths, just always tells the truth.' In short, Jesus calls His disciples to a much higher law, the law of love.
2. Different people lie for different reasons. Some lie to gain an advantage over others – like second hand car dealers! Their motivation is not hatred for others. Rather, they treasure profit above God. Another person lies about small, silly things. Not because they hate others, but because they love others – too much! They desperately want people to like them. So they lie. This shows they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Others lie out of fear. Fear of punishment, or fear of reprisal. But God is the One we ought to fear above all things. And so we could go on. The solution then, is to love God. The more we love God and treasure Him the more our mouths will be set free to speak like He does: truthfully.
3. Keep rehearsing the gospel to yourself every single day. The gospel of Jesus Christ is God's true word to me about how much He loves and accepts me. This love and acceptance frees me from fear of man. I can be free to tell the truth. I get to fear no people and I am freed from the desperate need to seek approval because God approves of me. And I get to admit my mistakes because I'm loved and accepted by my Father. In other words, I am free to love radically by speaking the truth. Practically, be aware of those situations where you are most tempted to lie. Perhaps before a meeting, sneak out to the loo and pray. Or maybe when you meet with a particular person or bunch of people that 'put you on the back foot' pray first. Keep God and His love for you in all your thoughts.
4. In each case, see how the gospel of God's love gives us the very things we are scared to lose and therefore fight for. If we are dishonoured (and by the way, that is what the slap on the cheek means. In their culture it was a sign of dishonour (like some people give the middle finger in our culture). Jesus is not talking about being violently assaulted – in the face of which you should do your best to defend yourself or at least get yourself out of harms' way!) The gospel gives us incredible, Christ-bought honour as the children of God – no need to fight for your honour and status. The gospel gives us possessions that are out of this world. The gospel is God's unimaginable generosity to us – we can afford to let things go when it comes to our possessions – bearing in mind that our possessions are just temporary things. For the right attitude see Hebrews 10:34.
5. This is the main point of the chapter. When we truly take to heart a) our unloveliness and b) God's great love for us in spite of us and c) at what great cost He loved us, then with the help of the Holy Spirit, such a love can only change us. As the song goes, 'love changes, love changes everything'. Anyone who has truly been loved has been changed (for the better) by such love. Any child growing up in any family is shaped by the love (or sadly, the lack of love) in that family. So Christians, loved perfectly by a perfect Father, change and become more loving like Him.
6. Actually, this was a real question a Muslim asked me when he attended the Search course we ran a few years ago. I'm not going to give an answer here – the aim is to let each member of the Growth Group try and summarise what we have seen over the past few weeks. Each person will summarise it slightly differently, and hopefully each member of the group will help each other get better at 'giving a reason for the hope that we have.'