

Sermon on the Mount

Loopholes: Anger & Judgment

Loopholes

What's a loophole?

a way of avoiding or escaping a requirement, regulation, or the like, esp. by taking advantage of an omission or ambiguity in the written text of a legal contract or other document. (wordsmyth.net)

People love finding loopholes to "get out of" having to obey certain rules or laws. Can you think of a rule in your family or school that people find ways to get around?

What's the purpose of a (good) law or rule? *(to keep people safe and well, and to keep order/peace)*

Can you name the ten commandments as a group?

Why did God give these "commands"?

Just like us, God's people in the Old Testament found "loopholes" so they could do what they wanted to, but not be seen as disobeying God's commands.

Read Matthew 5:21-26

From reading this, what commandment God's people were seeing as a "loophole"?

"I can talk to or treat anyone the way I want to and that's okay because the command says not to murder and I'm not murdering them!"

What three things from verse 22 does Jesus say are equal to murder?

Angry

Biblehub: *orgízō* – be angry, as expressing a "fixed anger" (settled opposition).

"Sinful (unnecessary) anger" focuses on punishing the offender rather than the moral content of the offense.

Why do we think "anger" like that isn't such a big deal?

Why is it a big deal to God?

How do we make excuses for our anger today?

'Raca'

Biblehub: *rhaká* (apparently related to the Aramaic term *rōq*, "empty") – properly, empty-headed.

This term expressed contempt for a man's head, viewing him as stupid.

'You fool!'

Biblehub: *mōrós* (the root of the English terms, "moron, moronic") – dull in understanding; nonsensical ("moronic"), lacking a grip on reality (acting as though "brainless").

How do we do this and justify it today?

Why do we think this isn't such a big deal?

Read James 3:9. Why is it a big deal to God?

What does Jesus declare as the consequences of these actions?

Judgment, court/trial, fire of hell

These are things that would have been thought of as consequences for murderers, not for people who are just angry or insult someone else!

(over →)

Why do you think he used such strong language?

To show how serious this was!

(Obviously these are the very things Jesus died to save us from, but that doesn't mean it's not serious)

How were the people missing the point of the God's commandments by finding "loopholes"?

What did God really want for them? What did he want their lives and their community to look like?

Read verses 23-24.

How do our relationships with people affect our relationship with God?

How important to God are our relationships with other people?

What helpful solution does Jesus give to this in Matthew 7:1-5?

Close by reading Philippians 2:5-8 out loud together.