

NEW: FINDING YOUR HUMANITY

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Pastor Derwin L. Gray – January 8, 2017

1. Open in prayer.
2. Discuss the following statement from Pastor Derwin's teaching: "If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. If you want to know what humanity was intended to be, look at Jesus. Jesus wants to show us how to live. And Jesus wants to indwell and empower us so we can live life as it was intended."
3. Pastor Derwin said, "The quality of your life will be determined by the quality of your relationships." Discuss how this has proven to be true in your life.
 - a. Read Matthew 5:21-26 NIV
 - b. What does this scripture say about living with anger towards one another?
4. Pastor Derwin said, "Anger and unforgiveness ruin your emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical health." Read the following quotes.
 - a. "Repressed anger — where you express it indirectly or go to great lengths to control it, is associated with heart disease," says Dr. Chris Aiken, an instructor in clinical psychiatry at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine and director of the Mood Treatment Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
 - b. In a 2012 study published in the journal of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, researchers found that anger can exacerbate symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), a condition characterized by an excessive and un-controllable worry that interferes with a person's daily life.
 - c. Discuss your thoughts on how anger and unforgiveness negatively affect us physically and mentally.
 - d. Read Matthew 5:22 to see how anger and unforgiveness affect us spiritually.

Note: The word "hell" here is the word Gehenna. We must be careful to distinguish this term from Hades, which is comparable to Sheol in the OT. Gehenna is a contracted compound word from the Hebrew terms "valley" and "the sons of Hinnom." It was the place outside Jerusalem where the god of fertility and fire was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:7; 2 Kgs. 23:10; 2 Chr. 28:3). The Jews turned it into the city's garbage dump where the fire continued to burn, the smell continued to rise and the worms proliferated. Jesus used it as a metaphorical example of eternal separation and punishment. Jesus is the One who speaks of hell! The term occurs only once outside the words of Jesus (cf. James 3:6) [Utley, R. J. (2000). *The First Christian Primer: Matthew (Vol. Volume 9, p. 44)*. Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.]

How To Live Out Reconciliation As an Act of Worship:

1. **Conviction:** *Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember... Matthew 5:23 NIV*
 - The Holy Spirit will convict you of who you need to reconcile with. Our prayers, our gifts and our singing are meaningless if we live with anger and unforgiveness.
 - Share a time when the Holy Spirit convicted you to reconcile with someone.
2. **Confession:** *First go and be reconciled to them... Matthew 5:24 NIV*
 - Go the person you have hurt in a non-defensive, humble posture. Be compassionate and clear about the issue.
3. **Repentance:** *Settle matters quickly with your adversary... Matthew 5:25-26 NIV*
 - Repentance means to know that when you hurt a person, it's first a sin against God, then it's against a person. Say, "I'm sorry," to the Lord and to the person.
 - Discuss what this means for your relationships.

4. Forgiveness

- Read Ephesians 4:32 ESV
- Ask for the forgiveness from the Lord (Read 1 John 1:9). Then, ask for forgiveness from the person you hurt. Discuss.

5. Restore

- Read Luke 19:8-10 ESV
- After you've asked for forgiveness, try to make right what you did you wrong. Restore what was lost. For example, Zacchaeus gave back four times what he stole. Discuss.

6. Reconciliation

- Read Matthew 5:24b NIV
- You can only reconcile with people who want to be reconciled. You are responsible for your actions, not for the response of others.
- Being a child of God, who is indwelt by the Lord Himself, means we are called to live in a way that reflects Jesus and His Kingdom. Discuss.

7. Close in prayer. Take time to pray for needed reconciliation to take place.