

Counter Rev Small Group Conversation based on Matthew 5:21-26

Keep this conversation no longer than 35-45 minutes. Draw out the contributions of everyone. Land the time in prayer, but remember to gently coach people who haven't prayed in a group before. Of course, there's no pressure to pray aloud. Encourage people to download the commentary of Matthew 5:21-26 off the website for personal study. Remind people to bring their Bibles to group.

Getting to know each other

- Who was your best friend in high school? And what made that friendship so special to you?

Understanding Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:21-26

- *Optional: if some of your group didn't hear the Sunday message, then play the summary audio clip to the group.*
- *Read verses 21-22.* Moses told everyone not to *kill people*, lest they experience the judgment of the authorities. But Jesus tells his disciples not to *kill relationships*, lest they experience the judgment of God. He speaks of three things that kill relationships: 1) anger, 2) contempt ('Raca', a spitting sound, means 'you're worth nothing to me') and 3) insult ('You fool!'):
 - *With regard to anger:* Is there a difference between sinful anger and non-sinful anger? If so, what?
 - *With regard to contempt:* What are the most common ways people today tend to show contempt for other people? Give both obvious and subtle examples.
 - *With regard to insult:* From your experience, why is an insult so potentially damaging to people and relationships?
- *Read verses 23-24.* What point do you think Jesus is making here about restoring fragile relationships in the scenario he describes?
- *Read verses 25-26.* In this scenario, Jesus warns of the escalating cost / damage that comes into our lives when we don't proactively seek to repair broken relationships. From your experience, what is the 'cost' of neglecting broken relationships?

Applying and praying about Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:21-26

- Get everyone to spend 5 minutes on their own, with pen and paper in hand. Ask them to prayerfully reflect on three questions:
 - 1) What one thing in your style of relating sometimes damages your relationships?
 - 2) Is there a broken relationship in your life?
 - 3) What one thing can you do to proactively strengthen your current relationships?
- Then encourage everyone to speak to God about their reflections. Also, encourage them to listen for anything he might want to say.