

Counter Rev Small Group Conversation based on Matthew 5:27-37

Keep this conversation no longer than 35-45 minutes. Do your best to draw out the contributions of everyone. Don't be 'rigid' in the use of this guide - reword or change or leave out questions if you want.

Two options to help people get to know each other

- Choose one of the two options:
- *Option one:* Every person is to think of and then share two not so obvious facts about their own life - but one of those facts is not true. Then the group is to guess which one is the lie.
- *Option two:* What was / is your parent's marriage (or relationships) like? And in what ways, if any, has this impacted on your view of marriage.

Understanding and applying Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:27-37

- *If some of your group did not hear the Sunday message, then play the summary audio clip.*
- *1) Read verses 27-28.* Jesus speaks of the importance of sexual purity in thought. Luther distinguished between the temptation to lust and the sin of lust by saying: 'We can't stop a bird from flying over our heads, but we can stop it from nesting in our hair.' How can we tell the difference between the temptation and the sin of lust?
- *2) Read verses 29-30.* What are some of the radical (and sometimes sacrificial) precautions or actions we might need to take to become or remain sexually pure in thought and deed?
- *3) Read verses 31-32.* Without debating the ethics of divorce and remarriage, what do we learn about Jesus' view of marriage in this verse? What, in your opinion, is the most important one or two things a couple must do in order to strengthen and protect their marriage from divorce?
- *4) Read verses 33-37.* Jesus calls us to be the antithesis of the devil in our speech. He calls us to simple, straightforward, non-deceptive and non-manipulative speech. He calls us to give thought to our words before speaking, and to say what we mean, and to mean what we say. Are you like this? In what practical ways can we more consistently be like this?

Praying through Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:27-37

- James 5:16 says, 'Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.' In same-gender groups of 3 people, obey this verse. Along the themes of sexual purity, marital faithfulness and honest speech, confess sins to one another and pray for God to bring transformation in each other's lives. (Don't pressurize any new people who haven't prayed in a group before - let them know that they don't have to confess or pray unless they're comfortable to do so).