

Be Careful What You Think

Matthew 5:21-48



New Testament 1
Part 2: The Sermon on the Mount

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 1 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 5:8,21-48; Psalm 51:10; 24:3-4; 101:2-3; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2; Ephesians 4:20-22

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site

- ["Little Feet, Be Careful"](#)
- ["Oh, Be Careful, Little Eyes, What You See"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Jesus' Birth & Sermon](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 1 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- Apologetics Press' [Bible Timeline](#)
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- "Matthew Chapter Summary" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- "[Map of New Testament World](#)" (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- "[Map of Palestine](#)" (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- Make a TV frame from a box. Use pictures (from magazines, old handwork, etc.) of famous people who do and say things that are not pleasing to God, as well as pictures of "ordinary" people doing things Jesus condemned in this section of the



Sermon on the Mount. As you talk about each person and what he/she is doing, slide the picture to the front of the box, i.e., the “TV screen.”

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

If I learn to control my thoughts, I can learn to control my actions.

LESSON STARTS HERE



TEACHING ALERTS:

- Note that Matthew 5:33-37 is not referring to “swear words” or “curse words.” See the second teacher’s note for more information.

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

One of the things that Jesus taught us is that we should always be careful how we act. Being mean or saying something unkind is very hurtful and is not the way we should act.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

There are a lot of people who say they are Christians, but do not act like a Christian in everyday life. Jesus taught us that you do not have to do something “really bad” (steal, murder, etc.) to do wrong. We need to act like Christians every day of our lives and in everything we do.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus wanted the people to understand that they needed to be good people on the inside—not just act like they were good people. He wanted them to know that the Jewish teachers and leaders (the Pharisees and scribes) were not being good examples because they did not live in the same ways that they taught the people to live (Matthew 5:20; 6:1-6). In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of important Old Testament laws and added emphasis to what we **think**, what our **attitudes** should be, and what we **do**. [**Jesus scrutinized the Pharisees’ and scribes’ interpretation of the Law and how they applied it, rather than questioning the validity of the Law itself.**]
2. One of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament says, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). Jesus told the people that it is not only wrong to murder, but it is wrong to have selfish anger. Someone with selfish anger constantly thinks about hurting others, is not willing to forgive, refuses to calm down when his feelings are hurt, and looks for ways to get back at others (i.e., to take revenge). Jesus also said it is wrong to use insulting words and words which hurt and can cause even more anger. [As someone once said, “Murder doesn’t start with killing. It starts with hate.”]



NOTE: In his commentary on Matthew, William Barclay says that “Raca” was an insult meaning “a brainless idiot, a silly fool, an empty-headed blunderer. It is the word of one who despises another with arrogant contempt.” To call someone “fool” was to accuse someone of immoral character or to cast doubt on his reputation.

3. The Old Testament said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” but it did not allow people to take revenge into their own hands (Leviticus 24:19-24). It also did not command the Jews to hate their enemies. The Old Testament did not command or encourage hateful, vengeful actions toward other people (Leviticus 19:17-18; Exodus 23:4-5). The Old Law limited retaliation to avoid abuses and make the punishment fit the crime, allowing punishment to be determined only by a (hopefully, unbiased) judge (Deuteronomy 19:18). Solomon encouraged kindness to enemies as much for our own benefit as for theirs (Proverbs 25:21; 24:29). Jesus said that we should not treat enemies as they treat us; instead, we should do good to them and pray for them. Jesus was often insulted and mistreated, but He never tried to “get back” at anyone.
4. In the New Testament period, the Jews had developed an oath system whereby the object that a person swore by determined how truthful a person was being. Swearing by heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, or even the hairs on one's head would determine how serious a person was about keeping his promise and telling the truth. Equivalents today might be swearing “on so and so's grave.” Jesus told the people that they should never swear on various objects like that. Instead, a Christian's word—his “yes” or “no”—should carry enough force to make anything more unnecessary. A Christian should be so truthful and should be known as such a trustworthy individual that such oaths should not be used. Read also James 5:12.



NOTE: Some cite Matthew 5:33-37 as proof that one should not use “swear words” or “curse words.” While it is true that the Bible condemns using such language, this passage should not be used as proof. This passage refers to oaths and swearing by physical objects, not profanity or vulgarity.

5. If we listen to music that is full of hate, prejudice, and bad language, if we watch violent movies and TV shows that encourage us to think that revenge is okay and that hurting others is “no big deal,” then we will begin to think like that ourselves. And those thoughts will surface in the things we say and the ways that we act. We cannot be happy, and God will not bless us, if we do not control the way we think and the words that we say.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Believing What Jesus Believed](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the argument that only the “teachings of Jesus” are particularly relevant to Christians today.

OBJECT LESSON (FOR 1ST-4TH GRADERS):

Cut out a child's silhouette from a large, thin sponge. As you talk about attitudes and actions to avoid, put a touch of food coloring or tinted water onto the sponge cutout (green for jealousy, red for anger, blue for wanting what someone else has, black for lying or stealing or wanting to hurt someone). Discuss how easily we absorb the bad things we see all around us. When the object lesson is completed, the ugly discolored, messy sponge shows what can become a part of every fiber of our being.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- [“Be Careful What You Think Coloring Sheet”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Talk with children about times when they have been angry, hurt, or jealous, and how they acted or should have acted.
- Fingerprint Bee Craft: Materials—washable black ink pad, yellow colored pencil, black fine point marker, and blank greeting or index cards with the memory verse already written on them. Have the children press a finger onto a stamp pad, then press lightly onto the paper to make the bee body. With a fine point marker, draw wings, stripes, antennae, and a face. Color in the tail and wings with a yellow colored pencil. Allow the children to keep the card to memorize their verse. (Kindergarten and 1st graders may be able to do the drawing and coloring themselves.)
- “What Should We Think About?” game: Have two poster boards, with each one having a picture of a child on it with “think bubbles” coming from his head. One poster is what we should think about, and one is for what we should not think about or fill our mind with. The teacher passes out “think bubbles” with words on them of things we should and shouldn’t think on. The children stick their bubbles on the correct poster when it’s their turn. (This may be better suited for kindergarten and 1st grade.)

1st-2nd Graders:

- Talk with children about times when they have been angry, hurt, or jealous, and how they acted or should have acted. Have magazines for children to cut pictures showing people acting in a godly way and also people being angry, hurt, jealous, or acting in a bad way. Give them each a piece of construction paper divided into two sections (actions that make God proud and actions that make God sad). Have them glue their pictures in the appropriate section.
- On slips of paper or index cards, write situations in which the kids have to be careful what they think and how they act. Write Scripture references on the board that could apply to each one. Ask the kids to choose the scriptures that apply to each situation.
- “What Should We Think About?” game: Have two poster boards, with each one having a picture of a child on it with “think bubbles” coming from his head. One poster is what we should think about, and one is for what we should not think about or fill our mind with. The teacher passes out “think bubbles” with words on them of things we should and shouldn’t think on. The children stick their bubbles on the correct poster when it’s their turn.
- Bible drill with memory verse
- [“Be Careful What You Think”](#) word search (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Be Careful What You Think Matching Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Have the children read AP’s [“What the Bible Says about What Goes into Your Mind”](#) morality tract
- Advanced Bible Reader: Have the kids read Matthew 5 again (and chapters 1-4, if they have not done so this quarter). [This could be assigned Sunday, to be completed by Wednesday.] If they did not take the quiz last week, print out copies of the Matthew 1-5 quiz from AP’s [Advanced Bible Reader](#) (ABR) site. Have each of the children take the quiz. If you have not already, outside of class, make ABR accounts for each of the children and put their answers into the ABR quiz for each child. Show them their scores in the next Bible class, and explain what ABR is.

- Talk with children about times when they have been angry, hurt, or jealous, and how they acted or should have acted.
- On slips of paper or index cards, write situations in which the kids have to be careful what they think and how they act. Write Scripture references on the board that could apply to each one. Have the students look up the scriptures and ask them to choose the scriptures that apply to each situation.
- Bible drill with memory verse
- [“Be Careful What You Think”](#) word search (provided in activity sheets)
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SONGS:

“LITTLE FEET, BE CAREFUL” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: J.H. Rosecrans

I washed my hands this morning,
 So very clean and bright,
 And lent them both to Jesus,
 To work for Him ‘til night.

CHORUS:

Little feet, be careful,
 Where you take me to;
 Anything for Jesus,
 Only let me do.

I told my ears to listen,
 Quite closely all day through,
 For any act of kindness,
 Such little hands can do.

(CHORUS)

My eyes are set to watch them,
 About their work or play,
 To keep them out of mischief,
 For Jesus’ sake all day!

(CHORUS)

“OH, BE CAREFUL, LITTLE EYES, WHAT YOU SEE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see. (point to eyes)

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see.

For the Father up above,

Is looking down in love.

So, be careful little [eyes] what you see.

Oh, be careful little ears what you hear...

Oh, be careful little mouth what you say...

Oh, be careful little hands, what you do...

Oh, be careful little feet, where you go...

Oh, be careful little mind what you think...

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 5:8,21-48; Exodus 20:14; 1 John 2:16

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

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- Refer to "Object Lesson" at the end of the lesson for materials needed.



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

If I learn to control my thoughts, I can learn to control my actions.

INTRODUCTION:

Review Sunday's lesson (see [N.T. 1 Review Questions](#) for example questions).

[N.T. 1 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under "N.T. 1 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

For preschool children: Spend time reviewing Sunday's lesson (review games/activities), emphasizing what actions we do that are pleasing to God.

1. The Old Testament says, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Jesus taught that husbands and wives are to love each other. Jesus taught that it was important not even to look at another woman/man in the wrong way (with impure thoughts). If the husband or wife starts to treat anyone else (or think about anyone else) as if they are married to them, that is a sin. It is not a joke or something to laugh about. It is very, very wrong in God's sight. Jesus called treating someone like they are your wife adultery (Matthew 19:9). From the very beginning, when God created the first man and woman, He had a plan for the home: one man and one woman for life. When a man and woman marry, they make a promise to each other and to other people, but most importantly, to God. They both promise that they will love one another and care for one another until one of them dies.



NOTE: With OLDER CHILDREN, it would probably be a good idea to explain that Jesus' admonitions in Matthew 5:29-30 do not encourage self-mutilation, any more than Proverbs 23:2 encourages cutting one's throat just to prevent overeating. One without hands and eyes can still have impure thoughts. Jesus used exaggeration (hyperbole) to emphasize His point about how our thoughts affect our actions. You might want to (very carefully) show them provocative magazine ads and talk about TV commercials which are examples of how the Devil is trying to fill our minds with evil thoughts.

2. Remember what Jesus said in the Beatitudes? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). We cannot hope to see God (i.e., go to heaven) if we think bad thoughts; those bad thoughts will always show up in our words and actions.
3. 1 John 2:16 tells us that there are basically three types of sin: the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Lust means craving something—wanting something so badly that you think you must have it. Lust of the flesh is physically craving something (with your body, like food, drink, drugs, and people). Lust of the eyes is craving something that you see or look at over and over and want. The pride of life is being too proud of yourself (being "stuck up" or arrogant), believing you're better than everyone else.
4. Do you know the story of David and Bathsheba? David saw Bathsheba and wanted her for himself, even though she was Uriah's wife. David apparently thought that as king, he could get away with anything, but he was very wrong. He took Bathsheba for himself. His sinful thoughts led to terrible actions, and those actions caused terrible consequences for his family (2 Samuel 11). On the other hand, Joseph was in a situation with Potiphar's wife

in which he could easily have made bad choices based on bad thoughts. But he didn't (Genesis 39:7-23)! Joseph realized that committing adultery (treating another man's wife as if she were his own) would be a sin against God.

5. We must not watch TV programs or movies, or listen to music that encourage us to think that adultery and divorce are "no big deal." And it's important that we follow the examples of godly men and women—both today and those in the past—who chose to be faithful to God and to their mates.

OBJECT LESSONS (FOR 1ST-4TH GRADERS):

To illustrate how bad movies, etc., affect us:

1. Have several bowls of "yucky" things (decayed leaves, mud, potato peelings, molded cheese or bread, etc.). Mix them together, and put them in a pretty gift box. Or shape small amounts together into balls and cover them with melted white chocolate. Emphasize that there is no way to make ugly, ungodly things good—good for us or acceptable to God.
2. Using the "garbage in/garbage out" idea, put the things mentioned above, along with shredded paper or toilet paper, into a trash can. Cover everything with shredded colored paper or colorful confetti. Tell the kids that the longer the trash sits there, the more it will smell and the more disgusting it will be—no matter what can be seen from the outside. And when everything is dumped out, it will still be garbage! [Jesus used a similar illustration when He called the Pharisees and scribes "whitewashed tombs" in Matthew 23:27-28.]

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning's lesson.

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