



# Daily Reflections

## February 16, 2020

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### Scripture

#### **Matthew 5:17-37**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.  
I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away,  
not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter  
will pass from the law,  
until all things have taken place.

Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments  
and teaches others to do so  
will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments  
will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses  
that of the scribes and Pharisees,  
you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors,  
You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.

But I say to you,  
whoever is angry with his brother  
will be liable to judgment;  
and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’  
will be answerable to the Sanhedrin;  
and whoever says, ‘You fool,’  
will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar,  
and there recall that your brother  
has anything against you,  
leave your gift there at the altar,

go first and be reconciled with your brother,  
and then come and offer your gift.  
Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court.  
Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge,  
and the judge will hand you over to the guard,  
and you will be thrown into prison.  
Amen, I say to you,  
you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.  
“You have heard that it was said,  
You shall not commit adultery.  
But I say to you,  
everyone who looks at a woman with lust  
has already committed adultery with her in his heart.  
If your right eye causes you to sin,  
tear it out and throw it away.  
It is better for you to lose one of your members  
than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna.  
And if your right hand causes you to sin,  
cut it off and throw it away.  
It is better for you to lose one of your members  
than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.  
“It was also said,  
Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.  
But I say to you,  
whoever divorces his wife -- unless the marriage is unlawful --  
causes her to commit adultery,  
and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.  
“Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors,  
Do not take a false oath,  
but make good to the Lord all that you vow.  
But I say to you, do not swear at all;  
not by heaven, for it is God’s throne;  
nor by the earth, for it is his footstool;  
nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.  
Do not swear by your head,  
for you cannot make a single hair white or black.  
Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’  
Anything more is from the evil one.”

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## Our Scripture Reflection

The self-righteous, self-centered religious leaders of the day had nothing but contempt for Jesus. They saw Him as nothing more than an unsophisticated country bumpkin from up north in Galilee. “What good ever came from up there?” they arrogantly pondered. They thought His growing fame was just a flash in the pan. But when He began drawing crowds they got nervous, so they began attacking His character. They accused Him behind His back of changing the long established religious Law. In today’s Gospel reading we see how He set them straight. Jesus

told them and the crowds that He “did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.” The religious leaders had played a game with the practice of the Law by attempting to do only the “least they could get by with” yet they hypocritically pretended to be obeying the Law. We call this “minimalism”. Jesus never played such a game. No, He taught and lived as someone akin to a spiritual aerobics instructor, challenging His followers to stretch and push and grow beyond their comfort zones. He wanted His disciples to practice their faith to the fullest. That’s what He expects of us today.

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## **Food for your Journey**

God wants to stretch your faith. And just like physical stretching, spiritual stretching is not easy. Stretching requires us to push beyond our normal level of comfort.

I've seen some pretty amazing feats when watching MMA fighters on TV. It's stunning to see how a fighter can effortlessly swing his foot over the head of his opponent with no thought at all. But one thing I know about that fighter is that he took many, many years to stretch those muscles so that he could get to that level. And the stretching in his gym was always designed to push him beyond what felt comfortable.

And so it is with our faith. God wants to stretch you beyond your normal comfort zone. And that is where you will begin to see growth and progress like never before.

--Chris Russell, "10 ways God wants to stretch your faith today," Bible Study Tools, [biblestudytools.com](http://biblestudytools.com).

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## **A Prayer from a Humbled Heart**

Lord Jesus, The Lenten season is quickly approaching and I know I need that holy,season more than ever. I need to stretch and grow in my capacity to,practice my faith to the fullest. I pray for Your light to see what I must change. I pray for the Grace to persevere in my Lenten commitments so that I may truly turn away from sin and back to You. Amen