

# ALT KINGDOM RETURNS

SMALL GROUP GUIDE





## Part One: Alt Anger

Well known. Poorly applied. That's an accurate way of describing so many of Jesus' teachings, including his teachings on anger. Some people think Jesus was just spouting hyperbole. Actually, he was ushering in His Alt Kingdom. We'll start this journey with Jesus' teachings on anger. If you think you have a right to be angry, think again.

**Scripture** Matthew 5:21-26

**Bottom Line:** Only God's anger is justified. Yours is incomplete.

### Discussion Questions

1. What tends to make you angry? Why?
2. Why do you think Jesus expanded the definition of murder to include any form of anger in Matthew 5:21-26?
3. Why do you think it's easy to fuel the anger you feel and to nurse the malice you experience? How does that tend to turn out for you and for the people you're angry with?
4. In the message, Carey said only God's anger is justified. Yours is incomplete. Why is your anger (and the anger of other people) inaccurate or unjustified?
5. Jesus' teachings are well known, but often poorly applied. But that doesn't stop Jesus from telling us to act. He gives us a specific application of his teaching in verses 23-24. Why do you think it is so important to God for you to reconcile with people?
6. Real forgiveness costs you something. Discuss.
7. With whom do you need to be reconciled? Work through the four questions below (in the Moving Forward section). What is it going to take for you to do something about reconciliation?

### Moving Forward

Getting past your anger is hard, but so necessary.

In addition to the time we had together in the services this weekend, take some time this week to process your anger.

Who am I angry at?  
What am I angry about?  
Why am I really angry?  
What will I do about it?

Only God's anger is justified. Yours is incomplete. So forgive.

### Changing Your Mind

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24 NIV



## **Part 2: Alt Sex**

If you really want to get countercultural, just look at Jesus' teachings on sex, marriage and adultery. Almost nobody believes that stuff anymore. Except for Jesus. When it comes to Jesus' alternative teachings on sex and relationships, maybe it's not just a question of what he's longing to save you from. Maybe it's a question of what Jesus is trying to save you for.

**Bottom Line:** Jesus' approach to sex isn't just trying to save you from something bad, he's trying to introduce you to something better.

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:27-32

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think our culture is so obsessed with sex?
2. To what extent have marriage, relationships and sex been a source of joy and pain in your life?
3. Read the teachings of Jesus on marriage, divorce and adultery in Matthew 5:27-32. Why do you think so many people disagree with what Jesus teaches?
4. Your sexuality is not your identity. This is a completely countercultural message. What do you think? Is your identity bigger than your sexuality,?
5. In what ways does this weeks message make you rethink the purpose of relationships, sex and marriage?
6. What does it mean for you when Jesus is trying to introduce you to something better?

### **Moving Forward**

Nobody can go back in this life, but we can all move forward.

Starting from where you are now, what would it mean for you to obey God so you can discover something better relationally, intimately, and sexually? What do you think God has in mind for you and for the people you love and He loves?

### **Changing Your Mind**

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:28 NIV



### **Part 3: Alt Enemies**

It's easy to love your friends, but it's almost impossible to love your enemies. Which is exactly why Jesus tells you to do just that. One of the defining characteristics of people who follow Jesus should be love for their enemies. If you think it's impossible to do that, think again.

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:38-48

**Bottom Line:** Loving your enemy makes no sense until you realize you're the enemy.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Who picked on you when you were a kid? How did that make you feel?
2. Read through Matthew 5:38-48. Make a list of reasons why Jesus' teachings seem impossible to implement.
3. Have you ever seen someone try to implement at least some of Jesus' teachings in today's passage? What happened to them and the people around them?
4. Get a list of names in your mind of people you don't like ... ask yourself and ask God why you don't like them.
5. Now list the reasons God (and other people) maybe shouldn't like you. Write them down.
6. Loving your enemy makes no sense until you realize you're the enemy. If you really believed you were the enemy (no better than anyone else), what might change?
7. Now re-read Matthew 5:38-48 and ask the Holy Spirit to help you begin loving your enemies.

### **Moving Forward**

This week, practice enemy love. Confess your sins, and then bless, don't curse, those who sin against you.

### **Changing Your Mind**

But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. Matthew 5:39-42 NIV



#### **Part 4: Alt Worry**

It's so easy to worry, and if you're honest, it probably seems a little annoying when Jesus tells you to simply stop worrying (which he does). The real questions is how? We'll look at what Jesus says the chief causes of worry are, and what to do about them.

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19-34

**Bottom Line:** Generosity delivers everything money promises.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Spender or saver. Which more accurately describes you? And why?
2. What makes you worry most?
3. Money promises so much...and delivers so little. Have you experienced that to be true?
4. When you read through Matthew 6:19-34, what part of the passage frightens you most? Why?
5. Generosity delivers everything money promises. What do you think? How could giving more cause you to worry less?

#### **Moving Forward**

The action step this week is to double your giving to the local church for the next month. Take whatever you're giving, and double it.

In the message, Carey also challenged everyone to give 10% of their income to the local church starting now. The reality is that for many people 10% is a big stretch.

That's why there's this action step: double your giving to the local church for the next month. Take whatever you're giving, and double it.

Every time a church leader talks about giving in this way, people get upset and point out that 10% is an Old Testament standard. And they're correct. 10% is the Old Testament standard, and Christians don't live by the Old Testament. In which case you might look to the New Testament standard of giving, which is deeply radical generosity (selling properties and possessions and giving radically).

So...if that freaks you out too much, stick to the Old Testament. Or maybe just double your giving. That's a good place to start.

If you want/need some help with personal finances, we can help through the Financial Learning Experience, which has helped hundreds of people live with financial margin and live on mission. Sign up at [ConnexusChurch.com/FLE](http://ConnexusChurch.com/FLE).

#### **Changing Your Mind**

"Wherever the desires of your heart are, there will your treasure be also be."  
Matthew 6:21 NLT

"Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be." NLT



## Part 5: Alt Spirituality

So how do you know you're good with God? How deeply do you have to obey? How often can you mess up? If you blow it, will God give up on you? Will he be mad at you? Will he punish you? These are good questions...but only religious people ask them. Christians ask a whole other set of questions, and Jesus shows us why.

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:1-18

**Bottom Line:** The religious obey to earn love. Christians obey because they've been loved.

### Discussion Questions

1. What bothers you about religious people you know?
2. Conversely, is there anything about certain people of faith that you admire?
3. What do you think Jesus is bothered by in Matthew 6?
4. Religion either makes you arrogant or insecure. Discuss.
5. The religious obey to earn love. Christians obey because they've been loved.
6. What changes might you make to help your life be less religious and more Gospel-based?
7. What would a quietly obedient, more secure you, look like?

### Moving Forward

"The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." Tim Keller

Whenever you feel you have to gain God's approval, remember, in Jesus that you already have it. Decelerate your public talk while accelerating your private walk. Give, forgive and love generously and quietly, and your heavenly father who knows what is done in secret, will reward you. Because you don't have to earn love, you are loved.

### Changing Your Mind

"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Matthew 6:7-8 NLT



## Part 6: Alt Success

Most of people either feel not very good about themselves or too good about themselves. Both are problems. And both are rooted in something sinister that Jesus would love to root out of your life. Once it's gone, a much better understanding of what true success is can emerge.

Scripture: Matthew 7:1-6

**Bottom Line:** Someone else's failure should never make you feel like a success.

### Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of things make you compare yourself to others?
2. In what ways are judgment and comparison linked?
3. Read Jesus' teachings in Matthew 7:1-6. What does Jesus say about judgment?
4. You can't love someone and judge someone at the same time, nor can you love someone you secretly hope will fail or whom you look down on. Discuss.
5. What would have to be true for your sense of success to have nothing to do with other people's failures or successes, but to instead flow out of your relationship with God?

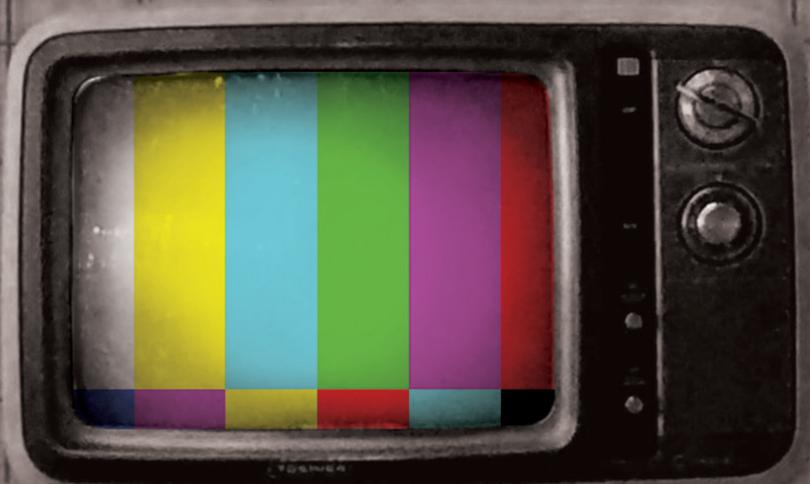
### Moving Forward

This week, watch for how often you judge others, and keep an eye on what Carey called 'comparogance'. Never build yourself up by tearing someone else down. Someone else's failure should never make you feel like a success.

This week, celebrate what God has given others. Leverage what God has given you.

### Changing Your Mind

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged."  
Matthew 7:1-2 NLT



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Maybe the way you're living your life isn't working the way you hoped. The latest trends never deliver what they promise, and life and faith feel, well, underwhelming. Perhaps that's because you're living in the wrong Kingdom.

Jesus says the Kingdom He's ushering in—a radically different Kingdom—starts now. Access it, and it will change you, your family, the way you work, and the way the world works. If you're ready for different, brace yourself. The Alt Kingdom is here.



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