

Non-retaliation

WARM-UP

- What was the hardest thing you had to face this week? What happened?
- Who is the kindest person you know? What has he or she done for you?
- Recall a time when a friend wronged you. How did you respond?

WORD

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." **MATTHEW 5:38,39**

(Read also **MATTHEW 5:40-42.**)

Old Testament law allowed an individual who was wronged to get back what was lost and receive just retribution. It was a way to limit violence and avoid personal revenge by those trying to get back more than what they lost. But, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus raised the bar again and redefined how we should respond when others do wrong to us, insult us, and are unjust to us. This passage can be easily misunderstood. But it is not against self-defense, fleeing from sin, or the use of force by government authorities. Rather, it is about our individual responses as believers when we are wronged. It was also best exemplified by Jesus Himself when He suffered and died for us on the cross. As believers, this is how He commands us to respond.

1 Turn the other cheek.

³⁹*But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*
⁴⁰*And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.* **MATTHEW 5:39,40**

Jesus said that when we are insulted and our personal dignity is assaulted, we are to prevent further violence and turn the other cheek instead. According to 1 Peter 2:21-23, how did Jesus exemplify this for us?

2 Go the extra mile.

“And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” **MATTHEW 5:41**

When we are asked to sacrifice and do something for others that we would rather not, Jesus tells us that we need to go beyond what is asked. We are to go the extra mile. How do you think people would respond if we did this? How can others know Christ's love through us?

3 Give generously to those in need.

"Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you." **MATTHEW 5:42**

Jesus commands us to give to those in need, without expecting anything in return. It is giving of and sharing what is ours with those who can't pay us back or have nowhere else to go. Why do you think Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)?

APPLICATION

- How do you usually respond when injustice is done to you? How should you respond, in light of Jesus' redefinition?
- Who do you need to forgive for a wrong done to you? How can you turn the other cheek, and trust God to take care of you, even when faced with injustice?
- With whom can you go the extra mile this week? What are you willing to do for this person to know God through you?

PRAYER

- Thank God for Jesus and His perfect example of love, sacrifice, and generosity. Pray that you would be more like Christ as each day passes, and that your life will reflect His love.
- Speak a blessing over those who have wronged you, and pray that they will know God and surrender their lives to Him.
- Declare that everything you are and everything you have will be used for God's purposes and glory. Pray that many more would come into God's kingdom through your life and example.

NOTES



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