



Living the Jesus Way

Session 6: How to Respond to Difficult People

Matthew 5:38-42 (NLT)

You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’³⁹ But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.⁴⁰ If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.⁴¹ If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.⁴² Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow. Matthew 5:38-42

The Sermon on the Mount wasn’t given as the way of salvation for the lost, but as the way of life for the children of the kingdom. The essence of Discipleship. Transforming a disciple’s life.

Class Notes:

- Session 1: ‘Worship the Lord’s Day’ - Jesus is the center of our worshiping life.
- Session 2: ‘How to Handle Anger’ - Anger out of love is a righteous anger. Anger out of hurting is an unrighteous anger.
- Session 3: ‘How to Live with Integrity’ - Cultivate a Jesus-focused heart without faking it.
- Session 4: ‘How to Conduct Ourselves as Sexual Beings’ - Seek pleasure as a god - in the long run, we find emptiness, disappointment, and addiction. Seek God first and we find, among many other things, ecstatic pleasure.
- Session 5: ‘How to View Divorce and Marriage’ - The heart of the gospel is reconciliation.
- Session 6: ‘How to Respond to Difficult People’

1. EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER DIFFICULT PEOPLE

- a. Those who are rude, insulting and abusive Matthew 5:39
- b. Those who persecute or even prosecute Matthew 5:40
- c. Those who waste your time Matthew 5:41
- d. Those who are takers Matthew 5:42

A Common Theme Between 5:39,40,41,42 is.....

2. RISE ABOVE REVENGE

- a. Four Qualifications in the OT for responding to these people.
 - i. Restrictive, rather than permissive
 - ii. For judges, not private individuals
 - iii. Rarely taken literally
 - iv. Not the whole picture

3. JESUS' ALTERNATIVES TO REVENGE

- a. "...turn the other cheek.." Matthew 5:39
- b. "Hand over your cloak as well..." Matthew 5:40
- c. "...go two miles...." Matthew 5:41
- d. "Give to the one who asks you and do not turn away..." Matthew 5:42

4. ACT WITH AN ATTITUDE OF RADICAL LOVE

- a. Interpret Jesus' teachings in context
- b. Jesus
 - i. The money changers John 2:13-16
 - ii. Verbally attacking scribes and Pharisees Matthew 23
 - iii. Demanded and explanation of physical abuse John 18:23
- c. Paul
 - i. Refused to allow authorities to act illegally Acts 16:37
 - ii. Enforced his rights Acts 22:25; 25:8-12
 - iii. Taught distinctions between dealings of state and personal morality Romans 13: 1-4

5. APPROACHING A DIFFICULT PERSON

- a. Choose your battles wisely
- b. Pause
- c. Be clear with assertive communication
- d. Continue being polite
- e. Stick to the facts

6. Change your mindset

- a. There will always be difficult people
- b. Increase your frustration tolerance
- c. Examine you own behavior
- d. Be aware of the perception of others

“The state, as well as ourselves as Christian citizens, may need to use force to restrain evil and protect others. But as individuals, we must always act in love and rise above revenge. Both of these are principles of love.”

(Daily Wisdom for Peacemaking: A 365-Day Devotional) Greet one another with a holy kiss.” Say hello with a spiritual token of your affection. Acknowledge a Christian brother or sister with a meaningful sign of friendship, like a warm handshake or gracious words. Paul’s emphasis is less on the kiss and more on how we greet each other.

Greetings are so important. Jesus taught about this. For instance, some people liked to be honored as they were greeted, and Jesus warned his followers about them: “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces” (Mark 12:38).

Jesus also cautioned his followers about greeting only the people they like (Matthew 5:46–47). Rather than being exclusive or selective, we are to have open hearts and reach out to others. Just before Jesus taught his followers about greeting people, he told them, “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:43–45). Clearly, in verses 43–47, Jesus is urging us to make no exceptions in our treatment of those we encounter.

(OVER FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of people do you find it most difficult to deal with? When you encounter them, how do you usually respond? How would you like to respond?
2. What do think Jesus means when he says, “do not resist an evil person” (Matthew 5:39)? Why is this important?
3. In everyday life, what does it mean to “turn the other cheek?” Matthew 5:39
4. Jesus gives four situations in which His followers are not to seek revenge. Can you think of modern equivalents for these?
5. How can we start to act with an attitude of radical love? How would this affect those who are rude to us, and in turn, society in general?
6. What can we do to avoid being a “difficult person”? Have there been times when you were the one in the wrong? How did others react to you then? How did you rectify the situation?