

MASTERING

the Art of Living

Not As It Seems...

INTRODUCTION

Jesus is forever turning things on “their head,” or so it appears. Doesn’t He seem to enjoy keeping us off balance? Now, I don’t believe that that’s what He does, but sometimes, I must admit that’s the way it looks. Perhaps a better way of understanding the issue would be that Jesus’ way of living, the rules of the Kingdom, if you will, are so counter to our culture, that it does sometimes seem like He is playing with our heads. Take for instance our Scripture Lessons. In the Garden, the last night of Jesus’ earthly ministry, the mob comes to arrest Him. He’s betrayed by one of His own, with a kiss(!). One of the disciples (by some accounts, Peter) whips out a sword and lops off the ear of one of those who came to arrest Jesus. (Read Matthew [26:47-56](#)). Jesus rebukes the disciple, telling him this isn’t part of the new order, “this isn’t the way we do things.” It is important for us to note also, that this “new order” appears from the very beginning in Jesus’ teachings about the kingdom, but especially in Matthew, (Read Matthew [5:2-5](#) and [38-42](#).)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Re-read Matthew [26:47-56](#); Understanding that a “sword” can be anything we use to defend ourselves, on what “swords” do you most often rely? In what circumstances do you use a “sword”?
2. Do you ever use words as a sword? (Read [Proverbs 18:21](#)) How is this true?
3. Coming back to [Matthew 26](#) passage, who is the strong one in the story, Peter or Jesus?
4. Do you ever confuse power, position, or authority with strength?
5. Re-read Matthew [5:2-5](#) and [38-42](#); How is Jesus’ teaching concerning discipleship contrary to what our culture call us to be and to do?

TO THINK ABOUT

What many of us have come to believe about life is that if someone comes after us in some way, we are to retaliate. We do this in numerous ways – they gossip about us, we gossip about them; they shovel dirt on our reputation, we shovel dirt on their reputation; they make a power move against us, we make a power move against them; they honk at us, we honk at them. (Note: Jesus is *not* calling us to tolerate abuse, or anything like it.) What Jesus *is* calling us to, is not to become the evil that is being done to us.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, keep a mental note of the times when you would like to (or did) strike back, or speak out, or raise a ruckus. What does it take to resist that urge?

MAKING A CHANGE

Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back in its place; for all who take the sword perish by the sword.”

[Matthew 26:52](#)