

CALLING ALL PEACE MAKERS

The “Sermon on the Mount” has always presented believers with a unique set of important issues. Aside from, “was this really one long sermon?” we are confronted with what sounds like pieces of a conundrum. Did Jesus *really* intend for us to “turn the other cheek”; to give the shirt of our backs; to go “the second mile”? What often happens when we are confronted with these directives is that we tend to trivialize them as simply “nice ideas.”

What if we stopped seeing them as simply “nice,” and started instead to see them as Jesus’ directive for us to creatively find alternatives?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read [Matthew 5:1](#). What is it do you suppose that there was about Jesus that attracted these enormous crowds? What is it about Jesus that attracts you? Why, after so many years do people still Him so compelling? What makes us want to “hear” more?
2. Read Matthew [5:38-42](#). When Jesus, (in v.39), says, “Do not resist an evil person...” He is using a Greek military-verb which means literally, “to stand against.” What are the times and places in your life when the most natural thing in the world is to react in a violent, disruptive, or destructive manner?
3. Did you know that the “eye-for-an-eye” phrase is taken from Deuteronomy? It is this holy safeguard for the punishment to “fit the crime” and nothing more.
4. Re-read Matthew [5.38-42](#). How do you read the passage dealing with the slap, and extending the left cheek? The cultural “stuff” surrounding this directive is much too much to get into here, but we ought not read this as a comment on becoming a doormat. By turning “the other cheek” might we not instead be offering a third way by confronting the perpetrator’s value system – not simply submitting, or retaliating – are we instead be placing the onus on them?
5. This business of the “two garments” has always fascinated me. It again pulls from imagery in Deuteronomy. The giving of a coat/shirt/cloak was actually done as a pledge, or a promise to pay. But through this gesture of offering more than is being asked, are we not again causing the other person to have stop and ask, is this really what I want; do I want to go this far?
6. Are there areas in your life – in conflict, perhaps or in disagreements – where a third or a more creative way of dealing with the situation might open it to new solutions?

TO THINK ABOUT

In this passage for the week, Jesus is saying to us things like: turn, go, give... He is not calling us to be passing, or retaliatory. In fact He is telling us be active, and in essence to become people of the “third way.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Spend some time this week, alone, thinking through the areas of conflict in your life. What are the issues surrounding your finding a new or creative way to a solution?

MAKING A CHANGE

...the peacemakers shall be called the children of God.

[Matthew 5.9](#)