

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, March 24, 2019

**When “Right” Is Wrong
A Study of Matthew 5:38-42**

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We've all heard the saying, "I don't get mad—I get even." Describe why this attitude feels so *satisfying* to our human nature.

We're in a sermon series called "The Spartan Call." The Spartans were legendary for shaping their men into an elite fighting force. The training program, called the *agoge*, began at the age of 7 and continued to the age of 30. In Matthew 5, Jesus recruited us to heed his "Spartan Call." In verses 21-48, he issued six of his toughest challenges.

The fifth of these six challenges has to do with retaliation. Read Matthew 5:38-42.

In this passage when Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said..." he was referring to passages like Exodus 21:23-25 and Leviticus 24:19-20. Read those verses.

Before we look at Jesus's "upgrade" to this Old Testament law, let's understand it. Of the following two options, pick the best way to understand this Old Testament law, and explain your answer:

- "You should defend your rights like this Old Testament law commands so that you won't be taken advantage of."
- "This Old Testament law restrains our sinful reactions, because when someone has hurt us, we're likely to want to do much more than simply 'get even.'"

Pastor Tom suggested six dangers of dwelling on how someone has trampled our rights. Use your sermon notes to fill in the following blanks as you come to them.

First, it draws us into self-_____.

When we re-play someone's offense against us in a continual loop, in what ways can that affect our emotional, spiritual, and relational health?

What's the best advice you were ever given that helped you overcome self-pity?

Second, it tempts us to _____ God.

The unjust actions of other people sometimes make us angry not only at *them* but at *God*. Why?

How can we continue to worship God and trust him even when we face mistreatment from others?

Third, it lures us into committing petty acts of _____ that make us look silly.

Has there ever been a time when you regretted the way you responded to perceived mistreatment?

How did you attempt to fix the damage? (Or, if you left it unfixed, have there been any consequences?)

Fourth, it causes us to waste all our energies seething over what we've lost instead of _____ the things that remain.

Imagine a man has been unfairly fired over a false accusation. Make a list of all the ways he can let bitterness ruin the other parts of his life. (Example: He shouts at his kids. Now list a few more.)

Fifth, it damages us _____.

How can inner resentment and outer rage impact our physical bodies?

When mistreatment makes you want to fly into a rage, what techniques have you found helpful to get your mind and body under control?

Sixth, it keeps you from _____.

Someone has said, “The best walls are built with the stones people throw at us.” What does that mean and is it true?

When we wall ourselves off from people to keep from being hurt, how does it impact our ability to love and serve them?

Conclusion

Summarize the examples of non-retaliation Jesus used in Matthew 5:38-42. Do you recall what Pastor Tom said “the second mile” meant?

To whom did Jesus intend today’s teaching to apply? Check all the right answers and explain:

- Individual believers
- A city’s police force
- A nation’s military

What is “codependency” and is this passage teaching us to be codependent?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests