



ICEBREAKER: If you could talk with only one person for the rest of your life, who would it be and why?

OVERVIEW: Somewhere along the way you have been mistreated by somebody; you have been on the opposite end of meanness, rudeness, insults, prejudice, violence, or persecution. How is a Christ-follower supposed to handle enemies? This is one of the most distinguishing marks of authentic Christianity, and that's why we have to get this right or we will blend in with the culture and cease to make an impact. On Sunday we studied Jesus' words in Matthew 5:38-48; now let's go deeper and make the message personal.

1. **Re-read Matthew 5:38-48.** What insight, principle, or observation from this week-end's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. When was the last you were mistreated by someone? How did it make you feel? How did you handle the situation?
3. What do the following verses say about revenge? Pick 3.
 - Luke 6:27-28
 - 1 Corinthians 4:12
 - Matthew 18:21-22
 - Ephesians 4:31-32
 - Colossians 3:12-13
 - 1 Peter 3:9
 - Romans 12:17-20

HOW TO RESPOND TO YOUR ENEMIES

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4. In Matthew 5:39, Jesus said, "Do not resist an evil person?" Does this mean that Christians are not supposed to defend and protect themselves and others against acts of violence? Explain. Can you think of any Biblical examples to support your answer?
5. The Holman Christian Standard Bible offers a couple of alternate translations that are helpful in understanding Jesus' words. It says that what Jesus meant was, "Don't set yourself against an evil person; or don't retaliate against an evil person." Jesus' point is not that He wants you to do nothing while violent people hurt you and others. His point is don't be an enemy to your enemies, but be a friend to your foes. What are some ways that you can be a friend to your foes?
6. In Matthew 5:39 Jesus commands us to turn the other cheek, meaning we should not return insult for insult. When was the last time someone insulted you? How did you handle it? What would it look like to be a friend to them rather than return insult for insult?
7. In Matthew 5:41 Jesus commanded us to go the second mile, meaning we should show kindness to the prejudiced. Have you ever experienced prejudice or discrimination? Explain. How did you handle it? What would it look like to show kindness to the prejudiced in that situation?
8. In Matthew 5:42 Jesus isn't commanding indiscriminate charity; He means we are to show mercy to the unmerciful – our enemies. What is a real way that you can show mercy to an enemy in your life – helping or serving them in a tangible way?
9. Instead of taking revenge, Jesus calls us to love our enemies in order to display the goodness of God. What should you do if you cannot find the strength to love your enemies?

From now on, when someone wrongs you, instead of retaliating, look for a way to pay them back with a tangible blessing.