

Jesus Our Teacher – Retaliation and Revenge

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile (Matt. 5:38-41; see also Luke 6:29).

"Jesus' teaching, viewed this way, is impractical, masochistic, and even suicidal—an invitation to bullies and spouse-batterers to wipe up the floor with their prostrate Christian victims." **Wink**

"resist" = *antistenai* = to stand (*stenai*) against (*anti*).

Fight – which is a violent response,

Flight – a passive response.

Alternative Response – Jesus' Third Way

3 Instructions

1. *"if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also."*

2. *"and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well."*

²⁵ "If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest. ²⁶ If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset, ²⁷ because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate. Ex 22:25-27.

¹⁰ When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not go into their house to get what is offered to you as a pledge. ¹¹ Stay outside and let the neighbor to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you. ¹² If the neighbor is poor, do not go to sleep with their pledge in your possession. ¹³ Return their cloak by sunset so that your neighbor may sleep in it. Then they will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the LORD your God. Dt 24:10-13

²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded^[a] to plant a vineyard. ²¹ When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. ²³ But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." Genesis 9:20-27.

“by stripping, the debtor has brought the creditor under the same prohibition that led to the curse of Canaan. And much as Isaiah had ‘walked around naked and barefoot for three years’ as a prophetic sign, so the debtor parades his nakedness in prophetic protest against a system that has deliberately rendered him destitute.” **(Wink)**

3. *“and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile”*

“Jesus does not encourage Jews to walk a second mile in order to build up merit in heaven, or to be pious, or to kill the soldier with kindness. He is helping an oppressed people find a way to protest and neutralize an onerous practice despised throughout the empire.” **(Wink)**

Flight

Submission, passivity, withdrawal, surrender

Fight

Armed revolt, violent rebellion, retaliation, revenge

Third Way

Seizing the moral initiative.

Asserting your own humanity and dignity as a person.

Breaking the cycle of humiliation.

Refusing to submit to or accept the inferior position.

Exposing the injustice of the system.

Standing your ground.

Forcing the oppressor to see you in a new light.

Shaming the oppressor into repentance.

Seeking the oppressor’s transformation.