

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

FAMILY DEVOS



Going Above and Beyond

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-42

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:7

“Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.”

For My Family:

How do you respond when others wrong you? Do you want to wrong them back? If someone calls us names or makes fun of us, we are often tempted to get revenge by doing something just as bad (or worse) to get back at them. People in Jesus' day had used God's law as an excuse to get personal revenge when others wronged them, but Jesus taught His followers to live differently. When people wrong us, He wants us to react in love, or as Paul wrote in Romans 12:21, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Jesus doesn't want our hearts to focus on revenge. Instead, He wants our lives to be full of the fruit of the Holy Spirit who lives within us (see Galatians 5:22-23). “Vengeance is mine. I will repay,” says the LORD” (Romans 12:19). When we try to get revenge, we put ourselves in God's place. Not only that, but revenge is usually motivated anger, not love, and James tells us that “the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God,” (James 1:20), it only causes more hurt. It leads to war, not peace.

This doesn't mean we should allow others to take advantage of us, but we should ask for God's help to respond in ways that show His love to others. As God's people, this may even look like taking insults without responding in kind. Jesus knew exactly what this was like. He didn't just teach it, He lived it out. But Jesus is talking about more than insults here. He continues by telling us that when people require or ask things of us, we should go above and beyond in a show of love for God and for our neighbor. If someone sues you and gets your coat as payment, give him even more than he is asking for. If someone compels you to go one mile, go even further.

In Jesus' day the Jews were under Roman rule. At anytime a Roman soldier could come and lay his spear on your shoulder, and that meant you had to carry whatever he wanted you to carry for a mile. We saw this when Simon was made to carry Jesus' cross. Jesus is teaching us, not just to do what you are legally required to do, but to go above and beyond. Others seek to do the bare minimum, but followers of Jesus are willing to go the extra mile. After all, our work isn't unto men, it's unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23). We do all for His glory, whether it's sharing what belongs to you, doing yardwork, or cleaning your room.

None of these things come naturally. This is why we have to let God to teach us through His Word and ask for His help. He has given us everything we need to walk with Him day by day. Ask for His help to better love Him and others by going the extra mile.

Questions for Young Children:

Which one of the things Jesus talked about today is the hardest to do? Why?

Who is the Helper?

What should you do when someone calls you names?

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

How do you normally respond to insults? What might it look like to respond in the way that Jesus tells us to respond?

Does today's passage mean that we should allow others to take advantage of us? Why or why not?

How might you "go the extra mile" for someone this week?