

Small Groups

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

Sermon on the Mount – Week 10– *The Problem with Revenge* – Alex Walton

Nov 12, 2023

[Group leader notes in red]

DIGGING IN:

1. Is there a difference between justice and revenge? If so, how do you define that difference?
2. What are some ways that people tend to confuse justice and revenge?

MAKING IT REAL:

Read Matthew 5:38-42.

(For reference, also read Exodus 21:23-25, Leviticus 24:17-20 , and Deuteronomy 19:16-21).

3. What is your initial response to reading Jesus' teaching in this passage?
4. Is Jesus speaking in hyperbole here? If so, what is the underlying message of what He is saying? If not, what does He intend?

[We do not believe that Jesus is saying here that if someone physically abuses/hits us that we should just stand there and take it. This passage is not about having no boundaries and letting people mistreat us – it is about not “going to war” over it and exacting revenge. The conversation is about the attitude of our hearts.]

5. Alex talked about our normal responses to a threat – fight or flight. But that Jesus is offering a third way. What could happen if we choose to *stay*? What might that look like?
6. Respond to this Richard Foster quote that Alex shared:
“There is a saying that virtue is easy. But the maxim is true only to the extent that God’s gracious work has taken over our inner spirit and transformed the ingrained habit patterns of our lives.”
7. How does a transformed heart happen?
 - Romans 12:2-3 [The renewing of your mind; and thinking of yourself according to reality]
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 [Staying connected with Jesus; becoming like Him]

- James 5:16 [Confessional community – This can happen in spiritual friendship or a small group. At times this could include working with a pastor or counselor to help expose truth and coach toward change]

PRAYER IDEAS

Apply James 5:16:

- Silently ask Jesus, “How are you challenging me personally with this teaching?” “What untransformed part of me are you revealing?” Write down the response.
- Break into groups of 2 or 3, share your responses to the above question, and pray for one another.

WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

Study ahead for next week’s sermon! Read Matthew 5:43-48. How does this passage on loving your enemies shed light on today’s passage?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Red Couch Theology Podcast

If you or group members have questions around parts of the sermon that are not included in the discussion guide, it’s always helpful to listen to *Red Couch Theology*, where Alex and Aaron talk about the sermon and answer questions that come in from people in the congregation. <https://guysdrinkingtea.podbean.com/>