

March 8, 2015
Religion vs Spirituality
Alternative to Revenge
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Matthew 5:38 - 48

Do nothing.

1 Peter 3:9 Pr 12:16 Rom 12:19

Do more than required

Ex 22:26 Romans 12:14;17-21

Do love

Prov 10:12 1 Peter 4:8

Revenge is when we inflict punishment, injury or loss in return for that done to us.

God had given the Judges in Old Testament times the law of "eye for eye and tooth for tooth" to limit vengeance and make punishment fit the crime in the courts. But, some people began to use this law and make it personal to avenge those who had committed wrongs against them. They took revenge. Today, when we are wronged, often our first reaction is to get even. Why is that? What happens to us when we seek revenge?

Read Mathew 5:38-48

Jesus recognized our tendency to seek revenge and said his kingdom operated in a different way, returning good for evil. This is not a natural reaction but supernatural. Why do we need the indwelling Christ to love others and be compassionate especially to those who have wronged us?

Read Romans 12:9-19

In these verses we are given specific actions to help us combat the need for revenge. Discuss these actions. Why are they difficult?

Share about a time when you have either expressed love in response to evil or someone has expressed love to you when you wronged someone.

In Romans 12:20 it goes on to state that by responding in a biblical way, one will heap "burning coals on the head of our enemy. That sounds like revenge. But, actually it speaks of forgiveness. Burnings coals were put in the head wrap from

warmth during cold weather. What can forgiveness do to or for our enemy? Why is forgiveness so important in life?

Read Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus was a crooked tax collector who had cheated many people. They hated him and resented Jesus going to his house. However, after his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus was a changed man and showed it by his actions in verse 8.

Following Jesus is not enough. Your faith must be demonstrated by changed behavior.

In what ways has your faith resulted in changed action toward others? Is it normally easy or difficult for you to forgive others? Why is it this way in your life? Share a change or experience that has happened in your faith walk that others have been able to see.

What steps do we need to take to have the natural reaction to forgive?

When we accept Christ His forgiveness is the catalyst that allows us to forgive others.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:1

How does this verse impact our responsibility to forgive?

Forgiving others frees them to accept Christ's forgiveness.

Not only does forgiveness free others, it frees us a well.