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*But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also*  
(Matthew 5:39)

**I. Be Willing to Suffer**

- a. Historically, we know that wars are settled with violence not with peace. In this teaching, Jesus is not speaking about national insults, but personal ones.
- b. The law, *an eye for an eye*, kept people from forcing the offender to pay a greater price than the offense deserved. And prevented people from taking personal revenge.
- c. Psychologists tell us that violence is born of weakness, not strength. We know all too well in our nation, that a child can pick up a weapon and kill based on personal pain.
  1. The weak person who thinks only of themselves and hurts others then runs away to protect himself.
- d. Jesus fulfilled the law with this attitude: *be willing to suffer loss rather than cause another to suffer*.
- e. "Wait a minute!" "They are making me suffer and I have to take it?" "They will think I'm weak."
- f. "Wait a minute!" "I can't even defend my honor." "You want me to be disrespected?"
- g. In order to *turn the other cheek*, you must stand where you are and not run away. This requires both faith and love. It also means that we will be hurt.
- h. Jesus is trying to establish a "greater righteousness than the scribes and Pharisees."
- i. It is easy to love people in your group, but to love people outside your group that is a challenge.
- j. It takes a strong person to love and suffer hurt. To endure personal insults and carry on in the will of God requires Holy Spirit power.

**II. Love the Haters and Be Blessed**

- a. It is not natural to love our enemies. That is why it needs to be spiritual. Christian love is an act of the will (it's a choice), and not simply an emotion.
- b. Nowhere in the Bible does it teach hatred for one's enemies. (Read Exodus 23:4-5)
- c. Jesus defined our enemies as those who curse us, hate us, and exploit us selfishly.
- d. Praying for our enemies takes the "poison" out of our attitude.
- e. Jesus provided several reasons for telling His disciples to love their enemies:
  1. This love is a mark of maturity, proving that we are sons/daughters of the Father.
  2. Our love can create a climate of blessings that make it easier to win over our enemies.
  3. It is a testimony to others.
- f. The word *perfect* suggests completeness, maturity, as the children of God.
- g. Jesus does not require us to love the enemies' character, deeds or anything else about them.

**III. Thoughts and Considerations for Action**

- a. Be willing to suffer for righteousness sake. Stay on the side of God.
- b. Remember, our enemies are the Lord's enemies. He loves. We should love.
- c. Only God will have the final word over people. God loves His enemies and seeks to make them His children, and we should assist Him.
- d. In Jesus' day it was a violent world, yet he gave the command. He still speaks this command to us today and we live in a very violent/divisive world.
- e. We are to pray and pray for more, until we feel something of God's love for problem people.
- f. How do we live in civility with so many people with strong opinions?