

discussion guide for May 20th

**“EXTREME MAKEOVER-Week 6”**

Changed By Christ’s Toughest Words – Retaliation

Matthew 5:38-42 (p. 1254-DSB\*)

GRIND IT  
BREW IT  
DRINK IT  
SAVOR IT



"Yes, I try to find **common ground** with everyone." 1 Corinthians 9:22b NLT

➤ **GRIND IT** (11:00 am)

Someone once told me, “I don’t have an anger problem, I don’t get mad - I just get even!” Does this really work? Why not?

When someone does something to you, what is your first instinct? Is this something you can control? When does instinct become action? When does sin enter the picture?

Discuss whether or not you agree with the following statement and why. You may want to give some examples from your own experience or that of others:

*“If you think about it, when we want vengeance, we say we want the other person to feel what they made us feel, but we really want much more. We swear to ‘get even’ but end up going far beyond.”*

\*“DSB”=Discovery Study Bibles on common ground tables.

➤ **BREW IT** (11:10 am)

In our extreme makeover, we have heard Jesus take old standards of behavior and raise each to a new level. His formula was *“you have heard it said . . .but I say. . .”* Briefly recall what Jesus said about: murder/anger, adultery/fantasies, divorce/marriage, honesty/integrity. Today’s lesson deals with retaliation/revenge.

1. In Mt. 5:38, (p. 1254, DSB\*) what was the old standard teaching about retaliation? Explain how this was intended to limit retaliation but had degenerated into an excuse for revenge. (See Lev. 24:17-22, p.157, DSB\*)

2. In Mt. 5:39, (p. 1254, DSB\*) how did Jesus “upgrade” the standard of behavior concerning retaliation? In your opinion, what was Jesus’ reason for doing this? (Hint: See Rom. 12:17-21, p. 1504, DSB\*)

3. In Mt. 5:39, (p. 1254, DSB\*) why does Jesus designate the *right* cheek as the one being struck? How should a follower of Christ deal with stinging insults? Why? (Hint: See Rom. 12:21, p. 1505, DSB\*)

4. In Mt. 5:40-41, (p. 1254, DSB\*) Jesus gives two more applications of the new standard at work. Explain the meaning of these two examples. Try to describe a modern parallel example of each of these situations.

5. Read the following out loud then discuss:

*To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past,  
To roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontation to come-  
To savor the last toothsome morsel of both the pain you are giving  
and pain you are getting back.*

*In many ways it is a feast fit for a king.*

*The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself.  
The skeleton at the feast is you. - Frederick Buechner*

\*“DSB”=Discovery Study Bibles on common ground tables.

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➤ DRINK IT (11:40 am)

Pastor Tom mentioned 6 reasons we need to renounce our thirst for retaliation. Check any you are currently struggling with or may have struggled with in the past. If you are comfortable doing so, share your struggles with the group.

Our thirst for retaliation:

- draws us into pouting self-pity where we use our pain to milk others for sympathy
- tempts us to distrust God's interest in us. We no longer pray, praise, & we become cynical and isolated
- lures us into committing petty acts of revenge that make us look foolish and small
- causes us to expend our energies on seething over what is lost instead of enjoying the things that remain
- damages us physically
- walls us in, separating us from those we were meant to impact with the love of Christ

Prayer Time: (11:45 am)

- Pray for freedom from the tyranny of bitterness and vengeful feelings.
- Prayer needs of people outside the group.
- Prayer needs of members in the group.
- Pray for absentees by name. Consider giving \_\_\_\_\_ a call this afternoon.

Go Deeper: Use the “*Savor*” section of this guide in your daily quiet time this week. If you would prefer receiving a daily e-mail, Sign up for “The Daily Cup” e-mail devotions: [herb@hbcaustin.org](mailto:herb@hbcaustin.org)

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➤ SAVOR IT (all week long)\*\*

Last week you discussed retribution and revenge. These readings will continue to explore this topic and reinforce the application of biblical truth.

Monday, May 21: Read Romans 12:14-21, (p. 1504-DSB\*). Where does “extending a blessing” place the responsibility for justice? Does vs.19 indicate taking revenge usurps God’s place to act on our behalf? Can these principles be applied to national policies?

Tuesday, May 22: Read Ephesians 4:29-32, (p.1564-DSB\*). How hard is it to follow these verses when someone hurts you? If we retaliate, how does it affect the Holy Spirit? What is the result of being unforgiving?

Wednesday, May 23: Read 1 Peter 2:20-24, (p. 1638-DSB\*). How did Jesus respond when they “hurled their insults”? How does this help us? Our nature is to strike back, but what happened on the cross to heal us of that infirmity? (vs.24)

Thursday, May 24: Read James 1:26, (p. 1629-DSB\*). What is the most common way we inflict revenge on others? How spiritually mature can we claim to be if we do not control our tongue?

Friday, May 25: Read Psalm 103:1-5, (p. 750-DSB\*). List the “benefits” in verses 2-5. According to verse 6, who is in charge of fairness and justice? When we usurp God’s responsibility in personal retribution, how are the benefits of verses 2-5 affected?

\*\*“DSB”=Discovery Study Bibles on common ground tables.

\*\*To subscribe to “The Daily Cup” email devotions, use the card on common ground tables, or e-mail [herb@hbcaustin.org](mailto:herb@hbcaustin.org).