



JOURNEY GROUPS

DEC 7 LEADER GUIDE

LEADERS NOTES

A few notes for you as a leader as you meet again this week:

- YOU ARE AMAZING!!!! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP THIS FALL! I HAVE SEEN GROWTH IN OUR PEOPLE - AND HEARD AMAZING TESTIMONIES ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE/IS DOING IN YOUR GROUPS! THANK YOU!!
- As we close out the year, remember to keep in touch with your people over the short break! We will start again the week of January 4th. Your group will just continue on without people needing to re-sign up. If you have any potential leaders in your group, I would love to hear about them! We would love to start a few new groups in January if possible! And if you have room in your group starting in January, let me know that as well.
- And just a reminder - if you as a leader could keep the church staff updated on anything going on with your people that would be greatly appreciated. We want to make sure we pray for/reach out to those hurting and sick so please let us know about your group.
- FYI - We will be having a gathering in January to celebrate all that God has been doing, and also for you to meet our new Discipleship Pastor, Ryan!

SHARE

Ice Breaker Questions (use whichever questions you want):

- What is your earliest Christmas memory?
- If you had a “holy pause button” you could press before reacting to something irritating, what everyday situation would you use it for most often?
- What’s a harmless but hilarious “creative response” you’ve used (or would love to use) instead of getting even—something like offering a donut to the person who cut you off?

STUDY

Digging Deeper into "The Sermon on the Mount"

1. Jesus said, "In this world you will have troubles." It's not uncommon to face evil, mistreatment, disrespect, or outright hostility. But instead of responding with retaliation, Jesus calls His disciples to courageously confront evil in a way that refuses to mirror it. He invites us into a radically different kingdom way—creative resistance that keeps our hearts innocent.
2. Matt talked about the temptation we all face when we (or someone we love) are wronged—wanting to take justice into our own hands.
 - Can you share an example—big or small—of a situation in your life (past or present) that made you so angry you found yourself fantasizing about getting even or acting out of anger?
 - What emotions rise up in you in moments like that—fear? pride? hurt? the desire to protect someone you love?
3. **Have someone read, Matthew 5:38-42, keying in on verse 38 to start.**
4. This Old Testament law ("eye for an eye...") was originally meant to limit retaliation, not encourage it. How did this law protect people from escalating revenge or vigilante justice?
5. Why do you think God had to put laws in place to restrain human revenge?
6. **Have someone read verses 38-39 again.**
7. The word 'resist' in Greek is a compound word; its compromised of two parts. Part one means: 'to stand against' and part two means 'in a way that matches'. A literal translation of verse 39 would read: "Do not stand against evil in a way that matches the evil."
 - How does knowing the full meaning of the Greek for "resist" change our understanding of our English translation: "Do not resist an evil person"?
8. Why is maintaining innocence so crucial when dealing with evil?
9. How does losing innocence (stooping to the same level) change the effect of our witness?
10. What does innocence not mean? (*Doesn't mean passive, silent, weak, or indifferent.*)

11. Jesus gave 3 famous examples to illustrate what courageous and creative resistance to evil looks like. **Have someone reread verse 39.**
12. Slapping someone was a big deal back in that culture. What were the differences and meanings behind a backhand slap across your right cheek, and an open palmed slap across your left cheek?
13. So how does turning the other cheek, and forcing someone who has disrespected you with a backhand slap to now slap your left cheek with the open palm of your hand, change the entire situation?
14. Can anyone think of an example in Scripture where Jesus took a slap to the face or suffered physical abuse, and yet He didn't retaliate? What do we learn from His posture in those moments?
15. **Example #2 is found in verse 40. Have someone reread that verse.**
16. What did we learn on Sunday about the cultural context of this example? What, in essence, was Jesus saying you should do if someone was suing you for your tunic (your undershirt)?
17. **Have someone read verse 41.**
18. What did it mean in Jesus' culture if a Roman soldier commanded them to go one mile, what would that entail and why would that be so demeaning and infuriating?
19. How would going a 2nd mile change the relational dynamic between a disciple and the Roman?
20. **Have someone read Romans 12:17-21.**
21. How does knowing that God will repay evil done to us help us restrain ourselves from taking revenge?
22. Are there any situations in life right now where you are being mistreated that you could share, so we could brainstorm some ways you could get creative in how you respond?
23. What would it look like for you to respond in a way that refuses to "match the evil" but still courageously confronts it?
24. What specific next step is the Holy Spirit prompting you to take this week?

PRAYER