



The Gospel According To Matthew

“The kingdom of the heavens is at hand.”  
-Matthew 4:17

September 23, 2007  
Group Reflection Questions

1. Does Jesus description here sound impossible to you?
2. Does a life free of revenge and hate sound good to you? Why might we resist it?
3. What does Jesus mean here by “be perfect?”
4. Has your capacity for love increased since you became a Christian?
5. How do we learn to return blessing for curses?

**Impossible?**  
**Matthew 5:38-48**

Jesus continues here with his picture of the good life—a picture of freedom from revenge and hate. He says, “if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also,” and “love your enemies.” Does that sound impossible? It’s okay in a theoretical situation, but what about the person that slaps me, or the person I hate? How am I supposed to love them? With the way most of us are made up, this is impossible. For this to happen in our lives we cannot depend on our own resources, we need God—we need the Spirit working in our lives. This kind of heart change can only happen with the resources of the kingdom of heaven, not with the law of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The ultimate question here is: “Am I becoming the kind of person Jesus describes?” If we simply worry about what we do when were slapped, we can take ourselves off the hook when it comes to being kicked or punched! Jesus makes the audacious claim here that in the kingdom of God it is possible to return blessing when we are cursed (or slapped, or kicked, or punched). For this transformation we truly need God, we are absolutely dependent on grace.

