



fledge
flēj: to grow the plumage necessary for flight



Turning the Other Cheek (part 2) Admitting It

In the *last fledge* we explained how every one of us has been “emotionally slapped” or treated cruelly by someone. How do we learn to turn the other cheek when we have been slapped?

Let’s start with the example Jesus gave. Imagine getting slapped on the face. It stings, it surprises and it angers you. Imagine how you’d probably respond. I’d step back and away. I’d retreat, definitely not just stand there and let myself get hit again. What would make me stay and offer the “other cheek”?

When Jesus talks about turning the other cheek, he says it is supposed to be a counter-cultural way of reacting to evil. It’s unique. It’s different.

Jesus says this way is better than fighting, better than yelling, better

"We can respond to an emotional slap in our face by absorbing the evil, like grape juice in a sponge."

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even than pretending it didn’t really hurt or it didn’t really happen. Some of us would run away or deny that anything bad happened. Some of us would fight back. Jesus says he wants us to live better than any of these options.

Imagine a puddle of grape juice on your kitchen counter. Think of the way a sponge absorbs that mess, the sticky liquid drawn into the sponge. This is a picture of a new way to deal with evil. We can respond to an emotional slap in our face by absorbing the evil, like grape juice in a sponge.

This works especially well when the person who slapped us is trying to hurt us. Last year a longtime friend of mine stopped returning my phone calls. She ignored me and eventually started spreading lies behind my back. During this time I wanted to hurt her back.

In some small ways I did, I started telling other people how mean she was, how much she had hurt me. I started talking behind her back. I justified it by saying to myself, “Well, it’s true!”

I didn’t turn the other cheek. I didn’t absorb her evil, like a sponge. Instead, I continued the pain: she hurt me so I hurt her so she hurt me, and on and on.



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Even worse, now I had given her a good reason for being unkind to me. I had actually become a worse person. Now she could honestly say, “See how Jonalyn is! She’s just a self-obsessed gossip!”

She now had even more ammunition against me. What’s worse, I had supplied the ammo.

The most embarrassing part of it all is that I had become like her. All the stuff I hated in her, I was doing.

But if I call myself a follower of Jesus, a Christian, I could have taken another road. I could have absorbed her evil. This doesn’t mean I will pretend like she’s a great friend. That’s not what Jesus says. He doesn’t say, “If someone slaps you on one cheek, then smile and pretend it never happened.” Jesus is not into denial. He wants us to admit that we’ve been slapped. He wants us to show that person that we are hurt, not by yelling at them or hitting them, but by intentional action. We can choose how we respond, even if we cannot choose who hits us.

Jesus is telling us to act differently. We can choose to absorb and not deny it happened or fight it with fists. You’ve heard the saying, “Actions speak louder than words” and this is what Jesus is teaching.



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We’re acting out forgiveness and absorption. We’re acting out servant-hood—not denial or victimization. We know we’ve been hurt, which is why we choose to not lash out. To not run away. To not deny the truth.

Jesus didn’t die on the cross pretending our sin wasn’t so bad. He wasn’t in denial. He was admitting that our sin was very, very deep. He faced our sin by absorbing our evil, not by using his fists to beat up the world. On the cross, Jesus turned the other cheek.

“Jesus is not into denial.”

For some of you, you cannot turn the other cheek because you haven’t

admitted you’ve been slapped. I was like that for awhile. People would ask, “Has she hurt you?” I’d respond, “No, I don’t care what she does” or “Why would *that* bother me?” I’d act tough and impenetrable, like a fortress with thick walls. But inside I was crying.

This is where you and I need to start working on being more like Christ. We need to admit that this person has hurt us. I challenge you to get out your journal (or open your word processor and start typing) right now. Start making a record of the



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names of people who have hurt you. Make a list as long as you can and write out what they did that hurt.

We have to be specific.

"Admit it, your friend betrayed you..."

You can't
"turn the

other cheek" until you've realized you've been slapped in the first place. You can't absorb evil unless you know where the evil is. Can you imagine trying to mop up a big spill of grape juice while saying, "There is no grape juice. My counter is perfectly clean"?

Admit it, your friend betrayed you, your brother made fun of you, your mother embarrassed you, your father hurt you.

I had to write it down: "My friend lied about me."

It hurts to admit it, I know. But think of it like the beginning of cleaning a deep cut. You have to clean it out, to get the germs out so that you can heal.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if these people who hurt us didn't have this power anymore? That is exactly what Jesus is helping us do. Our next *fledge* will talk about



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what to do after we've admitted the pain. Stay tuned.

If you enjoyed this *fledge* pass it on to a friend and let us know at mail@soulation.org.

Got questions/comments?

Feel free to **email us**.

or

Join us for Soulation Chat Wednesdays 6-9PM

Bring any question or puzzling life situation



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