



# DAILY DEVOTION

Hey, North Ridge Family! Here are this week's Daily Devos. Our hope is that you will process each of these devos according to how you can respond and love on your family and our city.

## DAY 1

### READ MATTHEW 5:38-48

Have you ever been slandered, oppressed, plotted against, or been doing right but accused of doing wrong? Most of us would be able to answer yes. You have probably also heard of some of these phrases: "Turn the other cheek," "go the extra mile" or "give the shirt off your back." Jesus said them in the Sermon on the Mount. These phrases were meant to be instruction for those who would follow Him.

Jesus is speaking to a people who were oppressed by an evil empire, people who were wronged on a massive scale. Their lives were often at stake, yet Jesus is raising the bar and instructing them, and us, to live in a way that doesn't demand revenge.

How do we respond when we are wronged?  
How is Jesus calling us to respond to others when we are wronged?



## DAY 2

### READ MATTHEW 5:38-39A

“An eye for an eye.” What does He mean? Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament’s oldest laws, which were often seen as a law or allowance of retaliation—an eye was taken so I get to take an eye, a tooth was knocked out so I get to knock out some teeth. However, this was not a law of required retaliation, it was a law of *restricted* retaliation. It was to make sure that people had some kind of restraint so that when someone wronged you, you didn’t go off on them and make things even worse. Retaliation was never intended to be the natural response of the people of God.

Does this mean we do nothing? Is Jesus calling us to a life of passivity? To do nothing in the face of evil? No, people of God are always called to resist evil, to stand against injustice wherever we see it. Jesus himself stands against evil, resists the devil in the wilderness, rebukes false teachers, stands up for a woman who is about to be stoned to death for adultery, talks about injustice and stands in for the oppressed.

How do we resist evil and protect those in need without retaliation and in love?

## DAY 3

### READ MATTHEW 5:39B

A slap sounds pretty harsh and violent, but in context, a slap was meant to shame the other person. It happened most often in religious context for those who would be deemed “out of order” or being rebuked, like a public correction. The highest form of assault on your dignity would be the public backhand slap to the right cheek which was 4x more offensive. Think about when someone shames you, cuts you down to nothing, or publicly assaults your character. What are you to do?

This is not a verse about domestic violence or physical danger. If you are in physical danger, get away to safety and please tell someone that you’re in that situation. In this verse, Jesus is talking about insult and slander.

Have you ever been publicly slandered or ridiculed? Has your reputation been put on the line? Have you ever wanted to do the public slapping—to get online and reduce someone to rubble? Jesus says, “turn the other cheek.” Instead of seeking vengeance in slapping back, offer the other cheek. Your dignity returns and their hypocrisy is exposed.

How can you turn the other cheek and not slap back in our world of social media slapping?

## DAY 4

### READ MATTHEW 5:41

Roman oppression was a daily experience for the Jewish people. Israel was an occupied territory and they hated it. Any Roman official could require any Jewish citizen to carry any load one mile at any time. It wasn't out of need; it was to shame them. Roman officials could do it at any time. They could pick you to carry their load, but the distance was limited to one mile.

Listen to what Jesus says, "When they tell you to carry their load a mile, carry it two." He's not talking about your mom or your friend, but the one who has offended you, who means you harm, the one who you consider to be your enemy. Jesus' plan is never retaliation, it is reconciliation. Retaliation is our initial response. It's what we want to do, but Jesus is teaching a change of heart; that you begin to think about that person in a completely different way.

Who is your enemy?  
How do you treat them now?  
How is Jesus calling you to change your heart?

## DAY 5

### READ PROVERBS 25:21

Would you welcome your enemy to the table, give your best to the one who has treated you the worst, or be generous to someone who you don't think deserves it? Why should you set a place for your enemy? Because God has set a place for you. How can you treat your enemy this way? Because when you were the enemy of God, He gave you his very best.

Now God has set the table for you and your enemies and you should not be afraid. Your confidence should be in the sovereignty of God and reflect this confidence in your response to your enemies and circumstances. You are putting God on display for your enemy when you respond this way. Don't allow retaliation to cheapen what God is doing in you. Citizens of the Kingdom refuse to respond to evil with more evil!

How have you seen God set the table for you and your enemies?  
How can you display God by not responding to evil with more evil?

Do you have someone to hold you accountable, to discover Jesus with, to walk with you during difficult times? Have you considered creating a DNA group- three people of your same gender, committed to meeting weekly to discover, nurture, and act on your relationship with Jesus, together?

Contact [brad@northridgenow.org](mailto:brad@northridgenow.org) for more information on forming a DNA Group.