

Russell Kelfer

The “Yes Sir” of the Heart

552-A

Series: The Beatitudes

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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The “Yes Sir” of the Heart

In this lesson we will continue our study, “Blessed Are The Peacemakers”. We are now studying the third phase of peacemaking, peace with men. In the last lesson we looked at the principles. Here we will look at the practical. How do we, as Christians, bring an atmosphere of peace into personal relationships in the world in which we live? The outline for the study looks like this:

I- The Practical

A- The “Yes Sir” of the heart

B- When “rights” are wrong

The “Yes Sir” of the heart involves peace under authority. It involves the goal of God for every Christian. We will seek to answer the questions:

What is peace with authority?

What are the four stages of submission in a Christian’s life?

When “rights” are wrong involves keeping the peace among our peers. We will look at the rights of a dead man and going beyond our rights when we have been wronged. We won’t get to all of these subjects in this lesson, but we will deal with the principles of the passage in Matthew 5 and the four areas:

- 1) Strike Two When You Win
- 2) Warm Hearts and Free Coats
- 3) The Miracle of Two Mile Island
- 4) Believers and Blank Checks

The “Yes Sir” of the heart: An Attitude of Submission

I want to begin by studying and reminding ourselves that the essence of Christianity is not behavior. The essence of Christianity is attitude. This is what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. Jesus would express what the law said about behavior and then He would add, “But I say unto you...” He would then deal with the attitudes of the heart. The expression of Christianity is behavior, but the essence of Christianity is attitude that is produced by character. The character of the Christian is to be continuously and

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progressively changed into the quality of the man or woman who brings peace wherever he goes, because he or she has developed the qualities that make for peace. These qualities are considered by the world, in themselves, to be weakness. But, when these qualities are expressed by Christ through the Christian, they become manifested as strengths. These qualities are the goal of God for every Christian.

GOD’S GOALS FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN

Let’s look at the goal of God for every Christian. The Christian is born into the world and born again living in a world where hostility is a natural expression when one’s rights have been denied. Even the smallest baby if neglected when feeding time comes around manifests anger and hostility until his needs have been met. In our world, vengeance and retaliation is the natural expression of one who has been wronged. In our world, an aggressive spirit is the cornerstone of success.

What are my goals? What are my needs? What are my ambitions? What are my objectives? We are told, “Be somebody,” “Make yourself known,” “Be successful.” In our world, self lives at the center of life. It is self that must be pampered. It is self that must be encouraged. It is self that must be accepted. It is self that must be satisfied. Hostility, vengeance, an aggressive spirit and self-centeredness are the natural fruits of the natural man. The expression of these qualities is the exhibition from the world’s perspective of strength.

So God’s job is to effect a gradual but total change of character. The aggressive spirit must give way to a submissive spirit. Hebrews 13 says this,

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

(Hebrews 13:17, 20,21 NKJV)

I Peter 5 says,

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Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,
casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

(I Peter 5:5-7 NKJV)

God says that our hostility must give way to a quiet spirit. I Thessalonians 4 in the Amplified Bible says this,

Make it your ambition and definitely endeavor to live quietly and peacefully, to mind your own affairs and to work with your hands as we charge you

So that you may bear yourselves becomingly and be correct and honorable and command the respect of the outside world.

(I Thessalonians 4:11,12 Amplified Bible)

I Peter 3 is talking to women, but we can all benefit from what it says,

Be beautiful inside in your hearts with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit which is so precious to God.

(I Peter 3:4 TLB)

Vengeance must then give way to gentleness. We see this in I Thessalonians 2 as Paul says,

But we behaved gently when we were among you, like a devoted mother nursing and cherishing her own children.

(I Thessalonians 2:7 Amplified Bible)

II Timothy 2 says,

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

(II Timothy 2:24 NKJV)

Titus 3 says,

Remind your people to obey the government and always be obedient and ready for an honest work

That they might not speak evil of anyone nor quarrel but be gentle and truly courteous to all.

(Titus 3:1,2 TLB)

James says,

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

(James 3:17,18 NKJV)

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Self-centeredness must yield to meekness as we see in Matthew 5 in which Jesus says,

“Blessed are the meek.” (Matthew 5:5)

In Matthew 11 He says,

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
(Matthew 11:29 NKJV)

In II Corinthians 10 we read,

Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ— (II Corinthians 10:1 NKJV)

Galatians 6 says,

Brothers, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
(Galatians 6:1,2a NKJV)

In Ephesians 4 Paul says,

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, (Ephesians 4:1,2 NKJV)

So God’s man becomes God’s kind of man and God’s woman becomes God’s kind of woman from the inside out. As we are being changed, we are commanded to change our behavior. But, changing our behavior without having our attitudes changed will simply result in a higher level of hypocrisy. So God’s peacemakers cannot help but bring peace, for the essence of their lives is non-retaliatory, gentle, unassuming and submissive. That marked difference of character sets us apart. It sets you apart. This draws men to Christ.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PEACE UNDER AUTHORITY

Principle 1- God places men under authority. God’s man and woman are in harmony with those around them when they are first of all in harmony with those under whose authority they have been placed. This is a tough lesson to teach and is a tougher lesson to hear. Let’s say it is tax time, for instance, but God’s man isn’t in rebellion or sowing discontent. He is grateful to have earned enough to owe taxes. He renders unto the government that which is his that he might render unto God the things that are His.

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It is election time. God’s man is concerned and dedicated to electing right leadership, but he isn’t panicking because God is in control. He isn’t defaming character or defrauding reputations, but he is dealing with the issues. God’s young person may have unbelieving or unsympathetic parents, but he submits to their direction knowing that the king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord and He turns it withersoever He chooseth. God’s man and God’s woman are at peace with God’s authorities. Peace isn’t possible, then, unless you are at peace with God.

The world pits each man against the other which results in conflict. God places men and women over one another for harmony so that peace must ensue. This is why we have governments. This is why we have husbands. This is why we have parents. This is why we have pastors and elders. This is why we have bosses where we work. God has placed each of us under one of several authorities for the purpose of maintaining peace. Peace in your home. Peace on the job. Peace in the world in which you live. Are you in submission to those over you? Does your submission bring a spirit of holiness and peace into the atmosphere in which you live or work?

Principle 2- The principle of final authority. Do you understand that God, ultimately, is in control and must be in control of all of your life? It is not God as your co-pilot, you are not even in the cockpit.

God owns the right and has the key to everything. You are not your own, you have been purchased, bought with a price. The title has been transferred. He owns the right to your health. He was able to say to Satan, “You do this with Job,” concerning his health. God said, “I will take care of Job concerning his spirit, and you can touch his body.” God is also in control of your life. “You cannot have his life,” God said concerning Job to Satan. In Psalms 116 in the Living Bible says,

His loved ones are very precious to Him and He does not
lightly let them die. (Psalms 116:15 TLB)

We saw this in the experience I shared with you previously about our friend David who survived an airplane crash. He was reminded of the fact that God was not finished with his life but had a purpose and a plan. God has redeemed him and snatched him out of the fire for a purpose.

God is in control. He is in authority over our possessions.

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He owns all we have, and He gives us stewardship over things from time to time. But, as Job was able to say when he had lost everything, can you say it?

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”
(Job 1:21 NKJV)

The Lord owns your family. He gives birth and guards and chastens our children. He is responsible. God controls our marriages. He is able to use the circumstances in them for His glory.

He is the authority in our financial and personal circumstances. He is the authority in our vocational jobs. He is our authority, and He is sovereign. Do you believe this? If you don't, you cannot go on to the next principle.

Principle 3- The principle of designated authority means that God, who is sovereign in our lives, has ordained the use of people, government and circumstances to shape our lives and create our message. He uses people as He did with Joseph. God used his brothers to sell him into captivity. He used an immoral woman to have him cast undeservedly into prison. He used a prison keeper and then a ruler ultimately to exalt him into the position he wanted. God used people in Joseph's life as he does in my life and in your life.

God uses government as He did with Paul to place him in prison unjustly so that he could then be free to share the gospel and to write that which ended up to be the better portion of the New Testament. God uses circumstances as He did with Job. So God places us under husbands, under parents, under governments and under bosses who can then best be used to shape your life and its message. To rebel against that authority is, in essence, to rebel against God.

Numbers 14 is but one of many illustrations of this principle. Moses was ordained of God to lead the children of Israel to the Promised Land. Let's look at Numbers 14,

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!

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Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”

So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;

and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: “The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.

If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’

Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.”

(Numbers 14:1-9 NKJV)

The story goes on that the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron. They were told not to rebel against these men. They rebelled against the authority that God had placed over them and thus were in rebellion to God Himself. Occasionally we may be called to resist the ungodliness that certain authorities produce, but that is not the same as rebelling against the authority itself.

Why does God choose to use authority? There are at least five reasons.

Reason 1- To create order. Every man doing that which is right in his own eyes creates anarchy, chaos and conflict. This is true in a marriage. If there is no headship in a marriage, the husband decides that he wants to do one thing, the wife decides she wants to do another and the children are in the middle. What you have is total chaos.

The same thing is true at work. The boss decides he wants to establish a new division. He wants to set up certain people to run it, and he wants to create a new structure of order. The men who work for him, however, decide they don’t think that is a good idea, and they would rather leave things just as they are. So the boss says, “I believe we are going to do this,” and the employees say,

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“No, we are not going to do that.” What you have is total anarchy or chaos. God is not a god who delights in that. The reason He assumes a position of authority in a job relationship and in a home relationship is to create order. I Corinthians 14 says,

God is not one who likes things to be disorderly and upset. He likes harmony and God finds it in all of the other churches.
(I Corinthians 14:33 TLB)

Authority creates order, and it allows for godliness.

Reason 2- To develop character. The powers that be are ordained of God to be used in the lives of His people. Unjust authority produced fruit in the life of Joseph, in the life of Jesus and in the life of Paul. Your boss, believe it or not, may be God’s chief instrument to change your life. You may say, “But you don’t know my boss.” Do you know your God and how He uses imperfect vessels to sandpaper His children’s lives? Your husband, who seems so ungodly to you or seems so irresponsible to you, may be God’s heavenly sandpaper in your life to draw you to a spirit of patience or to come to understand the joy of the Lord or to come to walk in the peace of God in the midst of tribulation. Wives, in authority as well, can be used to teach godliness by example. Through authority God develops character.

Reason 3- To provide direction. It is through authority that we can gain purpose and direction. Parents give direction to their children. Husbands give direction to their wives. The elders give direction to the church. The boss gives direction to his employees. God uses leaders to lead. Jesus always did His Father’s will, so he never lacked direction. He was always in harmony to the One placed over Him.

Reason 4- To demonstrate sovereignty. When you respond to authority with peace, God makes all things work together for good. He did this with Joseph, with Jesus and with Paul. Submission demonstrates and activates the sovereignty of God.

Reason 5- To provide a portrait of His plan. God’s plan for man is for man to relinquish the control of the steering wheel of his life and give it to God. This runs counter to the natural man, so God paints His portrait about relationships through earthly submission of a wife to a husband, of children to parents and employee to employer.

These are God’s reasons for authority. Before we pass on to another subject, I want us to see how God demonstrates His grace

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most abundantly through unjust authority. You may say, “Wait a minute, you are carrying this thing a bit too far.” I think the thing we want to realize is that God uses authority in everyone’s life to shape them; but to those for whom He has great love and confidence, He often places in the hands of unjust authority, authority that is not fair. Because God says that through them they can: a) be better trained in godliness, and b) will better manifest the grace of God to a lost and dying world.

This means that if you are in a marriage where there is a difficult situation, or you are in a job where there is a difficult situation with authority or with relationships with those in authority over you, or if you are in a parent-child relationship that is difficult, it may mean that God has His hand upon you for a very special reason as He did for Joseph. God places you in a tight spot so that through the authority He has placed over you He can demonstrate His grace. Let’s look at I Peter 2:18-21. This is a familiar passage to most of you, but I am going to read it in a paraphrase. Chapters 2 deals with submission to the government, submission to your job and submission to the home. Tucked into the middle of it we read,

You servants or employees, be submissive to those God placed over you, showing them the respect due their office even if and especially if they do not as persons deserve your respect. Obey not only those who are kind, considerate and gentle, but the overbearing, the unjust, the partial and the crooked ones as well.

There is special grace for those who suffer unjustly at the hand of authority.

After all, what accolades do you deserve if you disobey and take your punishment graciously? That is what you are supposed to do. But, if those over you blame you, accuse you or defraud you or wrong you without cause and you quietly receive it with joy, God is delighted and He showers you with grace.

It is part of your calling as a Christian. Christ is our example. Do as He did. He was perfectly right and horribly wronged but He didn’t say a word, He simply trusted God.

(I Peter 2:18-21 paraphrased)

Those are the principles of peace under authority: 1) God places all men under authority, 2) He is our ultimate authority, 3) He designates and designs earthly authority to create order, in order to develop character, to provide direction, to demonstrate

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sovereignty, to paint a portrait of His plan and to exercise the authority in the life of a man, and 4) unjust authority neither negates the principle nor voids the responsibility, but it amplifies the principle and multiplies the grace. We need to remember that submission is more than behavior, the essence of it is attitude.

THE STAGES OF SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

I want to share with you the principle of submitting to authority. It has four stages, regardless of whether it is just or unjust. I think that most Christians are satisfied with the first three.

Stage 1- The awareness of authority. This is coming to an understanding of the principle. A wife, for instance, goes to a seminar or a church service and learns that wives are to be in submission to their own husbands. A little light bulb goes on in her head and she says, “I never knew that before.” She has an awareness of a principle she did not even know existed. That is a start, but that is not submission.

Stage 2- The acceptance of authority. When she goes home, she begins to read her Bible and seek counsel. She looks in the mirror, and the mirror looks back at her and it says, “Yes, you.” And she answers, “Me? To him? I understand the principle, but I didn’t think it was that personal.” God says, “Yes, you to him.” She answers, “O.K. I will accept that.” This is a good step, but it is not submission.

Stage 3- Response toward authority. This is coming to the point of outer obedience. The husbands says, “We are going to change our plans.” Or, “We are going to make a move.” Or, “ We are going to curb our spending.” Or, “We are going to change the manner in which we discipline the children.” Or, “We are going to sell the car and begin to walk.” Or, “We are going to sell the house and buy a tent.” The wife has an awareness of the principle and has accepted it personally, and now she loves to respond and say, “Yes, dear.” She packs her things to move into the tent, cleans out the car and then sits down to write her mother a letter. “Dear Mom, this fool that I married has decided some strange things.” She then continues on to vent all of her hostilities. She picks up the phone to call her best friend and she says, “Guess what we are going to do? We are going to play camp out for the next five years.” She goes on to vent more of her hostilities. She has a response to others that is different than the one to her husband.

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As he walks into the house she says, “Dear, I am so excited about living in that tent. I have decided that bicycles are better exercise than cars anyway.” But she has just hung up the phone from talking to her best friend and had just mailed a letter to her mom and had just cried out to God, “That fool You had me marry!” She has learned to respond, but inside she is still on fire. That is better, but that is not submission.

Stage 4- Submission by motivation. I call it the “Yes sir,” of the heart. Most of us in our jobs or in our relationship to the government or our relationships to those in authority over us in our families or our churches, do not reach this stage easily. Submission is when a wife is so concerned about making her husband successful and so sure that God will take care of her if she does, that she gets excited over the thought of living in a tent or walking to work or whatever decision has been made. She does this even to the point of responding with joy when he unjustly accuses her. That is submission. That leads to peace.

You may say, “What is the difference? If I act like I am in submission and if I do the right things, that should do it.” I am here to tell you as a husband, as a father and as a boss, I can tell the difference. You know the times when someone is saying, “Yes sir,” on the outside and saying, “Good grief!” on the inside. You can tell the difference when somebody with a heart full of joy and filled with the Holy Spirit is saying, “I love you and I will follow you wherever you go. If that is what God wants to use you to do, I am on board. Let’s go.” You can’t change your heart, but you can monitor your heart. You can ask God to change your heart. You can expect God to change your heart and then by faith you will respond as though He has changed your heart. He will. If you do that, you will become an instrument of peace.

Submission to authority is the cornerstone to peacemaking. You can be an instrument to bring peace in your home. You can submit, and you will be amazed at the peace that will come into your home if you will reach a place where you joyfully submit even in the midst of an unjust situation. You can be an instrument to bring peace to your job. Maybe the person you work for is unreasonable. Maybe your boss just doesn’t understand the problems, and if he did he would then understand the solutions. Maybe your boss is unjust and doesn’t pay you enough. Let me ask you the question, “Do you pray for those in authority over you regularly, day after day? Do you pray for their welfare, not

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yours?” Scripture teaches us to do this. Or, do you pray, “Lord, get that person straightened out so that I won’t have to go through this.” How many times do we pray for our mate, “Lord, straighten my spouse out so that it would make my life easier.”? Then we wonder what James meant when he said,

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
(James 4:3 NIV)

You are praying out of selfish motivation. God’s way is to be God’s man or woman and to trust Him.

WHEN “RIGHTS” ARE WRONG

The second phase of peacemaking has to do with our peer level relationships. We will begin this part and finish it in the next lesson. Are we constantly at odds with the world around us? Or, are we constantly bringing peace and compassion? I can use myself as a perfect wrong example. What are our attitudes toward the people around us when things go wrong? Do we use it as a springboard to pray for them and show love to them? Or, do we dredge up our rights and wave our flag?

My wife and I took a trip. We were thinking of a lot of perfect illustrations we had for wrong responses to people. We went to a restaurant on the way. It was early, and we thought that we would get served quickly. We went in with a presumptuous spirit. The service didn’t measure up to our expectations. In fact, it was at best, very poor. You can just imagine. I had a painted smile on my face when the waitress came back on our third request. You can just imagine what was going on in my heart. I was thinking, “This whole place is empty, and we have our rights. We have a trip to make. We are paying good money for this. They ought to have a better response than this.”

We left the restaurant and finally got to the hotel to check in. The man at the counter would not wait on us but waited on everyone else first. He finally checked us in, but he forgot to put our room and phone number down. There were people trying to call us and who began panicking over a situation because the hotel employees were telling them we were not registered there. We waved a few flags calling attention to our own rights.

We finally got in the car and went to visit our friend in the hospital. On the second night I left the lights on. My “Diehard”

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battery did. It was late at night when we got to the car, and of course it didn't start. I had some wrong responses to that situation. We called a cab and went back to the hotel. We complained about the long route he drove to take us back. The next day as we left, we complained about the traffic and the bad things that were happening to us. I began to think that as I left the city limits of San Antonio, I forgot that as a believer, as far as the world is concerned, I have all of the rights of a dead man.

I think that most of us forget this so easily as we dredge up hostility and a vengeful spirit over meaningless situations. That waitress may have had real needs that we could have prayed for her. The people at the hotel may have had real problems in their operations that we could have prayed for or been a help with if we had had a right attitude. God may have had the dead battery in our car so that we could have had a real ministry in the life of the cab driver instead of the hostility we felt by being late and taken back to the hotel along the long route.

The whole idea is that we forgot that we are dead. Luke 9 deals with it this way. I want to read it in a paraphrase,

Jesus said, “The Son of man will suffer much. He will be deliberately disapproved and repudiated and rejected. He will be put to death, but He will rise again.”

And He said this to them all, “If any person chooses to follow Me, let him follow this course of action. Let him disown himself, repudiate and reject all of his claims to his own life. Let him reckon every day without fail that he is in essence a dead man. Let him cleave wholly to Me, following My example and using My power.

For whoever reckons himself alive in this life with all of the rights and privileges that accompany this life, will lose everything. But whoever reckons himself dead will be given by God real life, life that lasts. (Luke 9:22-24)

The Christian has all of the rights of a dead man. Jesus, when He died, gave us a spiritual inheritance. He died, and He gave to us everything He owned in the Spirit. Then we died when we received Him. We gave to Him all of the rights to the ownership, the acclaim, and the vulnerability of our lives.

Now consider a dead man, if you will. How many rights does a dead man have? Does he have the right of ownership? When a person dies, all titles are voided and transferred into the names of someone else. They are null and void. He owns absolutely

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nothing. Let’s consider the acclaim. Can you just see someone talking about you after you have passed on as they are walking by your grave? What if they said, “Well, I never thought too well about that person.” Can you see yourself rising up out of the grave and saying, “Wait a minute, you didn’t get that right.” There is no right to a claim. You can’t say, “Hey, what about me?” A dead man doesn’t have a reputation to protect.

What about vulnerability? You can stomp on and throw rocks at a dead person’s grave. What can the dead man do? Absolutely nothing. Luke 9 tells us that as dead men every morning you and I are supposed to get up, look in the mirror and give up our rights. Do you know what it means to get up and give up your rights? It means that you have rights to give up. As a favor to God, you are going to be so noble and come into His presence, the Almighty God who died for you, and say, “God, by the way, I am going to give up to You the rights to my family, my car, my possessions, my acclaim and my reputation. Lord, I really appreciate this, and I hope You will pay attention and tomorrow I will do the same thing. Amen.” What this is saying to God is that you are somebody who has something to give up and by an act of noble magnitude you are going to do just that.

But, a dead man can’t do this. He can’t get up every morning and say, “Lord, I’m not going to have any ownership today.” The whole point of this passage is that when we get up every morning we need to look God in the face and reckon ourselves to be dead. We need to reckon ourselves to own nothing. We need to reckon ourselves to have no rights to acclaim. We need to reckon ourselves as totally vulnerable, because God is all, owns all and has all and controls all in our lives. When we do this, then when these insignificant problems, these abuses that we face where people take advantage of us happen, we will be able to respond in love because we have no rights to be violated.

We will continue this in the next lesson, Lord willing. But the whole principle of the Christian life, as far as peacemaking is concerned, boils down to the matter of character. God wants us, as Christians living in a world where the physically stronger always win, to give up the rights to our lives, to give up by serving one another in love, so that the spiritually stronger will win.

In the next lesson, we will deal with that troublesome passage in Matthew 5:38-42. We will deal with the principle of going the

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second mile. We will deal with the principle of turning the other cheek. We will deal with the principle of giving to those who ask us and lending to those who ask for it. This is a very difficult passage to deal with. There are some things it is definitely not saying, and there are some things it definitely is. But in the meantime, between now and then, let’s remember that God is telling us to quit struggling for our rights. We need to relax and begin to give up ourselves in love to make peace.

These principles grate on the pride of a natural man. The world can’t adopt them, for they are spiritually discerned. The world can’t turn the other cheek, and don’t ask them to. Don’t expect a nation to adopt them as foreign policy. This passage was written to Christians. It was written to Christians so they could deal with them on a personal level. Where personal relationships are involved, this is God’s plan for God’s people. The world, which cannot accept it for itself, will marvel at its power, and many will come to see that meekness is not weakness. Gentleness is the essence of strength. Submission is the ultimate freedom. Peace, God’s way, so beautifully different, so miraculously powerful is ours to demonstrate in Christ.

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

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