

Alpha Counseling Services
20730 Bond Road / Poulsbo, WA/ 98370
alphapoulsbo.org/(360) 779-3624
August, 2024

Dear Friends,

Recently I had an interesting conversation with someone about "turning the other cheek." In the 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus says "But I say to you, if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:39 and Luke 6:29. We both agreed that personally we are not sure if we could do this since our instincts are to defend and protect ourselves from physical harm. What do you think?

I'm beginning to realize there are many ways to 'turn the other cheek' that do not involve an actual physical attack. I am very capable of reacting in verbal conflict, with comments used to defend myself. Even in minor disagreements! Recently, the Holy Spirit confronted me with a thought! "Can you turn the other cheek and not reply to that comment?" I was shocked with His input - considering the earlier conversation about 'cheek turning' just a day or so earlier. I began to realize the only way I could ever actually allow someone to strike me twice would be after plenty of practice doing it in nonphysical ways!

Jesus set an awesome example for us when being wrongfully questioned by the crowd in the high priest's house. Matthew 26:62-63 ... the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" **But Jesus remained silent.** Even to the governor in Mark 15:4-5 Jesus did not respond when being questioned. To me, He has given an example of turning the other cheek verbally.

Now we can start to explain that Jesus is God so He can turn the other cheek but, He lives in us and wants us to be a light in this dark world. Matthew 5:16 ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. I'm beginning to understand that, for me, my light will shine much brighter in this world by turning my 'verbal cheek' and allowing Jesus to help me to not be so quick to defend myself in any type of conflict. James 1:26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. With the meaning 'of no value'.

Winston Churchill said something I've always admired, "Life is fraught with opportunities to keep your mouth shut." I think I'm going to make this a project in my life!

My mother always referred to August as "the dog days of summer". I thought it meant dogs didn't like all the hot weather but it doesn't. The phrase comes from Ancient Rome and a star in the heavens evidently was seen in August. Oh well, August is here and if the dogs don't like all the heat I agree with them! Counseling usually slows down with vacations and school being out but this year I'm seeing more new people wanting to talk about their troubles. Please pray for us to have wisdom to help folks as they seek God's answers for their lives.

God bless you for your prayers for Alpha and thank you for helping financially 🙏

Richard