

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Godly Stand Against Bullying

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By definition, a bully is one “*who hurts, frightens, threatens, or tyrannizes over those who are smaller or weaker.*” If you are in the crosshairs of a bully, you are immediately on the defensive. Without warning you are suddenly shoved and/or verbally threatened. Like the coward he or she is, the bully is targeting you because you are perceived to be smaller or weaker. So, overwhelming barrages of staggering blows and/or degrading adjectives quickly ensue to destroy you with paralyzing tyranny.

How should the godly heart react to the evil suddenly perpetrated upon you? Prudence points us to God’s Word for the godly answer to the first onslaughts of a bully. We must first know what our Lord would have us do, so that when we are placed on the defensive, we can react quickly with godliness.

Jesus declares that we “*resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*” (Matthew 5:39). Jesus is not instructing us avoid a protective stance, and automatically leave open the left cheek to receive a right cross, to further the pummeling. When He was struck by

the hand of an officer serving the dictates of the high priest, Jesus did not literally turn the other cheek allowing Himself to be hit again (John 18:22).

By example, Jesus is teaching us to not first react with a vengeful get-even blow of our own. It is not an eye for an eye, or a cheek for a cheek. Jesus gives us godly steps to follow. He did not react by swinging his fists, or shrink with paralyzing fear. Jesus asked, “*If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me*” (John 18:23). He asked for the “judge” and “executioner” to point out his “wrong,” so He could know “why” he was commanded to be hit.

Jesus’ response was not to render evil for evil, but overcome evil with good. To quickly get the “bully” to think constructively instead of hitting you angrily is always good... for him and you.

The apostle Paul offers us a wise plan for standing before our bullying enemy in harmony with Jesus’ teaching. You are to prayerfully “*bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not*” (Romans 12:14). Instead of rendering “*evil for evil,*” we are to

“*take thought of things honorable in the sight of all men*” (Romans 12:17). We are not to “*avenge ourselves*” but give place to God, who reminds us when we are hurting, that “*vengeance belongs to Me (God)*” (Romans 12:19). In doing good to our enemy who is doing us evil, we “*overcome evil with good.*”

We have no control over the evil our enemy does to us, but we do have control of how we will react. The bully scores first with evil, but we do not add an evil response making the score 2 to 0 on the side of evil. We overcome evil by responding with good.

Bullying does not stop when adolescence matures into adulthood. We have just witnessed bullying in a political season of choosing who will be our President. Bullying adults sought to humiliate half of our country, calling voters “garbage. Hurtful slurs of “homophobe,” and “misogynist” were launched through the airways to shame you, not persuade you.

Like Jesus, we do not retaliate with hurtful words, seeking revenge. Following Jesus’ steps, we seek a constructive “why,” and “pray” for you instead of “curse” you.