

Plain Talk about My Personal Rights

Luke 6:29-31

These three verses are some of the most difficult words of Christ to obey. It's not that Jesus' words are difficult to understand; they're plain imperatives. It's not even that they are *hard* to obey. Assembling Christmas and birthday toys for your grandkids is sometimes hard, but these actions are simple. The problem is willingness. It does no good to proclaim our *belief in inerrancy* when our *behavior is errant*.

I. There is something we are called to grasp - *"Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either"* (Luke 6:29).

Before we examine what we are mentally (and emotionally) to grasp; look closely at Jesus' words.

(A). His words plainly mean you restrain yourself from retribution.

Is there benefit in being slapped on the cheek? No. There is great benefit in not slapping back.

This is the way of our Lord Jesus. He was beaten *for our sakes* and responded, 'Father, forgive...'

Governments were never designed to be the church, nor the church the government. We have a problem in the USA: Government acts like a church and our churches act like a government.

(B). His words plainly mean you offer more than what is taken.

"Hey, as you are stealing my lawnmower, would you also like my weed eater too?" This sounds absolutely ridiculous, does it not? Yes, unless I grasp something that is absolutely essential:

"Everything I possess belongs to God" - There's no need to strike back at the one who takes from you because he or she will ultimately answer to God, not you. What about *my* reputation?

When Shemei walked a high ridge above David, King of Israel, he cursed David and threw rocks.

Abishai said, "Why should this dead dog curse my king? Let me cut off his head" (II Sam. 16:9).

David responded, "Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him" (II Sam. 16:11).

II. There is something we are called to give - *"Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back."* (Luke 6:30). ***We are to give what is asked of us.***

(A). There are no caveats in this verse: Jesus says give to *everyone* who asks. Try this out. Give to everyone who asks you for something. If your wife asks you to help in the kitchen, do it. If the guy on the street corner asks for some money, give it to him. Learn to live loosely with what you have, trusting God. Make everything available to God. This is the command of your Lord Savior.

"One gives freely and grows all the richer; another withholds... and only suffers want" (Pr. 11:24).

"He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor. will himself cry out and not be heard" (Pr. 21:13).

You can't give what is not yours, but you can give all that is yours. Give...and it shall be given you.

(B). There is a convincing closer in this verse: For those who say, "All you do is enable people!"

Jesus says, "Whoever takes what is yours, do not demand it back." What? Don't demand it back?

This is the convincing argument that God is very serious about letting go of everything but Him.

We're called to *give it up*. Give up your rights. Give up your demands. Give up your expectations.

III. There is something we are called to grant - *"Treat others the same way you want treatment"* (v. 31).

We are to grant other people our status. They are to be seen as us. Others are the important ones.

Jesus is not saying, "Do good to those who do good to you." That's reciprocity, not Christianity.

He is saying do what you hope that others will do -- the best, the most, the greatest - for you.

People like that are rare in the world. A truly selfless person comes along only every once in a while

Bob Hope once quipped, *"Laughter is an instant vacation. Giving is a two-week cruise—with pay."*

You say, 'That's weakness, not strength,' I remind you the strongest Man in history lived this way.