

Summer on the Mount Discipleship Guide

In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus speaks to the “law of retaliation” explaining that God’s intent is that His children avoid retaliation of any sort entirely, that they love one another, and that we live to put the welfare of others before our own.

Putting this into action will mean entrusting our well-being completely to God. Jesus exemplified in His own life that we are not to treat others the way they treat us, but to treat them better knowing that God will care for His own.

Following are some biblical texts to study, reflect and act upon:

Matthew 5:1-12

Reflect: Remember the “Beatitudes”? It’s good to recall the descriptors of whom Jesus does His kingdom work. Who needs your mercy this week? Where can you be a peacekeeper?

Act: If you can identify someone who is treating you unfairly this week, think of ways that you could bless them. Turn those blessing into prayer and act upon them as the Spirit guides.

Psalm 31

Reflect: Does your welfare depend upon circumstances or how others treat you? Do you make yourself entirely responsible for your well-being? Instead, consider the words of Psalm 31 and see how God is the one our welfare depends upon.

Act: Throughout the week, pray through a section of Psalm 31. It would be good to actually write out the prayers in a journal. As you study the Psalm as the Holy Spirit to help you paraphrase it into a personal prayer. This takes practice but the more you stick with it, the easier it becomes.

Make the psalm’s words your words. Augustine of Hippo said, *“If the psalm prays, you pray. If the psalm laments, you lament. If the psalm exalts, you rejoice. If it hopes, you hope. If it fears, you fear. Everything written here is a mirror for us.”* As you pray the Psalms, you will learn how to pray in every season, whether rejoicing with those who rejoice or mourning with those who mourn.

Often, the Psalms express the experience, the sufferings, the faith of Jesus of Nazareth in his fully human nature during his life on earth. They are the prayers of Jesus. They express his “loud cries and tears” (Hebrews 5:7) as well as his praises. As the early church father Athanasius wrote, *“Before Christ came among us, God sketched the likeness of this perfect life for us in words, in this same book of Psalms; in order that, just as He revealed Himself in flesh to be the perfect, heavenly Man, so in the Psalms also men of goodwill might see the pattern life portrayed, and find therein the healing and correction of their own.”*

This week, pray. Pray often. Pray without ceasing. Pray God’s Word back to Him.