

Spiritual Practice: Spiritual Jiujitsu

When we have been hurt by someone else, one of the narratives that often runs through our mind is that, “Justice needs to be served.” Many times, that act of justice would come in the form of revenge. The response would actually go beyond seeing justice served and move to the place of causing hurt or pain to the same degree or greater than we have experienced ourselves. Often times when hurt or injury is caused, people point to Old Testament teaching like we see in Leviticus 24:19-20 *“Anyone who injures another person must be dealt with according to the injury inflicted—a fracture for a fracture, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Whatever anyone does to injure another person must be paid back in kind.”*

As we read through the Sermon on the Mount we see Jesus continually show us that he desires to give us a new way to live – a way that disarms the ideals and values of the world that we live in. James Bryan Smith in the book, “The Good and Beautiful Life” described it as Spiritual Jiujitsu. Jiujitsu is a martial art and many consider it a form of fighting. However, the word means “a way of yielding” by using an attacker’s force and energy to work against him or her.

Instead of trying to match force with force, jiujitsu teaches a person how to overcome an armed opponent with no weapons other than intelligence. Unless we understand this principle, this passage may cause a great deal of harm. People conclude that Jesus is teaching us to become passive victims of abuse. A closer look, though, shows that Jesus is offering a brilliant way to respond to abuse and attack from a position of Kingdom security.

To understand our position in God’s Kingdom as sons and daughters, we have the opportunity to offer grace and forgiveness to those around us. To lay down our need to seek revenge we can choose to respond to attack by not attacking back.

During this week make a conscious decision to pay attention to the way you respond to people around you. Are there moments that you think, “I hope they get what they deserve?” It could be a friend, co-worker, family member or even the driver that cut you off in traffic. **In those moments ask, “Am I trying to respond to force with force or am I willing to practice Kingdom Jiujitsu?”** It might startle people and provoke them to ask, “What kind of person would do such a thing?”

