



Links Players

Reactions Speak Loudest

You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." But I say to you, do not show opposition against an evil person.... (Matthew 5:38-39, NASB)

I have a confession to make. I'm becoming a fan of the mullet.

Well, I don't necessarily love the business-in-the-front-party-in-the-back hairstyle made popular in the '80's but the one who dons golf's most famous mullet, Cameron Smith.

His golden locks have become quite easy to recognize on television coverage over the last couple of years. After winning both The Players and Open Championship this season, he's becoming famous for a lot more than just his hairstyle.

Yes, he has a fantastic short game and is arguably the best putter in the world right now, but what I really appreciate watching is his demeanor. You cannot tell by his body language how he is playing. He accepts the good with the bad, and I've never seen him over-react to a shot.

I know very little about Cam Smith's personal life and certainly nothing about his faith or beliefs in God; however, I think he is a great model for us in following Jesus in one way – reacting to adversity.

Jesus taught and modeled much on how we should react to bad situations and evil things. As my pastor, Andy Stanley, said recently, "Jesus taught the art of mastering over-underreaction."

If actions speak louder than words, then reactions speak loudest. What we often refer to as the Sermon on the Mount (found in Matthew 5-7) is likely the highlights of what Jesus taught everywhere he went. Many verses like today's verse address how we react to evil. "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also" (Matthew 5:39, NIV).

This statement does not mean that we are not to defend ourselves from a physical attack. Jesus is referring to a backhanded slap and how we respond to an insult. A right-handed slap or punch would strike the left cheek, not the right.

We can be religious practitioners of Cultural Christianity by word and action, but to be followers of Jesus, we must mimic his reactions.

“And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If [any Roman soldier] forces you to [carry their armor] one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one

who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:40-42, NIV). In other words, go beyond the normal or required response.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:43-44, NASB). Here is why you need to put this into practice, “so that you may prove yourselves to be sons [and daughters] of your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:45, NASB).

We can be religious practitioners of Cultural Christianity by word and action, but to be followers of Jesus, we must mimic his reactions.

“If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the [corrupt] tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?” (Matthew 5:46-47, NIV)

Yes, putting your faith in Jesus is of supreme importance. However, the best way we can model the one we believe in is not only to put our belief into action but also in our reactions.

Prayer: Jesus, teach me how to control my over-reactions and the art of over-underreaction

Josh Nelson

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.