

What The Bible Says About

Am I, As A Christian To Be The Doormat Of The World?



Good Hope
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

4038 Graham Sherron Rd
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Pastor David Buffaloe
Home 919-562-9456 Cell 919-600-4925
online at bibleteacher.org

Am I, as a Christian, to be the doormat of the world?
Here's the short answer.

No.



Our Lord Jesus modeled the Christian way of life for us when He was on this earth. At a certain point in His ministry He **laid down His life for His sheep**, just as He was supposed to do. He was beaten, but

did not retaliate. He was tormented, but did not strike back. But these things happened to Jesus as He was **laying His life down in the final hours before the Cross of Calvary**. Everything from the moment when He was taken in the Garden of Gethsemane and following happened because Jesus Christ "**is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). He laid down His life willingly - it was not take from Him but He lay it down:

John 10:17-18 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Jesus Christ did that for a lost and dying world, a world

that is generally unknowing or uncaring of what His great sacrifice offers.



God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son (John 3:16), and this giving required that Jesus - like a Lamb led to the slaughter - be submissive to the process.

But what about the rest of the time?

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Did Jesus Defend Himself Prior To Gethsemane?

Illustrate A man owned a business in a pretty bad part of town. He was constantly losing money because troublemakers often came into his workplace, started fights, and destroyed his sustenance. The man hired local men to act as guards on the business, but no matter how man he hired it seemed as if he was constantly losing money. The business owner finally contacted a man that was supposed to specialize in what he was going through. On the first day he worked the "Specialist" called the staff of the business together. He told them, **"I have a few simple rules that you will have to follow. First, never underestimate your opponent. Expect the unexpected, and keep your eyes open. Second, never**

start anything yourselves. If someone wants to cause a problem, try and escort them out the door. But above all - always be NICE. Don't take it personally. Be nice until I tell you not to be nice."

Jesus was nice until it was time not to be nice. He never sought out a fight, but quietly kept doing what He was called by God to do. When challenged by the Pharisees for *healing on the Sabbath* our Lord did not back down.



Mark 3:1-5 {Jesus} entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And {the Pharisees} watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched [it] out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Jesus not only healed the man, but also **rebuked and was angry at the Pharisees**. When the Pharisees accused Jesus of being born of fornication (the son of a whore):

John 8:41 ... We be not born of fornication; we have

one Father, [even] God.

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Jesus quickly replied:

John 8:42-44 ... If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

that the Pharisees were not only **liars**, but also **children of Satan**. That's pretty rough language! When Jesus and His disciples did not ceremonially wash their hands according to the tradition of the Pharisees:



Mark 7:5 The Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

did Jesus give them a meek and mild answer? No! Jesus not only rebuked them, but *indicted them* for twisting the

Law of God to meet their own greed. Jesus said:

Mark 7:6-9 ... Well hath {Isaiah} prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with [their] lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, [as] the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Jesus reached out in love to the unloved publicans, prostitutes, Samaritans, and other downtrodden people of His day. He invited Pharisees like **Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)** and **Simon the Leper (Matthew 26:6-13)** to come to Him by faith. Jesus however refused to compromise the Kingdom of God by tolerating the self righteous - often Scribes and Pharisees - in any way. Jesus never justified sin nor did He ever tolerate hypocrisy.

In **Matthew chapter 23** Jesus systematically *destroys the belief system of the Pharisees*. Eight times the Lord Jesus berated the Pharisees, saying:

Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [yourselves], neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

The Pharisees not only made it impossible for others to

go to Heaven - but they themselves were hellbound!

Matthew 23:14 **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

They out of greed robbed the helpless, and covered their robbery with long, boring Churchy prayers.

Matthew 23:15 **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

They discipled people for Satan, not for God.

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Matthew 23:16-17 **Woe unto you, [ye] blind guides,** which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! 17 [Ye] fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

The Pharisees were spiritually blind and fools in the eyes of God.

Matthew 23:23 **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees,**

hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

They were halfway in their commitments.

Matthew 23:25 **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

and were as dangerous to society as filthy, bacteria laden plates are to a restaurant's customers.

Matthew 23:27 **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead [men's] bones, and of all uncleanness.

The Pharisees, like mausoleums, were pretty on the outside, but inside full of death.

Matthew 23:29 **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,



And who can forget how Jesus dealt with the Moneychangers who were

perverting the Temple of God? The Bible says:

Mark 11:15-18 ... Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; 16 And would not suffer that any man should carry [any] vessel through the temple. 17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the scribes and chief priests heard [it], and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

This is the only time it was reported in Scripture that our Lord Jesus used physical force against the sinner - but He did use it here. Our Lord did indeed defend Himself and His call, both verbally as well as physically.

What About Turning The Other Cheek?

When I was stationed overseas I found out that the customs of the lands I was in differ quite a bit from those of the Western World. You might remember a few years ago when **an Iraqi Journalist, Muntadhar al-Zaidi** (of the al-Baghdadia television network) **threw a shoe at President G.W. Bush**. Among the Muslim people throwing a shoe or else sitting *so that someone can see the bottom of your feet* is considered an insult. President Bush, by the way, was very gracious throughout the whole affair. Customs are different from East to West.



When I was stationed in the East I was told that **the left hand is considered the toilet hand**. In Egypt, the Philippines, and Korea I was told "**do not touch someone with your left hand. Do not shake hands with anyone with your left hand**". In fact, in the Korean marketplace when I purchased something I always was supposed to *put my left hand on my right forearm when passing or receiving money*.

Among the Eastern Peoples it is considered a terrible insult to be touched - or struck - with the left hand.

Knowing this, let's look at what Jesus taught on "**turning the other cheek**". We read:

Matthew 5:38-39 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.



Look at what Jesus said. "**Whoever smites (slaps) you on your RIGHT cheek**". If you are facing someone, how would you slap them on the RIGHT cheek? The only way you could do that with a normal slap would be with the LEFT hand, or with the *back* of your RIGHT hand. To the ancient Jew either type of slap was considered a great insult. The slap

was not the issue - the insult was. It really didn't matter how hard you were slapped - in either case ...

... the "toilet hand" slap or the "backhand" slap signified that YOU were less than the person who slapped you. It was a terrible insult.

The Pharisees had taken the **"eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth"** teaching of the Scripture (see Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) and used it to justify *immediate retaliation* over any type of offense - especially in regard to the Roman Occupation of Jerusalem. That is why the next teaching of Jesus is:

Matthew 5:40-42 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

What Jesus was teaching is that we as God's Children should not be so quick to insult back when we are insulted. If someone offends you, give them the benefit of the doubt. If the Roman soldier asks you to carry his equipment one mile, do it a second mile. Jesus explains this generous, Gracious attitude this way:

Matthew 5:44-45 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he

maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

We who are Christians represent the Father on the earth. He Himself is gracious and loving, though mankind often insults Him. We as believers are called to be Gracious and loving in our dealing with the lost. Is there a line drawn? Absolutely. Jesus said:

Turn the other cheek but He did not say keep on turning it

Let him have your cloak and coat but He did not say give him your pants as well

Go with him the second mile but He did not say to go a third, a fourth and a fifth

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Jesus calls His people to be gracious and loving, a people who are not argumentative. The Bible says that we who believe should *never start the fight*:

2 Timothy 2:24-25 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

for we represent God and His Kingdom, and want to see as many as possible saved by the glorious Gospel of Christ!

May I Defend Myself And My Family Against Evil?

Exodus 22:2-3 (NIV) If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; 3 but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed. ...



When God established a Law by which His Israel was to follow, one of the harshest punishments was given for murder and sexual sin. The Lord established Capital Punishment for both murder and sexual sin, because these type of sins destroy the fabric of civilization. Yet the Lord allowed killing within Israel in a few areas.

If a thief broke in to a person's home in the dead of night then allowance was made for killing the thief. The Lord said "**if it happens after sunrise, he (the homeowner) is guilty of bloodshed**". That was very practical. The homeowner in either case was allowed by the Lord to defend his home.

The Bible makes it very clear that God's people have the right to defend themselves - but we must never go overboard. _____



Illustrate Several years ago a young member in our Church brought me back a picture of "Ground Zero" in New York City. This is the area where Muslim Terrorists hijacked two commercial airliners and flew them into the **Twin Towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001**. There was 2752 victims who died at Ground Zero. Since that day the religion of



Mohammed has been loudly advertised as a religion of violence, a hate filled faith if there ever was one. The Lord Jesus Christ wanted His people to understand that we are not to be that way.

The faith of Christ is a saving faith, not a killing faith. Look at that picture of Ground Zero again. The Lord does not want His people to be identified with such evil.

Yet there are times in our history when Christians have fought one another and massacred one another. Empty church buildings with crosses on walls and roofs cry out just like the 9/11 Ground Zero Monument does. The Lord does not want us to do the same thing.

We are allowed to *defend ourselves* against evil. When Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city we read that they not only carried trowels but also carried swords:

Nehemiah 4:17-18 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. 18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

The swords were defensive and not offensive. The Lord Jesus told His disciples:

Luke 22:36-38 But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37



For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. 38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

The disciples were told to **go buy a sword for defense**. Any normal reading of the text clearly shows us that Jesus was giving us the authority to defend ourselves and defend our families. Theologian **Normal Geisler** said:

"to permit murder when one could have prevented it is morally wrong. To allow a rape when one could have hindered it is an evil. To watch an act of cruelty to children without trying to intervene is morally inexcusable. In brief, not resisting evil is an evil of omission, and an evil of omission can be just as evil as an evil of commission. Any man who refuses to protect his wife and children against a violent intruder fails them morally."

When resisting evil the Christian Way must always be:



a Within the Will of God, and
b Defensive, and not offensive.

Several hours after Jesus gave His disciples permission to buy a sword, the High Priest sends his servants into the Garden of Gethsemane to capture Jesus. Our Lord was going to willingly give Himself up. But in steps Peter! Quick as a wink he pulls his sword and strikes out at the leader of the guards, a man named **Malchus**. Peter's attack cost Malchus his

ear. The Lord picked up the severed ear and healed that servant (**Luke 22:50-51**).

Jesus rebuked Peter, saying:

Matthew 26:52 ... Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Peter was using the sword *offensively and outside of the will of God*. Jesus had repeatedly told Peter and the other disciples that it was God's Will that He go to the Cross. Peter had no right to stop what Jesus was doing, nor to offensively attack anyone at this point. Jesus was laying His life down for us - how dare Peter try and stop that? **Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15:14).**

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In Closing

Are Christians allowed to defend themselves? Yes they are. However, we need to carefully consider each situation and make sure that what we are doing is within the Will of God.

We do not need to over react. Some offenses are Divine opportunities to share your faith with the

offender. Certainly you should protect your family from the home invader, but you need not use a bazooka to kill a housefly!

We are not allowed to take **vengeance**. Vengeance is when evil is done to us, and we do it back to another. Again, we are allowed to defend ourselves, but *are not to take the offensive*. The Bible tells us:

Romans 12:19-21 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

As believers we are called to **overcome evil with good**. If you fight fire with fire, you may burn yourself up in the ensuing blaze! Let love be your guide.

Illustrate What would you do if you had an **18 month old daughter** who was injured when your car was struck from behind by a drunk driver? What if **six years later your son was run over by an unlicensed driver** who was impaired by tranquilizers? What if, after these two events, your **13 year old daughter was walking to Church and was run over by a drunk driver**? These terrible things all happened to **Candy Lightner**. Her 13 year old daughter **Cari** was crushed by the drunk driver's vehicle, so badly mutilated that she was unrecognizable. Candy could have drowned in anger following the

incident. She could have spent her days chasing drunk drivers through the courts, or could have sought to avenge her family. She did neither. Candy formed the group **Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)**.



MADD

Before this group started DWI offenders were rarely given jail time, and even those who

killed people were given little more than a slap on the wrist. MADD and its three million registered members have pushed legislation to criminalize drunk drivers. Her efforts led **President Ronald Reagan to appoint a Blue Ribbon Commission on Drunk Driving in 1982, and has led to the enactment of over 400 drunk driving laws nationwide.** In 1982 the legal drinking age was raised to 21 years old in most states, mainly in response to MADD's influence. In most cases repeat offenders lose their license to drive. All states except Alaska, Montana, and Arizona have vehicular homicide statutes.

As Christians we are called to be **the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-16)**. Whatever we do as believers is to glorify our Lord while bringing light to the world around us.

