



**“Love Dare”**  
**Matthew 5**  
**Small Group Plan**

Reflect on the progression of these definitions:

*JUSTICE – is getting what you deserve.*

*MERCY – is not getting what you deserve.*

*GRACE – is getting what you don’t deserve.*

When I think that he or she or they should “get what they deserve,” I must, by definition, include myself in the group, because I too am a part of humanity.

This list is a “progression” because it measures my own personal progress. Where am I in the process? Is what I desire for myself what I extend to others? Do I want justice for others but grace for myself?

**OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- Why are movies about vengeance or vigilante justice so popular?
- When you are hurt in a relationship, what is your usual reaction? Why?

**LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

**RETRIBUTION?**

**Matthew 5:38-39**

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ <sup>39</sup> But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

- READ Exodus 21:22-27. How does this context clarify Jesus’ meaning?
- Was the Exodus law promoting revenge or limiting retribution? Explain.
- If everyone today “got what they deserve?” What would happen?
- Is it weakness or strength to turn the other cheek? Explain.

## **RIGHTS?**

### **Matthew 5:40**

<sup>40</sup> *And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well*

- READ Exodus 22:25-26. The outer “cloak” was also used as a sleeping blanket at night and was protected by law from being seized as debt payment.
- What has failed in a relationship that reaches the law-suit stage?
- How can following Jesus’ words change the relationship?
- Since it takes two people to really change a relationship, how can following Jesus’ words change **your** heart, even if the other party doesn’t change?

## **RESPONSIBILITY?**

### **Matthew 5:41-42**

<sup>41</sup> *If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.* <sup>42</sup> *Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

- A Jewish citizen had the “responsibility” to carry a Roman soldier’s gear for one mile when asked.
- With this as the background, how could Jesus’ second-mile lifestyle change the Jewish-Roman relationship?
- What is the fatal flaw in the “do only what you have to do” attitude?

## **RETURNS?**

### **Matthew 5:46-47**

<sup>46</sup> *If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?* <sup>47</sup> *And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?*

- The “tax-collectors” and “pagans” are giving only so they can receive.
- List and briefly describe situations when Jesus loved those who couldn’t or wouldn’t return His love.

## **LOVE!**

### **Matthew 5:43-45, 48**

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous ... <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Why is it difficult to pray for someone who counts you as an enemy?
- How does “love” make me a child “of your Father in heaven”?
- What is Jesus teaching by pointing out that God’s gift of sunshine and rain comes to every kind of person?
- How would you describe the “perfection” of God’s way of love?

### **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- You have heard the phrase, “defusing a tense situation,” but what does it really mean?
- How have you seen it accomplished?
- What could a second mile lifestyle accomplish today?
- Reflect and respond to the quote: “God feeds 7.6 billion ungrateful people every day.”
- Close by asking God for the integrity of heart to extend to others what He has given to you.