

5 Lessons About Zero Victim Mentality from the Greatest Teacher of All

The world is a hostile place. At various times in our lives, all of us encounter people or circumstances that work against us.

Intentionally or unintentionally, people usually cause us to experience those negative circumstances. An identity thief victimizes people intentionally—a drunk driver unintentionally. People with a Zero Victim Mentality choose to *act*—and not *react*—to those circumstances.

On my spiritual and intellectual quest to better understand Zero Victim Mentality, I discovered the greatest resource on the subject—the Bible. Furthermore, Jesus leads as the greatest example of someone who modeled Zero Victim Mentality. I learned five important lessons from His example: 1. Don't seek revenge; 2. Love your enemies.

1. Don't seek revenge. In dealing with an enemy, most of us prefer to “take them out” before they can “take us out.” If they injure us first, we usually avenge ourselves by retaliating in some way, then justify our reaction because of what they did to us. As children, whenever a peer injured us, our playground code of ethics executed justice by seeking an “eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Little did we know the Bible mentions this form of justice. Note the words of Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person. But whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other as well. And if anyone sues you in a court of law and takes away your tunic, let him have your cloak

also. And whoever compels you to go a mile, go with him two.”
(Matt. 5:38-41).

Here we see Jesus introduce a new response to injury and injustice. He introduces the response of an individual who exercises Zero Victim Mentality. If a person strikes you physically, don't strike back. If a person sues you, don't countersue. If you have been forced into manual labor, don't rebel. This response would be considered weak, irrational, and even insane in today's culture. From childhood we learn to defend ourselves and never allow anyone to take advantage of us.

But if you look carefully, you'll see Jesus actually teaches potential victims how to take control of their situation—by first changing our mentality. When slapped on the face, instead of perceiving ourselves as victims of abuse, Jesus instructs us to victoriously rise above the situation by displaying the strength and self-control to be able to willingly receive a blow on the other cheek. At that moment, we become greater than our abuser and display a mentality that cannot be defeated.

If you lose your shirt in a lawsuit, instead of perceiving yourself as a victim, voluntarily offer your coat. The plaintiff cannot take what you as the defendant are willing to freely give away.

If you're forced to perform manual labor, instead of identifying yourself as a victim, readily offer to work twice as hard. With a Zero Victim Mentality, you cannot be enslaved.

Jesus wasn't justifying the mistreatment of anyone; nor did He say we should embrace injustice. He merely described a mentality that perceives the situation differently and liberates the potential victim from a mentality of defeat and victimization.

2. Love your enemies. Everyone has a different definition of

love. Instead of explaining what love is, Jesus shows us love in action.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Matthew 5:43-44).

We naturally love likable people and hate those who harm us. That would be a normal and expected emotional response. When we carefully consider Jesus’ words, however, we see He refers not to an emotional response but to an intentional decision—a decision that results from a specific way of thinking.

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Despite the harm we experience at the hands of those who are against us and persecute us, Jesus encourages a willful response to love and pray for them. This response can only occur in individuals who do not perceive themselves as victims of their enemies and persecutors. The decision to love and pray derives from a Zero Victim Mentality and empowers the potential victim to take control over the circumstances.

Many people’s lives are controlled by unfortunate memories their enemies and oppressors created.

They then spend the remainder of their lives dealing with mental and emotional wounds. Think of all the people in your past who hurt you and persecuted you. How did you respond in each of those circumstances? How would the outcomes of those circumstances been different if you had loved them and prayed for them?

In the moment, you might have felt like a “loser.” But truthfully, your decision to respond differently than expected—to repay evil with good, instead of evil with evil—offered you the upper hand in that situation. Zero Victim

Mentality gives you the upper hand.

Note: This is the first in a three-part series of articles. Tune in Wednesday for part 2 and Thursday for part 3.

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