

TO SLAP A FOOL

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The biggest news in popular culture happened at the Oscars Awards. Will Smith slapped the fool out of Chris Rock.

Our goal is to think biblically about things that everyone else is thinking carnally about.

First, true confession, there was a part of me that loved it. Why? Because I'm sick to my bones of people commenting on things they have neither insight into, jurisdiction over, or business involved with...

Secondly, there was a part of me that hated it. Two sets of rules...

Again, our goal: How do we think biblically about something everyone else is thinking carnally about.

WHAT ARE THE THEMES SHOWN HERE?

- Insult
- Pride and/or Honor
- The defense of Self or Others

INSULT

James 1:26 ESV

You are going to be insulted. This should not surprise you. And you'll need to watch your tongue.

"If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless."

Proverbs 12:18 ESV

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Jesus's words in Matthew's Gospel, where followers of Christ are taught not to resist the one who is evil, but, "if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and give him the other also" (5:39). Most Bible commentators see this slapping as a personal insult rather than an act of physical violence. (Notice the right cheek is emphasized, demonstrating that a backhanded slap is most likely in view.) Instead of returning an insult or another blow, the believer is to be content to endure the stinging slap.

PRIDE

Adapted from a sermon by Charles Spurgeon titled "Self-Deceived"

Human pride is incredibly deceitful. It can so deceive its host that he or she may well believe they are truly humble. It is true of all proud people, for pride is self-deceit. Some reading this may be proud. In fact, it is those who believe they have no pride who are most likely the proudest of all. Those who are proud of their humility are proud indeed.

Those who are self-deceived believe themselves to be of one character while most people see them as totally opposite. These people believe their position or stance or security is firm. However, they cannot see the truth that they are in peril for holding to their position or stance or believing they are secure because their pride has blinded them. They have latched onto certain leaders who they believe to be wise, but these "leaders" have no wisdom. They have confidence in things and people who are like water in their hands. They have placed their trust in people rather than God. Only God does not fail and anyone claiming to have the truth that is contrary to the Word of God is a deceiver.

We cannot trust our pride...

THE DEFENSE OF SELF OR OTHERS

When do we defend ourselves or others?

We do see examples of believers offering self-defense. In fact, Jesus foretold that his disciples would need to defend themselves against accusations, even noting that the Holy Spirit would aid them in their defense (Lk. 12:11-12). And the apostle Paul found himself regularly defending himself (Acts 22:1; 24:10).

The principle is this: Don't force your defense. This is not a good idea because we are both spirit and flesh—and we also have mindsets which are being renewed by God's Spirit each day.

The flesh has no scruples when it is influenced by the power of sin, and our unrenewed pockets of old thinking do not match up perfectly with our spirit. When we let our mouths run wild when pleading our case, bad things happen. The good news is, Jesus said we don't even have to worry about what to say when we defend ourselves because His Holy Spirit will give us the words! (See Luke 12:11-12).

11 "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

SO RATHER THAN FIGHTING BACK, WHAT SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN DO?

The key biblical concept for NT believers is this: Don't fight, withdraw.

Romans 16:17 ESV

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

Galatians 5:19-21 ESV

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Titus 3:10 ESV

As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,

2 Thessalonians 3:14 ESV

If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.

1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."