

Responding in the Opposite Spirit

Father has taught us that to be like him, we must respond to people rather than reacting to what they've said or done. What's the difference?

- Responding is a sober, measured reply to those who are negative towards us, which allows time for us to check our spirit to see what the Spirit is wanting us to do or say in the circumstance.
- Reacting is normally retaliatory. It's a soulish reply which is powered by emotions, attitudes and hurt, which bursts out of us without thinking of an appropriate response. Sometimes we do think before we react, but this is a consequence of thinking about our hurt, or how we can 'get even' with the person. It also produces a negative reply in many cases, and is also counter-productive.

In addition to responding appropriately, or as the Spirit shows us, we must do so in the opposite 'spirit'¹ to the negativity that we have been assailed with. Coming in the opposite 'spirit' is critically important in how we respond to others, and it cannot be dismissed for any reason.

The opposite 'spirit' is always love (unconditional love), as constantly demonstrated by our prototype,² Jesus of Nazareth. This needs to be developed in us because we haven't operated in this way all of our lives. In fact we've been programmed by life's experiences to react to others because of the hurt that they produce in us.

Practising responding in the opposite 'spirit' is a starting point, but it tends to become religious in an action way, just like trying not to sin. The source of what we need to do this is Father's love, which is where we need to apply our focus and time. We need to spend quality time in his presence, soaking up his love, asking him to fill us with it, so we can operate by it very easily, and without having to think about it.

One activity that we do need to put effort into is stopping ourselves from reacting, and stopping ourselves from responding in the wrong spirit. If we can't operate out of Father's love in a situation, it's best to halt our speech and actions, doing nothing, and allow Father to be our justifier and defender. This is where oneness is critical – not an option. The deeper we are in oneness with Father, the more we'll be able to function like him.

IMPORTANT: If we have an Old Covenant/OT view of the character of 'god', one who gets angry and is vengeful, we'll find it very difficult to respond in the opposite 'spirit'. Instead, we may fake it, by being 'wishy-washy'³ or pusillanimous, because we're copying how we think Jesus of Nazareth functioned.⁴

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(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)

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- 1 – Spirit here is not relating to spirituality, but to a particular way of thinking, feeling, or behaving, especially a way that is typical of a particular group of people, an activity, a time, or a place. e.g. as in 'mean spirited', 'highly spirited', 'team spirit' & 'spirit of the age'.
 - 2 – "See Me As Your Prototype" (24-3-2015) canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/33b-See-Me-As-Your-Prototype.pdf
 - 3 – 'Weak', 'lily-livered', 'insipid', 'lacking strength', 'lacking courage', etc.
 - 4 – FROM: "Gentle Jesus meek and mild"