

Matthew 5:38-48 New International Version (NIV)

Eye for Eye

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ [a] 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor [b] and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children 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. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

References:

Leviticus 24:19-22

¹⁹ Anyone who injures their neighbor is to be injured in the same manner: ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury. ²¹ Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a human being is to be put to death. ²² You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the LORD your God.”

Exodus 22:26-27

26 If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset, 27 because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

Jeremiah 21:12

12 This is what the Lord says to you, house of David: “Administer justice every morning; rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done—burn with no one to quench it.

James 4:7 New International Version (NIV)

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 2:21-23

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Leviticus 19:18

18 “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Text Outline

I. 38 “You have heard

- A. that it was said,
 - 1. ‘Eye for eye,
 - 2. and tooth for tooth.’
- B. 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.
 - 1. If
 - a) anyone slaps you on the right cheek,
 - b) turn to them the other cheek also.
 - 2. 40 And
 - a) if anyone
 - (1) wants to sue you
 - (2) and take your shirt,
 - b) hand over your coat as well.
 - 3. 41 If
 - a) anyone forces you to go one mile,
 - b) go with them two miles.
 - 4. 42 Give
 - a) to the one who asks you,
 - b) and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

II. 43 “You have heard

- A. that it was said,
 - 1. ‘Love your neighbor
 - 2. and hate your enemy.’
- B. 44 But I tell
 - 1. you,
 - a) love your enemies
 - b) and pray for those who persecute you,
 - 2. 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

a) *He*

(1) causes his sun to rise on

(a) the evil

(b) and the good,

(2) and sends rain on

(a) the righteous

(b) and the unrighteous.

b) *(You)*

(1) 46 If you love those who love you,

(a) what reward will you get?

(b) Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

(2) 47 And if you greet only your own people,

(a) what are you doing more than others?

(b) Do not even pagans do that?

3. 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

I. Retaliation

- A. Contemporary Cultural Value: get even
 - 1. **Eye for eye**
 - 2. **Tooth for tooth**
- B. Jesus' Instruction: Do not resist an evil person
 - 1. **Physical injury/insult: turn the other cheek**
 - 2. **Legal rights: give up your rights**
 - 3. **Coercion by power: go the extra mile**
 - 4. **Financial imposition: let them take advantage**

II. Love

- A. Contemporary Cultural Value:
 - 1. **Love neighbor**
 - 2. **Hate enemy**
- B. Jesus' Instruction: Love
 - 1. **Unconditional love**
 - a) *Love your enemies*
 - b) *Pray for those who persecute you*
 - 2. **Reason: you may be children of your Father**
 - a) *His character of unconditional love*
 - (1) He gives good unconditionally
 - (2) He gives bad (good in disguise) unconditionally
 - b) *Our character*
 - (1) love compared with tax collectors; question of reward
 - (2) respect compared with pagans; what's the difference for being set apart to be holy
 - 3. **Command: Be perfect as your heavenly Father.**

Potential Questions & Answers:

1. On 12/20/14, two policemen in NY were killed by a gunman who "was angered about the Eric Garner and Michael Brown cases" where the grand juries declined to bring criminal charges against police killing of black men. Do you think this kind of retaliation is justifiable? As a society, how do we handle injustice? Is there a difference in how as an individual we should handle injustice?

Read Mt 5: 38-48

2. These are the last 2 of the 6 antithesis Jesus taught. What is the fifth contemporary cultural value Jesus challenged?

- Getting even, taking revenge, or retaliation: eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

How is it different from our current societal value?

- It's not too different as demonstrated by road rage or the NYPD situation.

How does this teaching deviate from Moses' instruction in Lev. 24:19-22?

- Leviticus 24 is for application of justice by law court, not taking justice into individual's hands.

3. What is Jesus' instruction?

- Do not resist an evil person

Jesus offered us 4 illustrations related to the instruction. What are they?

How are they similar?

- Person mistreating us can be anyone.
- We're not to retaliate but to do more than required.

How are they different?

- They're different in nature and degree. Some more severe than others. Some more permanent than others.
- Nature:
 - Physical injury/insult: turn the other cheek
 - Legal rights: (coat is a Jew's right)
 - Coercion by power: Roman soldier can force anyone to carry his things & go one mile in any direction.
 - Financial imposition: let them take advantage

4. Does Jesus call us to be a doormat? Why or why not?

- It stressed meeting hatred with positive love rather than hatred. Though Jesus allowed His enemies to lead Him as a lamb to the slaughter, He did not cave in to every hostile attack from the scribes and Pharisees. Likewise, Paul claimed his Roman citizenship rather than suffering prolonged attack by the Jews. Disciples may stand up for their rights, but when they are taken advantage of, they should always respond in love.

What does it mean to not resist an evil person?

- resist – defend one's self; take aggressive action
- Not retaliate

- Do good

How do we resolve the contradiction before this instruction and multiple biblical instructions to administer justice as recorded in Jer 21:12, Zech 7:9, and Heb 11:33?

- The difference lies in whether it's social, moral, national or personal. On a personal level, we are called to let go of our rights and possessions for the sake of love. On a legal, social, moral level, we are to uphold justice.

How do we reconcile the difference between this instruction and James 4:7 to resist the devil?

- We are to resist evil in our own lives but not to resist anyone we consider as evil.

5. How did Jesus live out this instruction in His life time? What motivated him to tolerate such persecution?
 - I Pet 2: 21-23
 - His motivation was His trust in God and His love for us.
6. Use a sentence or two in your own words to summarize Jesus' instruction. Share a personal situation where you can practice this principle.

Read Mt 5: 43-48

7. Before studying the last antithesis, think of someone in your life you consider an "enemy" or a "persecutor."

The last of the 6 antithesis provides the motivation for the other 5 antithesis. What were the 5 antithesis?

- Jesus came to fulfill the law. Therefore, Christian righteousness needs to surpass that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law. (5: 17-20)
- Anger is equated with murder. Christians are to seek reconciliation immediately. (5:21-26)
- Deal with lust radically
- Do not divorce except for sexual immorality
- Truth & integrity in speech

What motivates Christian to live counter cultural lives?

- Love unconditionally as God loves.
8. What was the contemporary cultural teaching about love in Jesus' time?
 - Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. Jews only considered fellow Jews as neighbors. Therefore, they can hate gentiles.

How is it different from our contemporary teaching?

- Similar. We might be a bit worse. We might limit our love to just people we love, not all our neighbors.

How is that different from O.T. instruction in Lev. 19:18?

- There's not command to hate. They added that.

- Then, they limited their interpretation to neighbors to their own people, not neighboring nations.

9. Instead of partiality, whom & how are we to love?

- Love even enemies by praying for them.

What would praying for our persecutor do for us?

- God may change them. God may change our hearts towards them. Our love towards them might show them we belong to God.

10. What reasons did Jesus provide for us to live such radical lives?

- God loves everyone unconditionally.
- If we're to be His children, we need to be like Him.
- Our standard needs to surpass tax collectors and pagans.
- God will reward.
- We are called to be perfect as the Father is perfect.

How does God show His love? What would happen if God only loves the good and the righteous?

- He loves all and gives to all unconditionally (common grace.)
- If he doesn't love the evil and the unrighteous, we would never be saved. He wouldn't have come to save us. His common grace is provided so that we can experience His saving grace, which is available to all.

11. Jesus gave 2 examples of God's impartial unconditional love, how are they similar/different?

- Similar: given to all, through nature. We sometimes don't even consider them as grace.
- Difference: rain can sometimes be conceived as not a blessing. Yet, it's still available to all.

Why aren't the righteous spare of the "not so good" things? How might this thought help you when you encounter struggles?

- God is love. He is also just. Even as Christian, we would often experience similar struggles as others. Our struggles are common to others. Yet, our awareness of His love can help us to endure.

12. The next reason for the command to love is that our righteousness need to surpass 2 groups of people. Who are they?

- Tax collectors and pagans

How are they different and similar?

- Tax collectors were considered traitors; violators of God's standard
- Pagans were pigs, worshippers of idols and rejected by God
- Both were despised & rejected

Does this instruction to surpass sound familiar? Where have you seen it before?

- Mt 5:20 The Pharisees & teachers of the law

If we were to put the 3 groups of people together, who else is left? Why must our righteousness be better?

- No one. Our love is to surpass all because we are called to be different, holy, & perfect.

13. Why was I wrong in saying early that we needed to be better?

- The summary verse doesn't call us to be better but to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

From experience, perfection is not attainable & Jesus wouldn't be setting us up for failure. {He already told us to hunger & thirst for righteousness in 5:6 (not perfect) & to pray for forgiveness (6:12).} So what does He mean? What is this command about?

- Positionally, we are perfect already because of the accomplished work of Christ on the cross. We just have to live it out...be. This is the concept of "the already & the not yet." Justification and sanctification.

14. Being perfect, share how you will treat your "enemy" or "persecutor" in the next month.

Questions:

1. On 12/20/14, two policemen in NY were killed by a gunman who "was angered about the Eric Garner and Michael Brown cases" where the grand juries declined to bring criminal charges against police killing of black men. Do you think this kind of retaliation is justifiable? As a society, how should we handle injustice? Is there a difference in how as an individual we should handle injustice?

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3. What is Jesus' instruction? Jesus offered us 4 illustrations related to the instruction. What are they? How are they similar? How are they different?
4. What does it mean to not resist an evil person? How do we resolve the contradiction before this instruction and multiple OT instructions to administer justice as recorded in Jer 21:12, Zech 7:9, and Heb 11:33? On a personal/individual level, how do we reconcile the difference between this instruction and James 4:7 to resist the devil?
5. Does Jesus call us to be a doormat? Why or why not? How did Jesus live out this instruction in His life time? What motivated him to tolerate such persecution?
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8. What was the contemporary cultural teaching about love in Jesus' time? How is it different from our contemporary teaching? How is that different from O.T. instruction in Lev. 19:18?
9. Instead of partiality, whom & how are we to love? What would praying for our persecutor do for us?
10. What reasons did Jesus provide for us to live such radical lives? How does God show His love? What would happen if God only loves the good and the righteous?
11. Jesus gave 2 examples of God's impartial unconditional love, how are they similar/different? Why aren't the righteous spare of the "not so good" things? How might this thought help you when you encounter struggles?
12. The next reason for the command to love is that our righteousness need to surpass 2 groups of people. Who are they? How are they different and similar? Does this instruction to surpass sound familiar? Where have you seen it before? If we were to put the 3 groups of people together, who else is left? Why must our righteousness be better?
13. Why was I wrong is saying early that we needed to be better? The summary verse doesn't call us to be better but to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. From experience, perfection is not attainable & Jesus wouldn't be setting us up for failure. {He already told us to hunger & thirst for righteousness in 5:6 (not perfect) & to pray for forgiveness (6:12).} So what does He mean? What is this command about?
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