

The Sermon on the Mount
Love Your Enemies; Matthew 5:38-48

Matthew 5:38-39 “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 slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Old Testament law that provided a proportionate response in the world of criminal prosecution and punishment.

Romans 13:1-2 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Romans 13:3-4 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

Romans 13:5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake.

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There is risk of applying civil and criminal laws from the Bible to justify our personal interactions with others.

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“Turn the other cheek” is a reference to the insult of the person’s character, not to the physical violence or actual injury. Pride comes in and the seeking of getting even or getting revenge.

(Jesus) His concern is only with the inappropriateness of such a formula to personal ethics. Applied to that context it becomes a justification for relentless perpetuation of the blood-feud with no hope of escaping the cycle of reciprocal violence. RT France in the NICNT

Matthew 5:40-42 “If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

I Corinthians 6:7-8 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.

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“Go the extra mile” is a reference to willingly taking a burden that is not ours for the sake of the good or joy of another.

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“Live generously” captures the idea here.