

Will You Lash Out or Love?

Matthew 5:38-42

Main Idea

Jesus calls us to repay evil with blessing not cursing; to love radically and not lash out immediately.

Overview

- **Vs. 38: Jesus paraphrases teaching in the Old Testament:**
 - In Ex. 21:22-25; Lev. 24:17-20, God gives his people the “eye for eye and tooth for tooth law”
 - It was given to Israel as a whole community not just individuals
 - It was to be carried out in court, so to speak, not personal relationships
 - In fact, Lev. 19:18 explicitly forbid personal revenge
- **Vs. 38: How Are We To Respond?**
 - That word “resist” means to “not set yourself against” or “to not take revenge” or “not pay back” (cf. Rm. 12:17; 1 Pt. 3:9)
 - “The one who is evil” refers to anyone who wrongs you – that’s why following verses use anyone/whoever
 - Jesus knows our natural inclination is to get revenge so he explicitly tells us not to do that – he calls love radically not lash out erratically
- **Vs. 38-42: Four Examples of Responding in Love**
 - *By Turning the Other Cheek* – not seeking to defend your own honor
 - *By Giving Up Your Rights* – seeing reconciled relationships as more important than person rights, and seeing people as more important than possessions
 - *By Going Beyond What is Required* – not just doing what’s obligated begrudgingly and reluctantly, but cheerfully and graciously
 - *By Giving Generously* – we’re called to have a spirit of uncalculated generosity; even when we can’t give what is asked, we can still give something to who asks

Questions

Discussion Starter: *Why don’t we have to work hard at desiring revenge when someone wrongs, offends or mistreats us? Why do we seek revenge and find it so hard not to do so?*

1. Read Matthew 5:38-42. The saying quoted by Jesus in verse 38 was a law given by God to his people. What does this law tell us about the character of God?
2. In verse 39, when Jesus says “Do not resist the one who is evil” it seems he’s implying he knows our natural response is to resist/get revenge. Why is it important to understand this? What do we seek to gain retaliating?
3. In verse 39, Jesus calls us to “turn to him the other” cheek when slapped. What does this mean? Why is it so hard to do? How does the gospel inform us?
4. In verse 40, Jesus calls us when you are sued, “let him have your cloak as well.” What does this mean? Why is it so hard to do? How does the gospel inform us?
5. In verse 41, Jesus says when “anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” What does this mean? Why is it so hard to do? How does the gospel inform us?

6. In verse 42, Jesus calls us to “give to the one who begs” and “no [to] refuse the one who would borrow.” What does this mean? Why is it so hard to do? How does the gospel inform us?
7. Discuss specific examples of how you’ve seen or practiced the commands of Jesus. What was the result?

Accountability Question: *Is there a person who you need to seek forgiveness from because you’ve retaliated against them in some way? OR How has God given you the grace to not repay evil with evil?*