

Holding Grudges, Getting Even (Pt. 3)

Matthew 5:38-42

- I. Reject the Popular Misunderstanding of “an Eye for an Eye” (38)
 - A. What the Old Testament Really Taught (38) — *just legal punishment*
 - B. What the Scribes & Pharisees Wrongly Taught (38) — *justifiable personal revenge*

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II. Follow Jesus' Revolutionary Teaching about Personal Revenge (39-42)

A. The General Principle (39a)

B. Four Specific Examples (39b-42)

1. An intentional attack on our dignity (39b)

a. What This Does Not Teach

- Complete nonresistance—*"physical violence is always wrong in every circumstance."*
- Pacifism—*"a Christian must never engage in killing of any kind, especially in war."*

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- II. Follow Jesus' Revolutionary Teaching about Personal Revenge (39-42)
 - A. The General Principle (39a)
 - B. Four Specific Examples (39b-42)
 - 1. An Intentional attack on our dignity (39b)
 - a. What This Does Not Teach
 - b. What This Does Teach—*how to respond to insults*

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A. Four Specific Examples (39b-42)

1. An Intentional attack on our dignity (39b)
2. An intentional attack on our property (40)
 - a. What This Does Not Teach—*“Christians may not seek justice in court.”*
 - God uses the language of a lawsuit (e.g., Hos. 4:1-2; Micah 6:1-2).
 - God established a judicial system justice (Dt. 17:8-11; 19:16-18).
 - God condemned Israel for its failure of justice (Lam. 3:34-36).
 - God allows NT believers to pursue legal justice (Lk. 12:11; Acts 22:1; 24:10; 1 Cor. 6:1-7).

What are legitimate, biblical legal actions for Christians?

1. A Christian who commits a crime should be reported to the police.
2. Christians who can't settle their dispute should take it to the elders.
3. A Christian harmed or injured by a company or unbeliever can pursue a just settlement or rightful damages through the courts.
4. A Christian who is sued can defend himself.

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A. Four Specific Examples (39b-42)

1. Intentional attacks on our dignity (39b)
2. An intentional attack on our property (40)
 - a. What This Does Not Teach—*“Christians may not seek justice in court.”*
 - b. What This Does Teach—*“It’s better to give up your property than to give in to bitterness and revenge.”*
3. A governmental attack on our liberty (41)

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3. A governmental attack on our liberty (41)

a. What This Does Not Teach

- Condoning oppression by evil rulers or government officials (Jer. 22:17-19)
- Forbidding using legal means to change unjust, oppressive laws or treatment
 - Jesus called for the law to be followed (Jn. 18:22-23).
 - Paul demanded his legal rights (Acts 16:37).
 - Paul called for the law to be followed (Acts 22:25).
 - Paul used the judicial system by appealing to Caesar (Acts 25:11).

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3. A governmental attack on our liberty (41)

a. What This Does Not Teach

- Condoning oppression by evil rulers or government officials (Jer. 22:17-19)
- Forbidding using legal means to change unjust, oppressive laws or treatment
- Forbidding fleeing unlawful arrest or unjust punishment (Mt. 10:23; Jn. 11:53-54; Acts 9:23-25)
- Requiring us to obey laws contrary to Scripture (Acts 5:29)
- Revoking the duty of subordinate gov't officials to respond to gov't abuses, including superiors (cf. Rom. 13 sermon)

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3. A governmental attack on our liberty (41)

a. What This Does Not Teach

b. What This Does Teach

- No passive resistance or civil disobedience toward unjust laws and rulers (cf. Rom. 13:1-5; 1 Pet. 2:13-15)
- No armed revolution
- No resentment against specific laws or hatred toward individual gov't officials