

MY BODY,
MY CHOICE?

US
AGAINST
THEM?

WHAT DOES GOD SAY?

— PART 2 —

IS VIOLENCE
EVER JUSTIFIED?



Know

Romans

- Christians were a religious minority. Their allegiance to Jesus could put them at odds with Roman religious and social expectations.
- Roman authorities had enormous power. They could imprison, physically punish, and execute people, making conflicts with authorities potentially dangerous.
- Christians could experience hostility and mistreatment. Paul's instructions about revenge and loving enemies applied even when they were treated unjustly.
- They faced a difficult question: How should Christians respond to wrongdoing while living under an imperfect government?
- Christians had to figure out where their loyalty belonged. They were called to obey governing authorities, but their ultimate allegiance was to God, raising the question of what to do when human laws conflicted with God's commands.

Read

Romans 12:17-13:5

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

13 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ²

Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

Ask

If a police officer or soldier uses lethal force to stop someone who is threatening innocent lives, what makes that action morally different from murder? Does having legal authority automatically justify the use of violence, and what responsibility does the individual have if they're ordered to do something wrong?

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:39 to "turn the other cheek," yet the Bible also recognizes circumstances where the use of force may be justified. How do we reconcile these teachings when someone physically attacks us? How should our motives, the seriousness of the threat, and the possibility of a peaceful solution influence our response, and at what point does self-defense become retaliation or revenge?

If you or someone else is being repeatedly bullied or physically assaulted, and peaceful attempts to stop it haven't worked, when does standing up for yourself or others become justified? What responsibility do you have to intervene, especially if doing so puts you at risk, and how do you distinguish protecting someone from seeking revenge?

If someone commits a terrible act of violence against someone you care about, is it wrong to want them to suffer? How do you distinguish between justice and revenge, and what would forgiveness look like if the person never apologized or faced consequences?

In a culture where violence is often celebrated through movies, video games, sports, and social media, how can we determine whether enjoying violent entertainment is affecting the way we value human life, respond to conflict, and view the suffering of others?

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue or grey lines spaced evenly apart, typical of notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical lines, text, or other markings on the page.

Prayer Requests

Gospel Sharing Tool

1. Ask Permission

"Can I ask you a spiritual question?"

2. Ask Two Questions

- "What do you think happens after we die?"
- "If God asked, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' what would you say?"

3. Listen

Listen carefully and repeat back what you heard to make sure you understand.

4. Share the Gospel

Use this simple outline:

- God – God loves us and created us to know Him.
- Us – We have all sinned and are separated from God.
- Jesus – Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sins.
- Response – We must repent and trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.

5. Invite

"Where are you at with Jesus?"

6. Follow Up

"Would you like to read the Bible or talk more about this sometime?"

7. Pray

"Can I pray for you or pray with you?"



Sundays
9 AM, *Netcong*
10 AM, *Randolph*
11:15 AM, *Netcong*

Wednesdays
7 PM, *Netcong*

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