

Different On Purpose: The End of Payback Culture Matthew 5:38-48

Passage

Matthew 5:38-48 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 the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Jesus Rejects Retaliation as a Way of Life

Assertion

- Jesus addresses the familiar principle: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But Jesus goes further: "Do not resist the one who is evil... turn the other cheek..."

Possible Objection

- So are we just supposed to let people walk all over us? That's the immediate pushback. "Is Jesus saying be passive? Be weak? Just take abuse?"

Application

- The next time you are insulted, criticized, or slighted, intentionally delay your response—even by 10–30 seconds (or longer if possible).
- Biblical Grounding: James 1:19–20 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
- Why It Matters: You honor Jesus not by winning the moment, but by refusing to escalate it.

Jesus Calls for Radical Generosity Instead of Defensive Living

Assertion

- Jesus continues:
 - If someone sues you—give more than required
 - If forced to go one mile—go two
 - If asked—give

Possible Objection

- Isn't that unrealistic? People will take advantage of you. That feels like a legitimate concern. "If I live like that, won't I just get used?"

Application

- Identify one situation where you would normally do the bare minimum—and intentionally go beyond it.
- Biblical Grounding: Luke 6:30-31: Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

- Why It Matters: Freedom is found when you stop doing the minimum required and start doing the maximum God inspires.

Jesus Commands Love for Enemies

Assertion

- This is where it gets hardest. “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Not tolerate. Not ignore. Not avoid. Love.

Possible Objection

- But some people don’t deserve love. That’s honest. “They’ve hurt me. They’ve lied. They’ve betrayed. Why should I love them?”

Application

- Choose one difficult person (not a hypothetical enemy—a real one). For the next 7 days:
 - Pray for their good
 - Pray for God to bless them
 - Pray for your heart to change toward them
- Biblical Grounding: Matthew 5:44. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you
- Why It Matters: Prayer is how God transforms your enemies and your heart at the same time.

Jesus Calls Us to Reflect the Perfect Love of God

Assertion

- “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Possible Objection

- That’s impossible. No one can live like this.

Application

- In moments of tension, conflict, or offense, ask one diagnostic question: “If I reflect my Father right now, what would that look like?”
- Biblical Grounding: Ephesians 5:1–2: “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
- Why It Matters: Spiritual maturity is not measured by how you feel but by how clearly you reflect your Father.

Conclusion

- What kind of culture are you building with your life?