

## Matthew 5:38-42

# Discussion questions

Opener: What is the difference between revenge and seeking justice? Should we be doing *either* of these as Christians? Why or why not?

Reading Matthew 5:38-42

1. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" essentially means "the punishment should fit the crime"
  - a. How do we misuse this principle to justify retaliating when someone hurts us?
  - b. The principle is actually intended to restrain personal vengeance. How might it do this?
2. "Do not resist an evil person" (v. 39) What 'evil' is Jesus talking about here (look at the four examples he gives in 39b-42)?
  - a. What does it mean not to 'resist' when someone hurts us personally?
  - b. Some have taken this to mean that Christians should never: defend ourselves and our families from attack, call the police, take someone to court or defend the cause of others who are being mistreated or oppressed. Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. The response Jesus calls for here isn't defiance, defeatism or dissidence but involves giving up our pride, protection, power and property for the good of the other person.
  - a. Why is it so hard to react this way when someone wrongs us?
  - b. Can you think of modern day examples of how you might have to give up the following things to respond rightly when someone hurts you:
    - i. Pride
    - ii. Protection
    - iii. Power
    - iv. Property
4. Look up 1 Peter 2:13-25. How does Jesus himself demonstrate the response he is calling for in Matthew 5?
  - a. What perspective enabled Jesus to do this?
5. If you have time, look up Romans 12:14-21. What does this passage add in terms of the i) motive and ii) outcome of non-retaliation?

Prayer Idea

- Thank God that Jesus practiced what he preached and showed sacrificial love to us, even when we were enemies
- Pray for one another, that amid any conflict we face this week, God will enable us to show grace rather than retaliate.
- Prayer for your brothers and sisters around the world who face open hostility for their faith. Ask God to help them not to retaliate but to show grace and overcome evil with good.