

The Gospel according to Matthew
Personal Injury (“An-Eye-for-an-Eye”) – from Matthew 5:38 – 42

(This handout is supplemental to the class and is not meant as a comprehensive study of the subject.)

A study of both the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures are necessary for a proper understanding of how to deal with personal injuries from a biblical perspective. On one hand the Bible says, “An eye for an eye.” But, the same Bible also says, “Vengeance belongs to God.” How do these two statements blend together? For a better understanding of this topic, complete the following exercise.

The phrase an “eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” is found three times in the Old Testament (OT), and one time in the New Testament (NT). From each of the three OT passages, list the conditions for this law to be executed:

1. Exodus 21:22 – 25, what was the condition?
2. Leviticus 24:19, 20, what was the condition?
3. Deuteronomy 19:15 – 21, what as the condition?
4. What do you think would be some benefits of the “eye-for-an-eye” law?

These laws and statutes were not intended for private citizens to carry out or for the taking or private revenge. But, were, instead, rules for the courts of Israel to use in legal judgments.

5. Read Exodus 18:21 – 26
6. Compare Exodus 21:1 (notice the word legal word, “judgments”)

Now, compare the following verses:

7. Leviticus 19:18
8. Proverbs 24:29
9. Proverbs 25:22

From a dictionary, define the following words:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
| a. Violent (violence) | b. Injury | c. Laws |
| d. Retaliation | e. Judgments | f. Revenge |

In Matthew 5:39 – 42, Jesus is not telling us to never defend ourselves against those who do us wrong. Nor is He telling us to patiently endure all wrongs of others upon us. These verses are speaking of taking the law into our own hands. That is what is forbidden.

**JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING WRONG TO YOU, DOESN'T MEAN YOU
HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO THE SAME THING TO THEM!**

How do the following verses relate to Matthew 5:39 – 42:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Matthew 18:15 – 17 | 11. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 |
| 2. Mark 15:20, 21 | |
| 3. Luke 6:30 – 34 | |
| 4. John 18:22, 23 | |
| 5. Romans 12:17, 21 | |
| 6. 1 Corinthians 6:1 – 8 | |
| 7. 1 Corinthians 16:2, 3 | |
| 8. 2 Corinthians 8:13, 14 | |
| 9. Ephesians 4:28 | |
| 10. 1 Peter 2:18 - 23 | |

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