

REVERSING REVENGE

Matthew 5:38-42

I. Personal vengeance is contrary to biblical justice (v. 38).

II. Personal vengeance is contrary to biblical love (vv. 39-42).

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. What is the *lex talionis* (the law of retribution)? Why is it important?
2. How were the religious leaders distorting and abusing this OT law that says, “Eye for eye and tooth for tooth”?
3. What is revenge? Why is it sweet? Why does it end in death?
4. How was God’s civil law of “eye for eye” actually a means of preventing personal and private revenge?
5. Instead of seeking to get our enemies back for the harm they do to us, what does Jesus teach us to do?
6. Is Jesus teaching that there is never a time to defend ourselves and our loved ones? Is He teaching that we should always give to anyone who asks? Why, or why not?
7. How does Christ’s giving up of His personal rights in the gospel help us to understand how we should conduct ourselves when our rights are being threatened for His sake?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Why does my heart love getting revenge on people who harm me unjustly?
2. How does the gospel reorder my heart and reverse my natural tendency toward vengeance?
3. Does personal vengeance ever deliver on the satisfaction it promises? Can I think of a single time it resulted in good fruit in my life?