

## **Lesson 11: An Eye for an Eye & Loving Your Enemies**

Matthew 5:38-48: Rom 12:19-21

### **I. JUSTICE FOR ALL** (Mat 5:38; Lev 24:17-22; Deut 19:15-21)—“You have heard that it was said...”

#### **A. The Intent of Eye for Eye Justice**— the negative application of “Do unto others...”

1. **To Deter Crime**—What you do to others *will be done to you!*
2. **To Discourage Personal Vengeance** (Lev 19:18; Prov 20:22 & 24:29)
3. **To Establish Appropriate Penalty**—not too harsh or too lenient

#### **B. Based upon Empathy** (instill, reinforce, teach empathy)—*See how you like it!*

#### **C. How the Pharisees Misused the Law**—to *justify seeking* personal retribution

### **II. A HIGHER STANDARD** (Mat 5:39-42) “But I tell you...” Jesus’ understanding/authority superior

#### **A. Are you out of your mind?**

1. **A Slap in the Face** (39; Isa 50:6-7)—personal offense, rudeness, disrespect, insult on injury.  
➔ Jesus turned the other cheek when he was beaten before his crucifixion.
2. **The Shirt off Your Back** (40; Mat 25:37)—someone trying to take what belongs to you.  
➔ Jesus allowed soldiers to strip the coat and shirt off of His back before they crucified Him.
3. **Going the Extra Mile** (41; Isa 53:4; Gal 6:2)—don’t just do the *bare minimum*; he needs help so help him graciously.  
➔ Jesus “bore our griefs and carried our sorrows all the way to the cross.”
4. **Open-handed Generosity** (Deut 15:7-11)
  - a. **Give**—charitable giving, donating goods and services for people in need
  - b. **Lend**—loan money or tools or whatever they need without interest
  - c. **Don’t Turn Away**—Look. Notice. Acknowledge. Don’t ignore.  
➔ Jesus noticed when people were hungry. He cared and He fed them.

#### **B. We are not of this world!**—Christians are not supposed to be *passive doormats* but *active lovers*. Our behavior is to flow from:

1. **Not Weakness but Strength**
2. **Not Fear but Faith**

### 3. Not Natural but Supernatural

➔ *Only the Spirit of God can so change the human soul that these things are possible!*

## III. PAGAN MORALITY (Mat 5:43, 46-48)

### A. Common Courtesy

1. **Neighbors**—people who live near you; members of your community
2. **Brothers**—biological/ethnic kinship or *religious* kinship
3. **Friends**—chosen and cultivated out of mutual affection

### B. Natural Animosity

**Enemies** don't like, disagree, threaten, hurt, insult, and take what is yours.

➔ *Christians are required not only to respect and treat fairly, but to **love** all persons.*

## IV. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES (43-48; Prov 10:12/1 Pet 4:8; Prov 25:21; Rom 5:10)

### A. Defining Your Terms

1. **What does it mean to love?** To care for someone else and be steadfastly committed to the good of that person, often at significant cost to yourself
2. **Who are my enemies?** Anyone who does not naturally inspire your love, who, in fact, naturally inspires the *opposite*!

### B. Studying Your Model ((Mat 5:44, 45, 48)—*divine perfection*)

What is beautiful, noble, worth aspiring to?

1. **Generosity** (45b)
2. **Kind Patience** (Rom 2:4)
3. **Mercy** (Rom 5:8)

### C. Showing Family Resemblance (45a; 5:9)

1. **Not earning your place**
2. **Evidence of the Holy Spirit**

### D. Impressing God (46-47)

1. **Earthly Rewards**—obvious, utilitarian and awarded by man
2. **Heavenly Rewards**—must be seen and anticipated by faith

### E. What to Do with Bullies: Pray for them! Pray the way you want one to pray for you.