



# Retaliation And Vengeance

**“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39).**

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**“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matthew 5:38-42).**

The natural tendency in a person is to get even when wronged by overt or covert means. However, a Christian lives a supernatural life by the Spirit of God, therefore, must go by the supernatural standards of God. It takes the grace of God to live, walk, talk and act supernaturally.

It is very tempting to take a text like this and explain it from human standpoint in such a way to make it conformable to our understandings and experiences in life rather than what the Bible is actually saying. It is wrong to do so.

Let's start by noting that Jesus observed this in His life, and by so doing set a model example for the whole world to follow. Isaiah 53:7 summed it up how he responded towards the wicked oppressors who killed Him “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth”. Instead of reacting naturally to His killers, He switched unto the supernatural and prayed for them in love “... Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing...” (Luke 23:34). Such a love, can melt the hardest heart of sinners to repentance.

That is what the Bible meant in Romans 12:17-21 - “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for

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God's wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”.

It is often said that the best victory a person can have is winning his enemies over to become his /her friends. This is what Jesus came to do - reconciling the world back to God, and he has given us the same Ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).

“An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth...” was the just demand of the law, administered by nominated judges, and aimed at curbing evil. The principles Jesus teaches goes beyond merely curbing evil, to that of transforming the atmosphere to that where good can prevail. Consider the impact of a life dominated by the principles advocated by Jesus, as listed below, can be:

- 1) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also (vs 39).
- 2) And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also (vs 40).
- 3) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain (vs 41).
- 4) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (vs 42)

Consider what the society would be if everyone were bound by these principles! “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). This is what it takes to obey God!