

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

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In the New Testament, Jesus reinterpreted this law. He taught his followers not to retaliate, but to forgive and love their enemies. The standard shifted from equal retribution to mercy.

Jesus Teaches, Preaches, and Heals; He went all over Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom, and healing people who had all kinds of disease and sickness. In the teaching about Revenge (Matt 5: 38-42), Jesus has said: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too. And if someone takes you to court to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well. And if one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles. When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him."

Jesus continues to teach us to love our enemies. (Matt 5: 43-48) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.' But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! You must be perfect - Just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Forgiveness in the Bible is a central command, a reflection of God's grace, and a vital requirement for spiritual and relational health. God offers complete forgiveness and cleanses us from unrighteousness when we confess our wrongs to Him. God promises complete and free forgiveness of sins to anyone who confesses and trusts in Jesus Christ. Matthew 6:14-15 - "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done."

Unresolved conflict can affect our physical well-being, whereas the act of forgiveness can lower our risk for a heart attack, improving our cholesterol levels and our sleep. It can reduce pain in our body; and lower our blood pressure and levels of anxiety, depression and stress. None of this should come as a surprise because God said, "Listen to me, my child. Take seriously what I am telling you, and you will live a long life" (Proverbs 4:10).

We can find out every time when we are hurt. We can experience a better quality of life by practicing the scriptures to forgive others and enjoy a long life.

Luke 6:37-38 "Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands - all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you."

Mark 11:25 "And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done."

Colossians 3:13-16 "Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts."

Ephesians 4:32 "Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ."

Acts 2:38-39 "Peter said to them, 'Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit. For God's promise was made to you and your children, and to all who are far away - all whom the Lord our God calls to himself.'"

Hebrews 12:14-15 "Try to be at peace with everyone, and try to live a holy life, because no one will see the Lord without it. Guard against turning back from the grace of God. Let no one become like a bitter plant that grows up and causes many troubles with its poison."

Romans 12:19-20-21 "Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, 'I will take revenge. I will pay back.' says the Lord"

"If your enemies are hungry, feed them, if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame."

"Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good."

It is clear our world is sustained, helped and protected by the Love of God. God's love is described as unconditional, sacrificial and everlasting. God loves humanity not because of our good behavior, achievements or moral worth, but because "God is Love". (John 4:8)

God's Love (Ephesians 3:14-19)

Only when we personally live with Him can we feel that God is not a conceptual God, not a legal God, not a God of doctrines, not a God of a philosophy of life, but a living God who desires to dwell with us and give us abundant life.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

God's Love is important because it provides an unshakeable foundation for human worth, offers eternal hope, and empowers people to forgive and love others.

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