

Life Without Offense, Possessing Nothing

Matthew 5:38-42

Q: What are we supposed to do with the original statement from the law, “Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” when Jesus affirmed the law (Matthew 5:17-18) and scripture affirms it afterward (Romans 7:12)? The law being good, this is justice in its perfect form. These are just punishments. They are also a maximum penalty, not prescribed necessary punishment. Such punishment ensured it was never life for tooth, house for broken bone. Forgiveness and mercy could still be offered, though meeting a crime with justice is justified by the law. Obviously we have received incredible mercy from God

Q: What does this first prescription, turning the other cheek, do? It regards physical injury as something not to be resisted. Our body is not our own. Christ offered no resistance to this. In another sense it means to not return offense for offense.

Q: What does not taking offense at injury do for us? It disarms the hatred of the enemy. Reaction is satisfaction. When not received it can strip pleasure. It can also cause the offender to feel guilt over harming the innocent (depending on how hard their heart is). It also leave you guiltless, blameless before the judge (God). We desire to be clear, faultless if we can. Romans 12:17-21 speaks this way. As far as it depends on us, we live at peace. If others don't want that, it is not our business to treat them without love. We seek not to offend.

Q: What does the second prescription, suing/stealing, do? It addresses that physical possessions are not our own and are not to be coveted. We can do without. Jesus had nothing. What can we live with? How often is what is stolen or taken restored when given or taken?

Q: What does this third prescription, going the extra mile, do? It addresses that our time is not our own. By taking this time we are afforded more time to serve and perhaps build a relationship. We think we can do more with our time but would we use it selfishly or selflessly? Mk 9:35, 10:45 - service is ours as a main priority of the selfless, Christ-like life.

Q: Give to anyone who asks, do not turn from a borrower, what does this get at? We should be thinking serve first and anticipate meeting the needs of others. We should treat possessions and rewards as thing to be paid forward and given out. Our hands possess nothing, things only pass through on their way to bless.

Q: What is Jesus getting at? All points to what we have and even who we are is not our own. We own nothing, not our time, not our possessions, not even our physical bodies. It is the should that matters.