

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK ?

or do you have the right of SELF-DEFENSE as a CHRISTIAN ?

by Rev.Dr.Graham Healy D.D.(H.C.)

31st Oct 2015

below is an excellent explanation found on

<http://questions.org/attq/what-did-jesus-mean-when-he-said-to-turn-the-other-cheek-matthew-539%C2%A0/>

www.questions.org

What did Jesus mean when He said not to resist an evildoer, and to instead turn the other cheek ([Matthew 5:39](#))?

In [Matthew 5:38-41](#) , Jesus made three radical statements. First, He said that a person should turn the other cheek when someone strikes him. Second, He declared that His followers should give those who sue them more than they are asking. Third, He said that a person conscripted by a Roman officer to carry a load for 1 mile should offer to go 2 miles. Does this mean that we should never resist when somebody attacks us? Should we let everyone take advantage of us?

This can't be what Jesus meant. After all, Jesus denounced the Pharisees who attacked Him ([Matthew 23](#)), and **objected when He was struck by one of the officers of the high priest** ([John 18:22-23](#)). **Further, He advised His disciples to take measures to defend themselves** ([Matthew 10:16](#); [Luke 22:36-38](#)). He also declared that they shouldn't worry beforehand about how they should respond to their enemies' charges, because He would give them the right words to say so that their adversaries wouldn't be able "to contradict or resist" them ([Luke 21:14-15](#)).

Similarly, the **apostle Paul aggressively defended himself against his enemies, asserting his rights as a Roman citizen, and making it clear to his attackers that there could be consequences if he were unlawfully harmed** ([Acts 23:1-3](#); [25:14-27](#)).

What Jesus asks of His followers is not passivity, but surrender of the right to personal revenge. His three radical examples make His point about the attitude we should have toward those who wrong us. Rather than getting even, we should be willing to go to the opposite extreme. **We need to be ready to humble ourselves for the kingdom of God. We need to understand that vengeance isn't ours, but the Lord's** ([Romans 12:19](#)).

The natural human tendency has been to seek the emotional satisfaction of revenge for perceived injury ([Genesis 4:8](#)). Our instinctive response to any kind of injury is hatred and desire for vengeance. This is why Jesus made it so clear in His Sermon on the Mount that not only outward murder but also inward hatred is subject to God's judgment ([Matthew 5:22-23](#)).

The Old Testament law placed limitations on vengeance (Exodus 21:23-25).

Although, the “eye for an eye” provision of the Mosaic law has often been misunderstood as requiring vengeance, its actual purpose was to place limitations on it. The law prescribed that punishment must fit the crime. The law wouldn’t permit taking a life in revenge for an insult or a minor injury. If an eye were put out, only an eye could be taken; if a tooth, only a tooth.

Jesus went much further than the law, making it clear that He wasn’t merely calling for more limitations on vengeance. In **Matthew 5:38-48** , He implied that we must give up personal vengeance altogether. **But as illustrated above by both Jesus and Paul, there is a difference between confronting evil and seeking personal revenge.** It is possible to confront evil with a desire for the redemption of its perpetrator. **We are called to love a sinner while confronting his sin,** but when we seek vengeance we are motivated by hatred—a desire to make someone suffer for what they have done to us.

If Matthew 5:38-48 were taken literally at all times, we would have to let everyone take advantage of us. Turning the other cheek would become an encouragement for evil. This isn’t what Jesus had in mind. His vivid examples illustrate His disciples’ need to give up any sense of entitlement to personal revenge, to be purged of the motivation of personal vengeance. By asking them to turn the other cheek, **Jesus meant that His disciples should be motivated by love and a desire for the redemption and forgiveness of offenders—even when opposing their actions.**

Also I reference the Life application Bible’s tutorials in the discussion on Mathew chapter 5 and to put it in perspective:GH

**Jesus “DID NOT COME TO ABOLISH THE LAW BUT TO FULFILL IT”
(Mathew 5 :17-20)**

Matthew 5:17-20 Amplified Bible (AMP)

¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to do away with *or* undo the ^[a]Law [of Moses] or the [writings of the] Prophets; **I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.** ¹⁸ For I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke [of the pen] will pass from the Law until all things [which it foreshadows] are accomplished. ¹⁹ So whoever breaks one of the least [important] of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least [important] in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever practices and teaches them, he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰ “For I say to you that unless your righteousness (uprightness, moral essence) is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

To place this all in perspective :

There are arguments about O.T. Law verses the New Covenant etc The main point in bearing here is that Jesus himself clearly states (refer Mathew 5:17-20) that he did not quote: ¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to do away with *or* undo the ^aLaw [of Moses] or the [writings of the] Prophets; I did not come to destroy but to fulfil" however, I will try to place all this in perspective and in context as often it can be taken 'literally' to the point of being 'unbalanced' and 'ridiculous' in 'turning the other cheek' to the point of being totally 'passive' and therefore 'open to abuse from wrong-doers' of all types and persuasions.

In all scripture we must remember a couple of critical points :

a)The Father , the Son (Jesus) and the holy spirit **DO NOT ACT AS SEPARATE ENTITIES:**

A lot of Christians will try to separate the Holy trinity into categories , for example the Holy Spirit executes Anaias and Sapphira (gives them the death sentence on the 'spot' (Acts 5:1-11) for Lying .

"O but that's the Holy Spirit they say ? Rubbish! **The Holy trinity NEVER ACTS**

WITHOUT TOTAL AGREEMENT we do not have a maverick Holy Spirit .

In the Case of (Acts 5:1-11) if you could see what happened in the 'heavenly's ' this is how it would have happened behind the scenes:

God the FATHER would give the ORDER , JESUS the Son would 'Speak the WORD' and The Holy Spirit would ACT on the Instructions ! Period end of story, no exception in any place in scripture from Genesis to Revelations.

The HOLY TRINITY ALWAYS ACTS IN PERFECT HARMONY AND AGREEMENT with Itself.

b) **JESUS always Did what the FATHER SAID** re-read the who book of John a couple of hundred of times and this 'revelation' will come 'crystal' clear.

Especially in the discourse by Jesus over John Chapter 14 (read the whole chapter)

c)**The Holy Spirit Acts on his own is ludicrous ?** Actually in the same Discourse by Jesus himself refer John 14:17 Quote John 14:17 Amplified Bible (AMP)

¹⁷ the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive [and take to its heart] because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him **because He (the Holy Spirit) remains with you continually and will be in you."**

Many Christians today adopt the '**Totally pacifist point of view**' based on a misinterpretation or completely literal view of the bible (without inner guidance of the Holy Spirit if you are Born again John 3:3)and often this becomes a 'excuse' to meditate on their 'collective navels' and do absolutely '**NOTHING**' about anything in the outside world. I often say they are 'sitting around waiting for a 'brick to fall out of the sky and hit them on the head before they act on anything', instead 'wait on God to send fire from heaven, money, eventual justice after the Tribulation etc (Yes God can do All of these things, BUT, he has EMPOWERED YOU AND I via the Holy Spirit (within US refer John 14:17) to be HIS ARMS and LEGS, NOW, TODAY!.

In saying that **WE MUST ALWAYS ACT IN PERFECT HARMONY WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** (who is within us and lives on the INSIDE of the Born Again Christian) . The Holy Spirit to the Born Again Christian is our **INNER GUIDANCE SYSTEM** , we are **INSIDE-OUT PEOPLE** (to quote Bro. Kenneth Copeland) .

IN ALL DECISION WE ARE TO CONSULT WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. (not all the 'busybodies in the church, and in fact you have to be careful or 'listening to your own MIND' as it (the MIND) acts against GOD and in fact is AT WAR with the Spirit of God Rom 8:7 . so Hearing from the VOICE OF GOD is not easy at time (when the OUTSIDE WORLD crowds you out and creates 'static' and 'interference' between your Spirit and God's . I won't go into too much detail here as this is a subject all on its own But refer these scriptures to CLEAR THE WAY for hearing the HOLY SPIRIT in your heart.

1Kings 19:12 "Still Small Voice"

Rom 8:26-27 'Holy Spirit intercedes for us'.

WHATEVER GOD (in all his forms Father, Son and Holy SPIRIT) is SAYING TO YOU he will CONFIRM IT IN YOUR OWN SPIRIT (you will have 'PEACE IN YOUR HEART') .

I personally read and listen to all Scripture via the ILLUMINATION of THE HOLY SPIRIT if something 'does not sit right' the Holy Spirit will point it out , I always say the Holy Spirit has a YELLOW HIGHLIGHTER PEN and will bring 'up to your remembrance' the relevant scripture while you are READING or LISTENING to the Bible .

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD (in all its perspectives and meanings in the Holy scriptures, Jesus being the Word, God the creator , in the beginning and in the End etc) WE SERVE A BIG GOD and in the same breath he sees all the 'detail' as well .

DO NOT EVER LIMIT GOD! In BIG or even the smallest things.

now lets get to this discussion:

Reference page 1411 tutorial notes of 'Life Application Bible' by Tyndale House Publications

In the Old Testament there were 3 categories of LAW :

1)Cermonial

2)Civil Law

3)Moral Law

1)Ceremonial this Related to Israel's worship processes in the O.T. Tabernacle

(refer Leviticus 1,2,3, etc)

In the New Covenant JESUS is the Tabernacle (read whole book of Hebrews) so we simply have to Worship and Love a Holy God through Jesus death and resurrection. We All (born again Christians are now Kings and Priests and can come boldly directly to the throne room of God (Heb 4:16))

so that Covers The OT Ceremonial Laws verses the New Covenant .

2)Civil Law

refer Deuteronomy 24:10-11 etc)

Also Rom 13 (whole chapter) IS KEY here and the overview is that **GOD APPOINTS**

the GOVERNMENT, Armed Services and Police ,tax department , Government workers etc .

THERE MUST BE CIVIL LAW & ORDER and these are ministries instituted by GOD HIMSELF in fact he appoints and removes KINGS (Prov 8:15-16,Dan 2:21)

As Christians we NEED the LAW & ORDER of Civil Authorities , Military, Police and Government officials to PROTECT THE CITIZENS and live an ordered Life .

Also God HIMSELF clearly gives authority for the “Ministry of the Government” to execute JUDGEMENT (through the Judges and the appointed judicial system), even to ‘execute Wrath’ (punishment) and ‘Bear the Sword’ or the ‘death penalty’ to criminals. Refer “Does God believe in the death Penalty “ article on:

www.fitforchristministries.com

There is NO QUESTION that this is the JUSTICE ARM OF GOD in practical application.

in relation to Mathew 5:38 ‘turning the other cheek” this is a ‘discussion’ or ‘illustration’ by Jesus on ‘personal revenge’ from ‘personal insults’ rather than ‘grievous bodily harm’ and accordingly we are to apply the ‘forgiveness, love your Enemies principals in general first (wherever possible, using common sense and according to the magnitude or severity of the ‘personal insults’) within the framework or guidelines with the rest of scripture (bearing in mind that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit act in perfect harmony and in complete agreeance at all times on all subjects) .(Mathew 5 :38 is about ‘Personal revenge’ and the Christian ‘attitude’ it does not mean or is in reference to a ‘major crime’, like murder, serious assault, robbery etc but in reference to ‘Personal Insults’ as they would do in Jesus time and historical perspective of Jewish and middle eastern society, for example the ‘old English’ challenge of ‘slapping’ an ‘opponent on the face/cheek’ with your glove publicly as you issue a ‘challenge to duel to the death’(in the illustration with Jesus in Mathew 5:38 .the ‘personal insult’ was implied without the “duel to the death’ but I used this as an example or illustration. GH

If a **HIDEOUS CRIME** HAS been committed ,clearly this is covered by Romans 13 instituted by the Lord , in such that you as a Christian can ‘seek justice’ by applying to the ‘Judge and police authorities’ which is the ministry ordained by God and implemented to keep Civil LAW & ORDER as versed to taking the LAW into your own hands or to the other option would be :

COMPLETE LAWLESSNESS & ANARCHY

God at no time in the Bible wanted anybody to take the LAW into their ‘Own hands’ and the Jewish laws became somewhat bureaucratic and ‘twisted’ away from the original intensions of God (in fact 613 Jewish laws):

refrer: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613_commandments ,

but Jesus sorted that out , by empowering us as born again Christian by the Holy spirit (within) as the unregenerate ‘fleshly’ man cannot obey the Laws of God as the Flesh of man is at WAR with Gods Laws (naturally) refer Romans 8 (whole chapter)

SO LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT on ALL OF THE ABOVE and you will get the correct Instructions regarding what’s Right and wrongs and the way to react.

REMEMBER IF YOU HAVE INTEGRITY OF SPIRIT GOD automatically protects you.(

Genesis 20 (Abraham and and King Abimelec)

Christians on Rome 13 generally have 3 views :

(regarding Civil Law and order and interaction with the Government Authorities , police, army etc)

a)Pacifist point of view

basically , a literal interpretation of Mathew 5:38 and 'lie down and cop anything that is dished out to them' in the vain belief that God will help them ,perhaps in the after-life, or in some 'airy fairy way' this leaves the Christian open to abuse and to be easily to be taken advantage of , it's a bit sad really , **while the intension is good the practical result is usually not so good, and by its very nature 'open to abbuse'** They also do not believe in Government, or military or police service, or even working for the Government .

***This is not the view of** www.fitforchristministries.com

b)Other Christians believe the Government and Church are separate and not interrelated , they can work for the Government but keep religious beliefs separate totally .

Its like two different worlds they live in , they might have a Job in the Government , but nobody there would know their a Christian , I find this view almost the same as position (a) a Nominal Christian with (secret beliefs)

***This is not the view of** www.fitforchristministries.com

c)Based On Romans 13 .

Christians can serve in Government, Military and Police , and the Judicial System as a Judge or lawyer and can be politicians and or have 'influence' in Voting and who is in Government .

There is no personal separation between Christian Beliefs and the above, in other words for example a Police officer can operate (with a clear conscience and in line with the Holy Spirit) even if he has to "execute punishment" of Criminals or is a life threatening event "bear the sword" "which is a Gun in 2015" and if a police officer has to "shoot to kill" (note I said Kill not Murder, as murder is 'pre-meditated' by legal definition in the bible and in the Law of the Land" (Even Australian Law 2015 refer criminal Code 1899 refer link:

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/qld/consol_act/cc189994/)

It is obvious that God prefers that all CRIME is dealt through the Justice System and does not want us to 'take the Law into our own hands' , but in the same breadth , it is also clear that God allows us to defend ourselves against 'Evil doers' for 'self-preservation' and family protection ,(see separate article on "self defence and the Bible" by Graham Healy on www.fitforchristministries.com , but this has to be done (while listening to the Holy Spirit within and with a clear conscience) and **the INTENT and ATTITUDE has a lot to do with the outcome** , both from a spiritual viewpoint and from a Legal view point.

also refer the article on 'does God condone the Death penalty' on which God's clear principal is the result of SIN is Death both physical and Spiritual and this principal is clear right throughout the bible.

refer : www.fitforchristministries.com

*****THIS IS THE VIEW OF :** www.fitforchristministries.com

3)Moral LAW

The 10 commandments are the DIRECT COMMANDMENTS FROM GOD himself and is still requires strict obedience now in 2015 as it did the day Moses carried the Tablets down from Mt. Sanai being “Born again” just enables us to obey the 10 commandments by the “spirit of God” that is the Holy Spirit from the Heart. The ‘carnal’ Fallen from the Garden Man, born from Adam and Eve, is the Problem and the issue here in all this , but the ‘new man’ reborn ‘by Faith’ in Jesus can at last **‘OBEY THE MORAL LAWS OF GOD THE FATHER’** without slavery to ‘sin’ having been ‘set free’ by the ‘precious blood’ of Jesus our Lord.

And this was, at the end of the day, what Jesus came to this earth for , **to enable and EMPOWER is to be able to Obey the Laws of God , but as I say to do that successfully , you must be Born Again (John 3:3) and led by the Holy Spirit within YOU.**

Then it all becomes CLEAR , and remember ,just like our Lord and Master Jesus , So in acts of Self-defence , always act personally in line with the ‘Holy Spirit Within’, Personal Insults such as Illustrated by Jesus in Matt 5:39 “turn the other cheek” apply to personal Insults only and should not be ‘blown up’ into some sort of doctrine that is inconsistent with the rest of the bible (such as Romans 13 ie God’s ministry of “law & Order” also its is 100% absolutely crystal clear that God the Father implemented “capital punishment’ for the act of MURDER (different from accidental killing or killing in a righteous war) and the ‘blood’ 9ie the ‘death penalty’ of the offender is required (refer Gen 9:6), and also bear in mind that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit act in unity and NEVER CONTRADICT each other, a completely pacifist spirit , the Father ,Jesus or the Holy Spirit does not have , mercy and Justice YES and the ‘inner witness’ of RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE is overwhelming in a ‘True’ born Again Christian . So have you the RIGHT OF SELF PRESERVATION and SELF DEFENSE ? www.fitforchristministries.com BELIEVES ABSOLUTELY YES! As long as you... **“NEVER ACT UNLESS YOU HEAR DIRECTLY FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN.”**

Graham Healy .
1st Nov 2015