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2  **Scripture**

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matt 5:38–39 NIV)

3  **Scripture**

- “And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” (Matt 5:40–41 NIV)

4  **Scripture**

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” (Matt 5:43–45 NIV)

5  **Scripture**

- “If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? (Matt 5:46 NIV)
- And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?” (Matt 5:47 NIV)
- “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48 NIV)

6  **Introduction**

- It’s a standard movie plot: A vulnerable hero is wronged or hurt by some sinister person or force.
- He or she gains strength from their anger at the injustice and sets out to get revenge.
- In the end, the villain is vanquished, justice is done and the credits roll.

7  **Introduction**

- Revenge fantasies are so common in the movie industry that they have become a genre of their own.
- In fact, almost all of Quentin Tarantino movies are based on revenge and most often with violence and malice.

8  **Retributive Justice**

- If the truth to be known, we all love the idea of retributive justice.
- It appeals to our sense of fairness and the idea that everyone finally gets what they deserve.

9  **Retributive Justice**

- Some psychologists suggest that these revenge fantasies are actually good for us.
- They’re products of an often overlooked emotion called “embitterment.”
- It is a feeling produced by victimization coupled with the desire to fight back.
- Because the person feels helpless, it leads to fantasies of revenge or aggression.

10  **Revenge Fantasies**

- Psychologists think that these accompanying revenge fantasies actually serve as buffers against the negative feelings associated with victimization, which is why people love revenge movies.
- We don't have to actually do anything vengeful; it's the feeling of justice that counts.

11 **Revenge Fantasies**

- If we're all honest with ourselves, we all have had these kinds of feelings—getting even with those we think have hurt us.
- However, Jesus warned us, that even harboring such fantasies can give birth to actions—bad decisions—which, in turn, can lead to our own destruction.

12 **Sermon on the Mount**

- In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reframes the retributive justice of the law of Moses and calls his disciples to turn from “embitterment” to embodiment of the way of the kingdom of God.
- Rather than merely restating a law that gives the plaintiff the right to ensure that the offender gets at least what he or she deserves, Jesus overrules even that law for his disciples.

13 **Sermon on the Mount**

- For Jesus, it wasn't just about limiting revenge; it was about rejecting any kind of retaliatory violence.
- Jesus wanted his disciples to reject the revenge fantasy in favor of the redemption factor for both the offended and the offender.

14 **Lamech**

- Six generations after the fall and long after Cain was made a wanderer, one of his descendants make this statement.
- Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.” (Gen 4:23–24 NIV)

15 **Lamech**

- What Lamech is saying here is that if a blood feud begins and he is killed, then avenge his blood 70 x 7.
- In this statement is found what scholars call the beginnings of disproportional and irrational violence.
- In other words, Lamech is not only known as the father of polygamy, but also vindictiveness.

16 **Lamech**

- This attitude years later became so bad that the Bible says, Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. (Gen 6:11 NIV)
- So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. (Gen 6:13 NIV)

17 the Days of Noah

- Concerning Noah, Jesus says the following . . .
- As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37 NIV)
- In this passage, Jesus is paralleling the idea that just as the flood was a surprise and caught people off guard, so will be his coming.

18 the Days of Noah

- However, we know in other passages in the New Testament that when Jesus returns to the earth, it too will be filled with corruption and violence.
- So then, we must be sure that we will not be tempted to repay evil with evil.

19 Jesus' Commands

- Some argue that these commandments of Jesus actually turn his disciples into doormats for evil people who will take advantage of them.
- Standing there and just taking whatever it is that our enemies dish out is a sign of weakness.
- We're culturally conditioned to fight for our rights.
- So then, no wonder that Jesus' approach seems unrealistic and even dysfunctional to many.

20 Jesus' Commands

- But rather than seeing these actions as signs of weakness, Jesus asserts that they're positions of strength.
- The way that Jesus confronts evil is by realizing there is a time and place for everything.
- Justice will come and when it does it will be fair, just, and proportional.

21 God's Patience

- It's not that God is soft on evil.
- God will ultimately avenge the evil in this world.
- But unlike the swift vengeance laid out in a two-hour movie or in our own revenge fantasies, Scripture tells us that God is a slow avenger—"slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

22 God's Patience

- God's slowness is not weakness, but a sign—a sign of His patience and longsuffering (tolerant delay).
- God withholds wrath so that all people will repent and turn to Him.
- If God gives us that chance, God will give it to our enemies as well.

23 God's Patience

- So, revenge is never up to us. As Paul explains to the congregation in Rome, . . .

- Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. (Romans 12:17 NIV)
- If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18 NIV)
- Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21 NIV)

24 **Bottom Line**

- The bottom line is that we as individuals are not to dish out to offenders what we think they deserve.
- As the Apostle Paul says, Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. (Romans 12:19 NIV)
- 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. (Romans 12:20 NIV)

25 **Bottom Line**

- Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14 NIV)
- See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

26 **Bottom Line**

- I don’t know if you catch this or not but according to Hebrews, bitterness (revenge fantasies) can corrupt our souls.
- In fact, it is a major contributor to disqualifying many from God’s grace.
- Therefore, as it is possible, make every effort to be a peace with everyone.
- As Jesus has said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9 NIV)

27 **Bottom Line**

- So then, instead of thinking of ways on getting even with people, think on ways of being reconciled and at peace with everyone—without compromising the faith.
- While the Bible supports justice, it doesn’t support us “settling the score” or “paying back hurt.”
- According to Proverbs, Do not say, “I’ll pay you back for this wrong!” Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver [avenge] you. (Proverbs 20:22 NIV)

28 **bottom Line**

- To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21 NIV)
- He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. (1 Peter 2:22 NIV)
- When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:23 NIV)

29 Conclusion

- Here is my advice to those who have issues with your near-neighbor or one-on-one relationships.
 - Recognize that vengeance is the Lord's responsibility, not ours.
 - If possible, stay away from those who have hurt or still hurting you.
 - Instead of plotting revenge or how to get even, pray for your enemies and ask God to help you be reconciled to them.
 - If you see your enemy in need help them.
 - Remember, Christ has set the example. Are we greater than he?