

38 Eye for an eye—limiting personal revenge and court decisions; punishment has to fit the crime (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21).

39 resist—within one-to-one interpersonal relationships do not take a hostile stance against another who has wronged you. This does not dictate our response when *another* is harmed. Love for neighbor sometimes requires intervention and force, and we are rebuke sin (Mt 18:15). Peacemaking is not passive; it does not permit violence and injustice.

The general principles are: do away with revenge or retaliation; establish and maintain relationships; and always act lovingly toward others. Jesus applies these principles to various situations.

Vss	Problem	Threat to
39	Slap	Dignity and honor
40	Suit	Property
41	Service	Liberty
42	Support	Security
43ff	Sectarianism	Identity

A **backhanded slap** was a stinging insult, treating another as a child, slave, and woman. To turn the **other cheek** was to present oneself as an equal, without shame, guilt, or fear, and express willingness to mend the broken relationship. To hit another with the full force of one's palm broke civil law, incurring a stiff fine and shame.

40 The **tunic** was the primary clothing over one's skin, leaving only the outer covering for warmth (coat). To give up both pieces means one could wear only a loin cloth or nothing at all, forcing the plaintiff to break the law (Ex 22:26–27), and incurs guilt and shame upon themselves. “Here, take everything, and people will see how despicable you are.” (Cf. 1 Cor 6:7–8.)

41 Roman law strictly allowed for one mile of service from civilians, but no further. Jesus says when pressed into service cheerfully and gladly carry their supplies for two miles. It would not only surprise them, but also cause them to break the law, risk punishment, and incur shame.

42 When accosted by **beggars**, we are to **give** something, but not necessarily what was asked or the amount that was asked. Instead of giving money, one can give food, directions to the nearest shelter, an offer of a job, or a kind sympathetic word. The idea is to recognize them as a person with whom you have a relationship and toward whom you have responsibilities. All deserve respect and kindness. Instead of money, hospitality, sympathetic listening, direction to shelters or other help, or prayer could be given. Refusal to support addictions or to become co-dependent are better responses than out-right giving money—tough love. (Cf. 2 Thess 3:7–10). Cf. Ex 22:25; Deut 15:7–11; Ps. 37:21 & 26; 112:5; Pr 11:25; 14:21; 14:31; 19:17; 22:9; 1 Tm 6:18).

43–44 In all of these situations, we may be tempted to respond with degradation, humiliation, depersonalization, and retaliation; but Jesus says we are to respond with **love**, even with those who **hate** and **persecute** us. This does not mean manufacturing loving feelings, but being respectful, civil, and helpful if able. (cf. Rom 12:14–21; James 3:9–10; 1 Pt 2:13–17; 3:9–17). We do not countenance their beliefs and all of their actions, but neither do we denigrate and mistreat them (Pr. 20:22; 24:9; 25:21–22; Rom 12:9). We treat our enemies as our neighbors, going beyond civil greetings and polite conversations, to actually doing them good (Rom 12:17–21). We treat them as we want to be treated (Mt 7:12), and **pray** blessings upon them (Lk 6:28; Rom 12:14).

45 We are to give loving actions to all because we are to follow our **Heavenly Father's** example. “Children” are to reflect the character, values, and purposes of their fathers. Since our Father is overwhelmingly generous, slow to anger, quick to forgive, and full of grace, we should be the same. Cf. Ex 34:6; Neh 9:17; Ps 77:9; 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2.

46–47 The second reason why we are to love everybody is to demonstrate we are different from unbelievers.

48 Jesus concludes by commanding us to be **perfect**, meaning “mature,” being an integral part of society and keeping our passions and emotions under control (cf. Lk 6:36). We are to be perfectly mature, fulfilling our responsibilities to God and neighbor, consistently showing love to all.