



Sermon on the Mount RAISE THE BAR

Life Groups Discussion Guide

February 16, 2020

THE EXTRA MILE Matthew 5:38–42

CONNECT

1. When someone wrongs you, what's your natural response? Do you fight back, avoid the problem, try to talk it out, sue for damages or do something else entirely? (Consider different types of relationships: marriage, LifeGroups, work, social media.)

CELEBRATE

2. What does "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" mean? See Leviticus 24:19–20 for context. How does this compare to other ancient legal systems where a hand could be chopped off for stealing an apple?
3. Followers of Jesus should be marked by extraordinary mercy and grace. Think back on this past week. How often have your actions demonstrated mercy and grace? How often have you lived out something less, such as demanding fairness, returning hurt for hurt, harboring unforgiveness or lashing out in anger? If necessary, take time to confess in prayer and ask God to work in your life as you study this passage.
4. When have you witnessed a follower of Christ react with mercy and grace instead of hostility and revenge? How did it impact you?
5. Some people hear "do not resist the evildoer" and fear that it means we will be exploited if we do. Read Matthew 5:39–42 and identify each of Jesus' examples that flesh out this command. Who is in control in each example? How does that change the situation?
6. Read Matthew 5:42. Does Jesus command us to fulfill every request someone demands of us? Or does Jesus command us to take care of the person who asks something of us? How does it change these situations to raise the bar from meeting a request to caring for the person?
7. Think through Jesus' life. When did He live out the principles of this passage? Tell one or two stories.
8. Some fear that if we obey Jesus' commands in this passage, we will let injustice go unpunished. Read 1 Peter 2:23 & 2 Timothy 4:1. How is justice ultimately served? Will anyone escape from this? How does that change the way you regard someone who commits injustice against you?
9. Based on Matthew 5:38–42, is a Christian ever justified in getting revenge?

CONTRIBUTE

10. Think through Jesus' command. Then think about your daily life: school, work, the people you interact with. Share one example of how you've been wronged. What would it look like to respond to that offense in the way that Jesus commands? How might God use your response?
11. Ask God to bring to mind a person whom you sought "an eye for an eye" from after they wronged you. What would it look like to go to them, apologize and extend them the mercy and grace Jesus commands? Pray through this, then make a plan to go and do it this week.