

LIFEGROUP NOTES: MATTHEW 5:38-42

As ever, please use (or discard!) these ideas as is most suitable for your group. Don't feel you have to use everything.

Preparing for God's Word

1. What is your instinctive reaction if you feel insulted or imposed on or treated unfairly in some way? Why?

Read Mt 5:38-42

2. See v.38. This famous OT law was given to guide judges in Israel's law-courts: the punishment must be in proportion to the crime. But what are the consequences if we take it out of its legal setting and apply it aggressively in personal relationships, e.g. "I have a right to get even – and I'll make sure I do"? Why is this inappropriate for a follower of Christ?
3. What do you think Jesus means by "Do not resist an evil person" (v.39)? Why does He say this? Where do you find this most challenging?
4. In vv.39-42, Jesus gives a number of illustrations of situations in which we might feel abused or "put upon":
 - Try to make sure everyone understands these illustrations
 - Think of some examples from the personal experience of members of the group
 - How have group members responded to these situations in the past?
 - How does the grace of God in the gospel change our hearts?
 - What would be the impact on our relationships if we became the kind of people Jesus calls us to be? How would this help us to demonstrate the truth of Mt 5:13-16?
5. Is there someone in your life right now whom you resent for having hurt you? To whom are you currently relating on the basis of "an eye for an eye"? How can you begin to give grace rather than resentment in that relationship?

Responding in Prayer

Praise God that "He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities" (Ps 103:10). Pray for grace to become like our Heavenly Father, especially in those relationships you find most difficult.

Eddie Larkman, March 2017