

Oaths, Generosity, and Enemy Love

The Simple & Perfect Way

August 23, 2026

33“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ 34But I say to you, **do not swear at all:** neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; 35nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37**But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.**

Matthew 5:33-37

"And with regard to our not swearing at all, and always speaking the truth, He enjoined as follows: **“Swear not at all”**

Source: Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*

Read in context: <https://thehistoricfaith.com/en/library/ante-nicene-fathers/apostolic-fathers/first-apology#paragraph-569>

Matthew 5:33-37

1. And again, speaking of oaths, He says, “Swear not at all; but let your conversation be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.” **And thus, by forbidding the swearing of oaths, He declares that there should be no occasion for swearing.** For if any one is compelled to swear, he ought to do so by saying, “Yea, yea,” and “Nay, nay.” But if he goes beyond these, he has sworn.

Source: Irenaeus, Against Heresies II.32.1

Matthew 5:33-37

Certainly, lying and perjury in making statements and swearing are contrary to duty. **But the one who lives justly and does not fail in any of his duties, when the judgment of truth is closely examined, swears truth by his actions.** Therefore, testimony by the tongue is unnecessary in his case.

Source: Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata (Miscellanies)

Read in context: <https://thehistoricfaith.com/en/library/ante-nicene-volume-2/ante-nicene-volume-2/the-stromata-miscellanies#paragraph-64043>

Matthew 5:33-37

38“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39But I tell you **not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.** 40If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, **let him have your cloak also.** 41And whoever compels you to go one mile, **go with him two.** 42**Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.**

Matthew 5:38-42

Romans 12

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who will seek Him, the Good One. He will wait for and quietly expect the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man when he takes up a yoke in his youth.

He will sit alone and be silent, because he bears it on himself. **He will give his cheek to the one who strikes him, and he will be filled with insults.** Yet the Lord shall not reject him forever.

For He who humbles will have compassion according to the abundance of His mercy. For He does not afflict willingly, though He humbles the children of men.

Lamentations (of Jeremiah) 3:22-29, LXX

For the law will no longer say, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," to the person who **counts no one as an enemy but all people as neighbors**. Therefore, that person cannot reach out a hand at all for revenge.

SOURCE: Irenaeus

Matthew 5:38-42

When they know that **we cannot stand even to watch a man be put to death even if it is done justly**, who among them can accuse us of murder or cannibalism? Who does not count the contests of gladiators and wild beasts among the most interesting things, especially the ones that are put on by you? **But we believe that watching a man be put to death is almost the same as killing him. So we have turned away from those shows. How then, when we do not even watch, so that we will not take on guilt and pollution, can we put people to death?**

Source: Athenagoras, A Plea for the Christians, 2.147.

Matthew 5:38-42

“You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth." But I say to you, **do not fight back** against an evil person...”

Source: TATIAN, The Diatessaron, 9.57.

The Diatessaron was compiled by Tatian, an Assyrian early Christian apologist and ascetic, around 160–175 AD. He combined the four canonical gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—into a single, continuous narrative of the life of Jesus

Matthew 5:38-42

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44But I say to you, **love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;** for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

Matthew 5:43-48

Romans 12:20-21

20On the contrary, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head.” **21**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44But I say to you, **love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;** for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

Matthew 5:43-48

Proverbs 25:21-22

21If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. **22**For in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44But I say to you, **love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;** for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

Matthew 5:43-48

Acts 7:59-60

59While they were stoning him, Stephen appealed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”
60Falling on his knees, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”
And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

JUSTIN MARTYR: in martyr. We used to hate and destroy one another. Because of their different customs, we would not live with people from a different tribe. Now, since Christ came, we live closely with them. We pray for our enemies. We try to persuade those who hate us without a just reason to live in line with the good teachings of Christ. We do this so that they may share with us the same joyful hope of a reward from God, the Ruler of all. About our love for everyone, he taught this: "If you love them that love you, what new thing do you do? For even fornicators do this. But I say to you, pray for your enemies, and love them that hate you, and bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you." He also said that we should share with the needy and do nothing to get glory for ourselves. He said, "Give to him that asks, and from him that would borrow do not turn away. For if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what new thing do you do?"

Matthew 5:43-48