

Tragedy: Picking Up the Pieces of *Crime*

Crime is a fact of life, no matter where you live. In our well-connected world, we hear more about the crimes around us ... and not around us ... than at any time in history. Although about one family in four were the victims of some sort of crime last year, the fact is, crime rates have been steadily falling over the last several years. In fact, according to the FBI, virtually every major category of crime – both violent and property – saw declines over the last year. That's good news for our society, but that doesn't bring much comfort to the 25 percent of us who were impacted by some crime last year. Jesus said "Turn the other cheek," but that's not easy to do when your identity gets stolen, your car gets vandalized, or your child gets arrested.

Matthew 5:38–42

1. _____ is at the root of all evil – including crime.
2. Historically, there are three responses to criminals: _____, _____, and _____.
3. _____ isn't an option ... it's more than an expectation, it's a commandment.

My Count Me In! Commitments

- I'll be here next Sunday
- I'll invite a friend
- I'll familiarize myself with victims' rights
- I'll volunteer with Kairos Outside in the fall
- I want to be a part of Celebrate Recovery

Additional Notes

Digging Deeper, Going Further

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Scripture: Matthew 5:38–42

Introduction: Almost all of us will be touched by an act of crime sometime in our lives. Some of us will be victims. Some of us will have family members who suffer from crime. And a few of us will have a family member perpetuate a crime. No matter how we're touched by crime, we will invariably feel vulnerable, angry, and fearful – all at the same time. The Hebrew Bible lays out all sorts of punishments for the perpetrators of crime, and yet the scriptures also demand that we leave vengeance to God and that we're to turn the other cheek. What is a faithful Christian response to crime?

1. Read Matthew 5:38–45. Jesus' words are set in the context of how to deal with our enemies. Why do you think Jesus turned the *eye of an eye* response to wrongdoing on its head?
2. Some of the actions in this passage are crimes and some are not. Why do you think they're lumped together?
3. All crime is a sin, but most sin is not a crime. Why do you think the Bible deals more with the sin issue than the crime issue?
4. What are the differences between the three classic responses to crime: Revenge, Punishment, and Restitution?
5. Read Exodus 21:12 – 22:31. This passage is one of the most detailed passages about dealing with crime in the Bible. When is restitution required? What is the response when restitution isn't possible?
6. Read Romans 12:19–21 and Matthew 6:19–20. What is a faithful Christian response in the face of crime? What makes this possible?
7. Dr. Bill said that forgiveness is what makes Christians different from everybody else. How is your faith driving you to be "different from everybody else"?

***Next Week: Picking Up the Pieces When Tragedy Strikes—Death
Who will you be inviting to worship with you this week?***