

Don't let Evil get the Best of You. Romans 12:17-21

Romans 12:17–21 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore

*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his
head.”*

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Introduction.

In the first sermon that our Lord gave recorded in Matthew 5

Jesus said to his disciples

Matthew 5:13–16 (NKJV)

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

In other words, Jesus wants salt to be genuinely salty and Light to be bright and not hidden. Salt needs to serve its purpose and Light needs to serve its purpose. Salt that is not salty cannot do what salt is suppose to do and light that is dim or hidden cannot do what light was designed to do.

So it is with your christian life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You are to be as effective as salt is suppose to be and you are to affect the darkness as

much as light does set up on a hill. Your life and your conduct and love for Christ should have an affect on those around you. YOU should be noticeable because of who you are and what you do.

Our conduct should make the world sit back and take notice.

Peter says this too.

1 Peter 2:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Titus 2:1–10 (NKJV)

2 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *to be* discreet, chaste,

homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, **that the word of God may not be blasphemed.**

⁶ Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, **that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.**

⁹ Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, **that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.**

Philippians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, **among whom you shine as lights in the world,**

1 Peter 3:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they

defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ ***may be ashamed.***

The text we have before us today teaching the same truth but from a slightly different angle. Paul is calling on us to have our conduct among the lost to be honorable in a most profound way.

One that strikes at the very heart of the human fallen condition. One that all of humanity understands and for the most part loves to practice.

That is....

Vengeance or getting even, or returning evil for evil.

Paul is calling on us to conduct our lives contrary to the fallen world and contrary to the desires of the flesh.

To....

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Now, I do not believe that these verses are just disconnected or unrelated thoughts. That Paul is just dropping in a few remaining thoughts before he

moves on to the topic of Romans 13 regarding God ordained governments and authorities.

No..... this is the picture that Paul is painting of what a living sacrifice that is not being conformed to this world looks like.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

One of the ways that we show this kind of living sacrificial life that doesn't think like the world is we do not...

Repay evil for evil done to us.

But rather we give place to the vengeance of God that may come in the form of the execution of Justice by the governing authorities that he has ordained and put in place.

You can rest in peace and forgiveness and show the love of Christ to your enemies that have done terrible evil to you. And you can do this with no

bitterness, anger or malice in your heart and genuinely desire the best for your enemies.

So for a moment, let me explain what I believe to be the main catalyst of this passage, or the main point that Paul is driving home at this point.

Look at the text again,

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore

*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his
head.”*

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

I believe the main point is found in the second part of verse 17 and verse 18

Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Have regard

προνοούμενοι **Pres Mid Part** Continually be considering this ahead of time.

προνοέω^a; πρόνοια, ας f: to think about something ahead of time, with the implication that one can then respond appropriately—‘to give attention beforehand, to have in mind to do, foresight.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 355). United Bible Societies.

προνοέω *pronoéō*; contracted *pronoō*, fut. *pronoēsō*, from *pró* (4253), before, and *noéō* (3539), to think, comprehend. With a gen. of person following, to provide for (1 Tim. 5:8). In the mid. voice, *pronoéomai*, with an acc. of the thing, to provide, take thought, care for beforehand (Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; Sept.: Prov. 3:4).

Deriv.: *prónoia* (4307), providence.

Syn.: *problépō* (4265) or *prooráō* (4308) or *proeidō* (4275), to foresee.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

good— morally good —or right as opposed to wrong.

“Take care to do what is right in the sight of everybody”

Longenecker, R. N. (2016). [The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#) (I. H. Marshall & D. A. Hagner, Eds.; p. 933). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

2 Corinthians 8:21 (NKJV)

²¹ providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

....when Paul told the Romans that they were to “be careful to do what is *right* in the eyes of everybody,” he was saying that Christians are to lead the way in good or right things, and they are to do this always. We are to be known as those who always pursue the very best in all areas.

Leon Morris puts it in other terms. He says that Paul “is calling on them to live out the implications of the gospel. Their lives are to be lived on such a high plane that even the heathen will recognize the fact. They will always be living in the sight of non-

Christians, and the way they live should be such as to commend the essential Christian message

Boice, J. M. (1991–). [Romans: The New Humanity](#) (Vol. 4, p. 1615). Baker Book House.

One of the ways we do this in an extraordinary way is how we respond to our enemies or those that harm us and do us wrong.

The world loves it when we return evil for evil done to us and in fact it will cheer us on so they can feel justified in their anger and in their vengeance toward others.

But they don't know what to do with a Christian who returns good for evil and blessing for cursing and good for bad.

They don't know how to process someone loving someone else who hates them, or forgiving someone that has done the irrefutable harm.

It is natural for the world to lash out and to get even, but to do the opposite and return love, goodness and forgiveness is supernatural

So Paul calls on us to seriously consider and give continual thought to how to live right in the sight of all men.

v 17. **Have regard** for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

How.... repay no one evil for evil

Do good to your enemies

Dont be overcome by evil

But give place to the one who has the right to vengeance. The Law Maker and Creator.

Lesson

The Command regarding Evil

The Consistency regarding Evil

The Contingency regarding Evil

The Conduct regarding Evil

I. The Command regarding Evil

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil.
μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες,

This is the polar opposite of the bent of our sinful nature. It is natural for our fallen flesh to lash out and give evil to someone who has done evil to us. It is natural for the sinful flesh to do harm to someone who has done harm to us.

This is the way of the world, the way of the lost and the way of the devil.

To be clear up front,
Paul is not saying it is wrong to defend yourself or that you become a doormat for everyone to abuse or that it is wrong for the punishment of evil doers by a Just and God ordained authority.

Paul is dealing with a natural human tendency to get “even”.

Morris, L. (1988). [*The Epistle to the Romans*](#) (p. 452). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

You hurt me and I will hurt you.

You harm me or my family and I will harm you,
You hit me, I will hit back
You slap me, and I will slap back
You do something wrong to me and I will get back at
you.

Paul is addressing the natural retaliatory spirit
that is in all of us.

There are others ways of doing this than the tit
for tat approach.

Someone cuts me off on the highway, well, I will
speed up and get in front of this person and slow
down.

Some one lies to you, and you just right them off
and never have anything to do with them again.

Someone is unfaithful in a a relationship, and
you are unwilling to forgive and are bitter toward
them.

Someone slanders you and who quietly and
persistently wish harm on that person and are glad
when they experience trouble in their lives.

The sad things is that this is not only the tendency
and propensity for fallen humanity to return evil for
evil...

but it was encouraged in the Pharisaical Judaism of
Jesus' day.

This is why Jesus gave this instruction in

Matthew 5:38–47 (NKJV)

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

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘*You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.*’ ⁴⁴ But 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, ⁴⁵ that 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. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’

This quotation is taken directly from the Old Testament (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21) and reflects the principle of *lex talionis*, one of the most ancient law codes. Simply put, it required that punishment exactly match the crime. The same idea is carried in the expressions *tit for tat* and *quid pro quo*. The earliest record of *lex talionis* is in the Code of Hammurabi, the great Babylonian king who lived a hundred or so years before Moses. It is likely, however, that the principle was in wide use long before that time.

In the Pentateuch an **eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth** are part of longer lists that include “hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise” (see Ex. 21:24–25) and “fracture for fracture” (Lev. 24:20). In both the law of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi the principle of punishment to match the crime had two basic purposes. The first was to curtail further crime. When a person is punished for his wrongdoing, “the rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you” (Deut. 19:20). The second purpose was to prevent excessive

punishment based on personal vengeance and angry retaliation of the type of which Lamech boasted: “For I have killed a man for wounding me; and a boy for striking me; if Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold” (Gen. 4:23–24). Punishment was to match, but not exceed, the harm done by the offense itself.

It is of the utmost significance that each of the three Pentateuch accounts that prescribe the **eye for an eye** principle has to do with the civil justice system. Exodus 21–23 deals entirely with God’s provision for Israel’s civil law, as do the similar teachings in Leviticus 24 and Deuteronomy 19. Punishment was sometimes carried out by the victim, but the trial and sentencing were always the responsibility of duly appointed judges or of a large, representative body of citizens (see Ex. 21:22; Deut. 19:18; Lev. 24:14–16).

The law of an **eye for an eye** was a just law, because it matched punishment to offense. It was a merciful law, because it limited the innate propensity of the human heart to seek retribution beyond what an offense deserved. It was also a beneficent law, because it protected society by restraining wrongdoing.

Selfish overreaction is the natural response of sinful human nature. We are tempted to get more

than just even. Anger and resentment demand the sort of retaliation Lamech glorified. Human vengeance is never satisfied with justice; it wants a pound of flesh for an ounce of offense. That is one reason why God restricts vengeance to Himself. “Vengeance is Mine, and retribution” (Deut. 32:35; cf. Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30).

In no instance did the Old Testament allow an individual to take the law into his own hands and apply it personally.

The Perversion of Rabbinic Tradition

Yet that is exactly what rabbinic tradition had done. Each man was permitted, in effect, to become his own judge, jury, and executioner. God’s law was turned to individual license, and civil justice was perverted to personal vengeance. Instead of properly acknowledging the law of an **eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth** as a limit on punishment, they conveniently used it as a mandate for vengeance—as it has often been wrongly viewed throughout history.

What God gave as a restriction on civil courts, Jewish tradition had turned into personal license for revenge

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 1, p. 330). Moody Press.

39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Jesus is not saying that when someone wants to do evil to you... you just lay down and take your beating. And is he is not arguing for pacifism toward evil or violence

Anthistēmi (**resist**) means to set against or oppose, and in this context obviously refers to harm done to us personally by someone **who is evil**. Jesus is speaking of personal resentment, spite, and vengeance. It is the same truth taught by Paul when he said, “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.... Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:17, 19). Vengeful retaliation has no place in society at large, and even less place among those who belong to Christ. We are called to overcome someone’s evil toward us by doing good to them (Rom. 12:21).

After establishing the basic principle in Matthew 5:39a, in verses 39b–42 Jesus picks out four basic human rights that He uses to illustrate the principle

of non-retaliation: dignity, security, liberty, and property.

dignity

but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. (5:39b)

As human beings we have the right to be treated with basic dignity, respect, and consideration. Because every person is created in His image, God demands that we treat one another with respect. But he knows that we will not always be so treated. Often for the very reason that we belong to God and go by the name of His Son, we will be mistreated, ridiculed, and held in contempt (see Matt. 10:16–23; John 15:18–16:3; 1 Pet. 2:20–21; 3:13–17; 4:12–19; cf. 2 Tim. 3:12). It is the way we react to mistreatment and insult that Jesus is talking about here.

Among Jews, a slap or other striking in the face was among the most demeaning and contemptuous of acts (cf. Matt. 26:67–68; Mark 14:65; John 18:22). To strike someone elsewhere on the body might cause more physical harm, but a slap in the face was an attack on one's honor and was considered to be a terrible indignity. It was to be treated with disdain, as being less than a human. Even a slave

would rather have been stuck across the back with a whip than be slapped in the face by his master's hand.

To strike someone on the **right cheek** would then be a vicious angry reaction, indicating an act of insult. Yet when we are insulted, maligned, and treated with contempt—literally or figuratively struck on the cheek by someone—we are to **turn to him the other also**. But Jesus' point pertains more to what we are not to do than what we are to do.

(Jesus is not calling for us to just seek to be abused. Just to literally keep turning the cheek after you have been hit in the face and to keep offering to hit me again until I'm so battered and bloody that I collapse.)

We use this kind of speech all the time.

We say,

“You will not know what its like until you have walked a mile in his shoes”

does not mean, to go get a pair of his shoes and put them on and walk a mile.

Turning the other cheek symbolizes the nonavenging, nonretaliatory, humble, and gentle spirit that is to characterize kingdom citizens (cf. vv. 3, 5).

Jesus strongly resisted evil that was directed against others, especially His Father—as when He cleansed the Temple of those who defiled His Father’s house. But He did not resist by personal vengeance any evil directed at Himself. When the leaders of the Sanhedrin, and later the soldiers, physically abused Him and mocked Him, He did not retaliate either in words or in actions (Matt. 26:67–68). As Isaiah had predicted of Him, Christ gave His back to those who struck Him and His cheeks to those who plucked out His beard (Isa. 50:6). As Jesus hung from the cross, He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Peter sums up our Lord’s example: “But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Pet. 2:20–23).

When someone attacks our right to dignity, we too are not to defend that right by retaliation. We are to leave the protection and defense of our dignity in

God's hands, knowing that one day we will live and reign with him in His kingdom in great glory.

security

And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. (5:40)

The **shirt** mentioned here was a type of tunic worn as an undergarment, and the **coat** was an outer garment that also served as a blanket at night. Most people of that day owned only one coat and probably only one or two shirts. It was the outer garment, the **coat**, that Mosaic law required be returned to its owner “before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body” (Ex. 22:26–27).

Jesus is not speaking of a robbery, in which a person tries to steal your clothes, but of the legitimate claim of **anyone who wants to sue you**. When a person had no money or other possessions, the court often would require the fine or judgment be paid by clothing. The attitude of a kingdom citizen, one who is truly righteous, should be willingness to surrender even one's **coat**, his extremely valuable outer garment, rather than cause offense or hard feelings with an adversary. The court could not demand the **coat**, but it could be voluntarily given to

meet the required debt. And that is precisely what Jesus says we should be willing to do.

If a legal judgment is fairly made against us for a certain amount, we should be willing to offer even more in order to show our regret for any wrong we did and to show that we are not bitter or resentful against the one who has sued us. In so doing we will show the love of Christ and that we are “sons of [our] Father who is in heaven” (v. 45). It is better even to be defrauded than to be resentful and spiteful. (Paul later instructs Christians regarding lawsuits in 1 Cor. 6:1–8, emphasizing a similar principle of willingness to forfeit one’s due rather than be vengeful.)

liberty

And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. (5:41)

The third right the Lord indicates kingdom citizens are to be willing to sacrifice is that of liberty. God’s original intention was for everyone made in His image to live in freedom. Human bondage and slavery are consequences of the Fall and have no part in God’s original plan for His creation. The best of human governments have always tried to protect the freedom of their citizens, and sometimes even of

foreigners. In light of God's will and proper human justice, men have the right to certain freedoms. But like all other rights, freedom is not to be cherished and protected at the expense of righteousness or even of faithful witness.

Roman law gave a soldier the right to **force** a civilian to carry his pack for a *milion*, a Roman **mile**, which was slightly shorter than our modern mile. The law, designed to relieve the soldier, not only caused great inconvenience to civilians but was made even more despicable by the fact that the oppressed were made to carry the equipment and weapons of their oppressors. Outside of combat the Roman soldier was probably never more hated than when he forced someone to carry his pack.

Yet even so despised a burden should be carried willingly, Jesus says—not only willingly but with magnanimity. When we are forced to go **one mile**, we should willingly go **two**. When we are robbed of some of our cherished liberty, we should surrender even more of it rather than retaliate. In so doing we are obedient to our Lord and testify to His righteousness, knowing that in Him we have a dearer freedom that the world cannot take from us.

property

Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.
(5:42)

The fourth right we are to surrender is that of property. Possessiveness is another characteristic of fallen human nature. We dislike giving up, even temporarily, that which belongs to us. Even as Christians, we often forget that nothing truly belongs to us and that we are only stewards of what belongs to God. But as far as other people are concerned, we *do* have a right to keep that which we possess. By right it is ours to use or dispose of as we see fit.

But that right, too, should be placed on the altar of obedience to Christ if required. When someone asks to **borrow** something from us, we should not **turn away from him**. In other words, we should give him what he wants. The implication is that the person who asks has a genuine need. We are not required to respond to every foolish, selfish request made of us. Sometimes to give a person what he wants but does not need is a disservice, doing him more harm than good.

Also implied is the principle that we should offer to give what is needed as soon as we know of the need, whether or not we are asked for help. Jesus is not speaking of begrudging acquiescence to a plea

for help, but willing, generous, and loving desire to help others. He is speaking of generosity that genuinely wants to meet the other person's need, not tokenism that does a good deed to buy off one's own conscience.

Jesus does not undercut civil justice, which belongs in the courtroom. He undercuts personal selfishness (characteristic of the false religionists listening to Him on the mountain), which belongs nowhere and especially not in the hearts of His kingdom people.

...The only person who is non-defensive, non-vengeful, never bears a grudge, and has no spite in his heart is the person who has died to self. To fight for one's rights is to prove that self is still on the throne of the heart. The believer who is faithful to Christ lives for Him and, if necessary, dies for Him (Rom. 14:8). It is impossible to live for self and for Christ at the same time.

George Mueller wrote, "There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Mueller and his opinions, his preferences, and his tastes and his will. I died to the world, to its approval and its censure. I died to the approval or the blame of even my brethren and friends. And since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

That is the spirit Jesus teaches in this passage, a spirit all men fail to possess apart from saving grace. It is the spirit Abraham manifested when he gave the best land to his nephew Lot.

It is the spirit of Joseph when he embraced and kissed the brothers who had so terribly wronged him.

Is the spirit that would not let David take advantage of the opportunity to take the life of Saul, who was then seeking to take David's life.

It is the spirit that led Elisha to feed the enemy Assyrian army. It is the spirit that led Stephen to pray for those who were stoning him to death.

It is the spirit of every believer who, by the Holy Spirit's power, seeks to be perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect (v. 48).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 332–336). Moody Press.

17 Repay no one evil for evil.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες,

“**no one**”. Paul has the word in an emphatic position: Christians should repay evil to no one at

all, Gentile or Jew, Christian or pagan. It is a universal duty for believers

Morris, L. (1988). [The Epistle to the Romans](#) (p. 451). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

This is found through out the Old and New Testament.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

Proverbs 20:22 (LSB)

22 Do not say, “I will repay evil”;
Hope in Yahweh, and He will save you.

1 Peter 3:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Corinthians 4:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;
¹³ being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

1 Peter 2:20–23 (NKJV)

²⁰when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² *“Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;*

²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

God has given us some amazing portraits of Romans 12 historically and in our own day. For example, in January 1999, Graham Staines and his two sons, Phillip (age ten) and Timothy (age six) were mobbed by radical Hindus, trapped inside their vehicle in Monoharpur, Orissa, India, and

burned alive. The three charred bodies were recovered clinging to each other. Graham Staines had spent 34 years serving the people of India in the name of Jesus. He was the director of the Leprosy Mission in Baripada, Orissa.

He left behind his widow Gladys and daughter Esther. And you may remember that her response was in every paper in India to the glory of Christ. She said, a few days after the martyrdom of her husband and sons, “I have only one message for the people of India. I’m not bitter. Neither am I angry. But I have one great desire: that each citizen of this country should establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who gave his life for their sins . . . let us burn hatred and spread the flame of Christ’s love.”

Everyone thought she would move back to Australia. No. She said God had called them to India, and she would not leave. She said, “My husband and our children have sacrificed their lives for this nation; India is my home. I hope to be here and continue to serve the needy.” Then, perhaps most remarkable of all — listen to this all you who are teenagers — her daughter Esther was asked how she felt about the murder of her dad, and the

thirteen-year-old, said, “I praise the Lord that he found my father worthy to die for him.”

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/do-not-avenge-yourself-but-give-place-to-wrath>

The Command regarding Evil

The Consistency regarding Evil

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Psalm 150:1–6 (NKJV)

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty firmament!
- 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts;
Praise Him according to His excellent
greatness!
- 3 Praise Him with the sound of the
trumpet;
Praise Him with the lute and harp!
- 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments
and flutes!
- 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with clashing cymbals!
- 6 Let everything that has breath praise
the Lord.

Praise the Lord!

Romans 16:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—²⁷ to God, alone wise, *be glory* through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

