



[1 Thessalonians 5:15](#)

(15) See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

[Matthew 5:39-45](#)

(39) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. (41) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. (43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

King James Version

Two wrongs do not make a right, and in our irritated or angry impatience, we frequently say or do something just as bad or worse as was done to us! Then where are we? Often, our [patience](#) does not delay our wrath as God's does.

The obvious meaning of Paul's advice is that we should not take vengeance. In [Romans 12:19](#), Paul repeats this more plainly:

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

This, in turn, feeds directly into Jesus' teaching in [Matthew 5:39-45](#), where Jesus' consistent instruction is that we not set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring

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us, whether verbally, physically or judicially. Rather, [Jesus](#) teaches us to be willing to give the offender something that might defuse the immediate situation—andperhaps even provide some small example that will promote his eternal welfare. Patience is of great value in this respect.

This in no way means we are weak, though to them we may at first seem so. Nor does it mean that we approve of their conduct. Though we may hate their conduct and suffer keenly when it affects us, Christ tells us to bless them, meaning we should confer favor upon or give benefits to them. We can do this by wishing the person well, speaking kindly of and to him, and seeking to do him good.

Situations like this may be the most difficult test we will ever face. Patiently deferring retaliation and committing the circumstance to God's judgment are indispensable to the best possible solution. But the primary point of Jesus' instruction, however, is not how to resolve these situations, but that we may be children of our Father. By imitating God's pattern, we will resemble Him and take a giant stride toward being in His image.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[The Fruit of the Spirit: Patience](#)

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