



## [1 Thessalonians 5:15](#)

(15) Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

## [Matthew 5:39-45](#)

(39) But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (41) If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. (42) Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. (43) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

*New International 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 us, whether verbally, physically or judicially. Rather, [Jesus](#) teaches us to be willing to

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (<http://www.theberean.org>) 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

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