



[1 Thessalonians 5:15](#)

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

[Matthew 5:39-45](#)

(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.

New 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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