

I. Introduction and review.

II. The world will hate you. v. 12b, 14a, 17a, 20 John 15:19

A. Paul is honest about the challenges you will face as a Christian.

1. You will endure tribulation. v. 12b Acts 14:22 John 16:33
2. You will be persecuted. v. 14a II Ti. 3:12
3. People will do evil to you. v. 17a, 21a
4. Some will treat you as an enemy. v. 20a
5. No matter how hard you try, there are some people with whom it is impossible to make peace. v. 18a Mt. 10:34-36 Luke 12:51

B. How are modern believers persecuted?

**C. We also are hurt and wronged by people we thought were our friends. Phil. 1:15-18
I Ti. 1:20 II Ti. 1:15**

III. Don't retaliate against those who wrong you. v. 14b, 17a, 19, 21a

A. You will be tempted to fight fire with fire. Ps. 37 73

1. You cannot achieve God's righteousness through revenge. Js. 1:19-20
2. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is self control. Gal. 5:23 Prov. 16:32

B. Don't retaliate. Lu. 9:55-56

1. Do not curse those who curse you. v. 14b I Pe. 3:9a Mt. 5:22
2. Never pay back evil for evil. v. 17a
3. Never take your own revenge. v. 19a Lev. 19:18a Pr. 20:22 24:29 II Chr. 28:8ff
4. Do not be overcome by evil. v. 21a

C. Why is revenge wrong?

1. It runs contrary to what all people recognize is right. v. 17b
2. It only stirs up more fighting. v. 18
3. It usurps a task (judgment) which belongs only to God. v. 19
4. To stoop to vengeance is to be conquered by evil. v. 21a

D. Leave vengeance to God. v. 19b Matthew 7:1ff

1. Paul is not saying that evil will go unpunished. 2:5 13:4
2. God Himself will make things right. Vengeance is His prerogative. 1:18 2:5 3:5 9:22 Dt. 32:35 II Th. 1:6-10 Nah. 1:2 Heb. 10:30 Mt. 16:27 II Sa. 24:48 Col. 3:6 Ps. 94:1-3 37:12-15 7:11
3. When you take your own revenge, you are playing God. Luke 9:54
4. When you are wronged, look to God as your Defender. Rev. 6:10 I Pe. 2:23
5. Remember *beloved*, when you were God's enemy, Christ delivered you from God's wrath against you. 5:9-10 Mt. 18:21ff I Th. 1:10 Eph. 4:32

E. Questions:

1. What about righteous anger? Eph. 4:26 John 2:14ff
2. Is it wrong to take comfort from the future punishment of the wicked? Ps. 73:16ff Rev. 6:10 II Thess. 1:6-7
3. Does the principle of not taking revenge apply to governments? 13:4
4. How does the principle of not seeking revenge apply to parents? Pr. 13:24 19:18

F. Examples of those who refused to seek personal vengeance.

1. Joseph refused to take revenge against his brothers. Ge. 50:15ff
2. David refused to kill King Saul when he had the opportunity. I Sam. 24:3-7 26:8ff
3. Abigail talked David out of avenging himself against Nabal. I Sam. 25:26,33-34
4. David didn't respond in kind to Shimei's curses. II Sam. 16
5. Jesus did not retaliate against those who tormented Him. I Pet. 2:23

IV. Instead do good for your enemies. v. 14a, 17b, 18b, 20, 21b

A. Fight fire with water. I Pe. 3:9b

1. Bless those who persecute you. v. 14a Mt. 5:43-44 Acts 7:60 Prov. 15:1
2. Instead of retaliating, remember your testimony before the watching world. v. 17b Pr. 3:4 II Co. 8:21 4:2 Titus 2:10 Col. 4:5 I Ti. 3:7
3. Actively seek peace, even at a very high price. v. 18b Mt. 5:9 Js. 3:17 Heb. 12:14 Pr. 26:20 17:14 20:3 I Co. 6:1ff
4. Generously show love to your enemy, meeting his needs. v. 20b-21 Pr. 25:21-22
5. Conquer evil with good.

B. Why should you do good to those who hurt you?

1. This is how God treats His enemies, including you! Mt. 5:45 Co. 1:21-22 Jo. 3:16
2. Perhaps your goodness will lead your enemy to repentance. v. 20b-21 I Pe. 3:1-2
3. Your choice to love instead of taking revenge is a victory. v. 21 Pr. 16:32
4. Your goodness reflects great honor on Christ. God will reward you. Pr. 25:21-22

C. Examples of the power of goodness:

1. Joseph was generous to his brothers. Ge. 50:21
2. Saul was contrite before David. I Sam. 24:17
3. Elisha fed the Arameans. II Ki. 6:20-23
4. Stephen prayed for those who stoned him. Acts 7:59-60
5. Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him. Lu. 23:34

V. Endure tribulation through hope and prayer. v. 12 I Co. 13:7

A. Our present joy is grounded upon our future hope. 8:18,24ff 15:4,13 I Pe. 1:3-9

John 14:1-3 Titus 2:13 I Th. 5:8 I John 3:1-3 I Co. 15:58 Mt. 21:21 II Ti. 4:8

B. Hope is kindled through prayer. I Th. 5:17 Phil. 4:6

VI. Concluding applications: What could be harder? Phil. 4:13

Discussion questions.

1. What kinds of persecution do Christians face in the world today?
2. What kinds of persecution do you experience?
3. Why do people want to take revenge?
4. What are some subtle ways Christian people can be guilty of returning evil for evil?
5. Why is it wrong for a Christian to take revenge?
6. Does the principle of not taking revenge apply to governments?
7. How does the principle of not taking revenge apply to parents?
8. Are there some circumstances in which peace may be impossible? v. 18
9. Why should you do good to people who harm you?
10. How can anybody live up this amazing standard of loving enemies?