

# Romans 12:14-17 Commentary

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Romans 12:14 **Bless** **those** who **persecute** you; **bless** and **do not curse**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** **eulogeite** (2PPAM) **tous** **diokontas** (PAPMPN) [**humas**]. **eulogeite** (2PPAM) **kai** **me** **katarasthe**. (2PPMM)

**Amplified:** Bless those who persecute you [who are cruel in their attitude toward you]; bless and do not curse them ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** If people persecute you because you are a Christian, don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** ... as for those who try to make your life a misery, bless them. Don't curse, bless. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Be constantly blessing those who are constantly persecuting you; be blessing and stop cursing. (Eermans)

**Young's Literal:** Bless those persecuting you; bless, and curse not;

## ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

| Romans 1:18-3:20         | Romans 3:21-5:21       | Romans 6:1-8:39         | Romans 9:1-11:36         | Romans 12:1-16:27          |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| SIN                      | SALVATION              | SANCTIFICATION          | SOVEREIGNTY              | SERVICE                    |
| NEED<br>FOR<br>SALVATION | WAY<br>OF<br>SALVATION | LIFE<br>OF<br>SALVATION | SCOPE<br>OF<br>SALVATION | SERVICE<br>OF<br>SALVATION |

|   |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| God's Holiness<br>In<br>Condemning<br>Sin | God's Grace<br>In<br>Justifying<br>Sinners | God's Power<br>In<br>Sanctifying<br>Believers | God's Sovereignty<br>In<br>Saving<br>Jew and Gentile | Gods Glory<br>The<br>Object of<br>Service |
| Deadliness<br>of Sin                      | Design<br>of Grace                         | Demonstration of Salvation                    |  |   |
|   |  | Power Given                                   | Promises Fulfilled                                   | Paths Pursued                             |
| Righteousness<br>Needed                   | Righteousness<br>Credited                  | Righteousness<br>Demonstrated                 | Righteousness<br>Restored to Israel                  | Righteousness<br>Applied                  |
| God's<br>Righteousness<br>IN LAW          | God's<br>Righteousness<br>IMPUTED          | God's<br>Righteousness<br>OBEYED              | God's<br>Righteousness<br>IN ELECTION                | God's<br>Righteousness<br>DISPLAYED       |
| Slaves to Sin                             | Slaves to God                              |   |  | Slaves Serving God                        |
| Doctrine                                  |  |   |  | Duty                                      |
| Life by Faith                             |  |   |  | Service by Faith                          |

Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work "[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#)"

**BLESS** THOSE WHO (continually) PERSECUTE YOU: eulogeite (2PPAM) tous diokontas (PAPMPA) (humas):

- Ro 12:21; Job 31:29,30; Matthew 5:44, 48, Luke 6:28; 23:34; Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 4:12,13; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; James 3:10; 1 Peter 2:21, 22, 23; 3:9)

**Jesus** said

Matt 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you

Matt 5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Luke 6:28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 23:34 But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

**Wayne Barber** gives us the proper context for how one can even begin to produce the "fruits" in this section of Paul's exhortation... Wayne says "I love the chorus, The Family of God.

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.

I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood.

Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod.

I'm glad I'm a part of the family of God."

Something happens when you are **surrendered**. Your whole life changes. If I am not **surrendered**, if I am not being transformed willingly by the renewing of my mind, then the fog is still sitting on me. It has not lifted. I see the church as an organization. I see it differently than God sees it. But, oh, when I become **surrendered**, God begins to lift that fog and I begin to see the congregation, the church, differently than I have ever seen it before. As a matter of fact, when I am **surrendered** we know from studying Romans 1 through 11, the Holy Spirit of God produces a love in me. It is qualified in Romans 12:9. He says, "Let love be without hypocrisy." There is something in me and my relationships to others that is drastically different. It is God in me. It is God in you. God is manifesting a love that human ability could never attain. It is a divine love. It is a sensitive love. It is a caring love. It is a selfless love. It is God in us, living and manifesting His life and love through us. (from sermon **Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7**) (Bolding added)

## SURRENDER ENABLES SPIRIT FILLED SUPERNATURAL OBEDIENCE

**Now that you are surrendered** (if you're not read **Wayne Barber's sermon on Romans 12:1**) you are ready to put into practice

the following command, remembering that God never asks us to carry out any task that He does not first equip us to complete.

**Bless those who persecute you** - The **present imperative** calls for (commands) us to make it a habit to bless them. Try to fulfill this command in your own strength beloved! Every imperative or command in Scripture is an opportunity for the believer to jettison self-reliance and surrender to Spirit enablement, for He alone can give us the necessary desire and the sufficient power to bless those that our natural flesh wants to curse! Obedience to this command must be motivated by love (a desire to please our Father in Heaven) and not by legalism (the fallen flesh loves the latter approach).

**Wuest** paraphrase = "Be constantly blessing those who are constantly persecuting you."

**Hodge** - The exercise of love, and the discharge of the duties of benevolence, are not to be confined to the saints, or people of God; but the same spirit is to be manifested towards our enemies. The word eulogeo rendered to **bless**, signifies both to pray for good to anyone, and to do good. Here, from the context, the former meaning is to be preferred, as it is opposed to cursing, which signifies to imprecate evil on anyone. The command therefore is, that, so far from wishing or praying that evil may overtake our persecutors and enemies, we must sincerely desire and pray for their good. It is not sufficient to avoid returning evil for evil, nor even to banish vindictive feelings; we must be able sincerely to desire their happiness. How hard this is for corrupt human nature, everyone who is acquainted with his own heart well knows. Yet this is the standard of Christian temper and character exhibited in the Scriptures, Matthew 5:44. ([Romans 12 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

**William Newell** - Here is a verse that needs no comment, in view of our Lord's words of Luke 6:27-28 : "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you"; and of His blessed example. But note, in our present verse it is not mere outward blessing that is commanded, but refraining from inward reservations, or private expressions, for sometimes we speak sweetly to opposers, but our after words prove that we did not allow our hearts to go out in love to those enemies. And by the way, do not stumble if you find other Christians speaking ill of you, even persecuting you. Bless them, too! ([Romans 12 - Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Vincent** - **Pursue** hospitality toward the brethren as the wicked **pursue** them.

**Ray Stedman** - First, love speaks well of its persecutors. That is a tough one, isn't it? "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." That is getting right down to where the rubber meets the road, isn't it? That means you don't go around badmouthing people who are not nice to you. You don't run them down or speak harshly about them to others, but you speak well of them. You find something that you can approve, and you say so to others. That is a tough one. I confess that that is not my natural reaction. When somebody persecutes me, I persecute back! At least I want to. But this is what the Word tells us we don't need to do and we should not do. I think this applies to such practical areas as traffic problems. Have you ever been persecuted in traffic? It happens all the time. Somebody cuts you off, and you want to roll down the window and shout, "Melonhead!" But according to this, you are not supposed to. Now, this doesn't tell you what to call them, but it tells you to bless them, anyway ([Romans 12 - Ray C. Stedman](#))

**Bless** (2127) (**eulogeo** from **eu** = good + **lógos** = word; see cognates **eulogetos** and **eulogia**) means speak good or well. When eulogeo is used by men toward men it means to speak well of with praise and thanksgiving (English "**Eulogy**" = an address in praise for one deceased ). To say good or positive things. **Eulogeo** can be from men to God, from men to men, and from God to men. When God blesses men He grants them favor and confers happiness upon them.

"*Blessing God*" extends (shares) *ourselves* with the Lord, giving our *word* to be *completely His* – i.e. *conferring ourselves* to Him which fulfills the common OT imperative, "*Bless the Lord!*"

Lk 1:64: "And at once (Lk 1:63) his (Zacharias) mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he was speaking, *blessing* (*eulogéō*) God."

[The Discovery Bible](#) says "Scripture calls us to *"bless God!"* See: Lk 1:64,68, 2:28; Ro 1:25, 9:5; 2 Cor 1:3, 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3. The distinction between "*blessing God*" and "*praising God*" is carefully preserved in the original Hebrew/Greek text of Scripture and therefore *both* should be practiced in true worship! "*Praising God*" *acknowledges* (*exalts*) His work and character. In contrast, "*blessing God*" means *surrendering oneself* to Him. The scriptural imperative to "bless God!" is frequent in the (*Hebrew*) text of the OT. See Ps 103:1,2, 104:1, etc. Unfortunately, it was "eliminated" by the *NIV* (and other translations), rendering it the same as "praise God." God also "gives Himself away" to us as He blesses us. A. W. Tozer, "*God gives....but He doesn't give away!*" *Reflection: "Blessing (2127/eulogéō) God"* means *giving ourselves away* to Him. It is *so important* to *bless God* because this impacts Him *forever*. Why? The Lord never becomes more nor less than He has always been, is, or will be (cf. Rev 4:8). Therefore what impacts God *now....does so forever!* Meditate on this in light of Mal 3:6 and Heb 13:8."

**Bible Dictionary Articles on Bless**

- [Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary](#)

- [Bless - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Bless - The Hawker's Poor Man's Concordance And Dictionary](#)
- [Bless - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Bless \(2\) - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)

In early Greek literature **eulogeo** meant simply, "to speak well of someone." Later on it came to mean "the advocacy of a person's cause." It is a word used frequently in the Septuagint Greek Old Testament to describe blessing, such as the blessing of Aaron (Nu 6:24).

### The LORD bless you, and keep you

In **context** Paul is commanding us to speak well of those who chase after us! It means to even invoke God's blessing upon them. This is not our **NATURAL** reaction to those who persecute us, but instead calls for a **SUPERNATURAL** response, a response which imitates our Lord Jesus facing the ultimate "persecution" on Calvary (1Cor 11:1, Lk 23:34, cp a Spirit filled Stephen's response even as the rocks were hitting him! See Acts 7:55, 59, 60 and compare Acts 6:3, 5, 10!). **God's commandments always include his enablements** - beloved of the Father, we can **ONLY** obey this command as we yield to and are filled by His Spirit and walk by His Spirit, for **ONLY THEN** will we be enabled to **NOT** fulfill the desires of the flesh, which are desires for revenge rather than blessing! (Memorize one of the most important verses in the New Testament -- and ask God to enable you to live it out in "shoe leather" Christianity! = Gal 5:16-**see note**)

**Bless** (Webster's 1828 English Definition) -

1. To pronounce a wish of happiness to one; to express a wish or desire of happiness. - And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Genesis 28:1, 3, 6
2. To make happy; to make successful; to prosper in temporal concerns; as, we are blest with peace and plenty. - The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thou doest. Deuteronomy 15:4, 6, 10, 14, 18
3. To make happy in a future life. - Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Revelation 14
4. To set apart or consecrate to holy purposes; to make and pronounce holy. = And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Revelation 14
5. To consecrate by prayer; to invoke a blessing upon. = And Jesus took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven he blessed them. Luke 9:16
6. To praise; to glorify, for benefits received. = Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Psalms 103:1-2
7. To praise; to magnify; to extol, for excellencies. Ps 104:1, 35
8. To esteem or account happy; with the reciprocal pronoun. = The nations shall bless themselves in him. Jer 4:2
9. To pronounce a solemn prophetic benediction upon. = Jer 4:2. Deuteronomy 33:1, 11, 20
10. In this line of Spenser, it may signify to throw, for this is nearly the primary sense. = His sparkling blade about his head he blest.

**Vine** - lit., "to speak well of" (eu, "well," logos, "a word"), signifies, (a) "to praise, to celebrate with praises," of that which is addressed to God, acknowledging His goodness, with desire for His glory, Luke 1:64 ; 2:28 ; 24:51,53 ; James 3:9 ; (b) "to invoke blessings upon a person," e.g., Luke 6:28 ; Romans 12:14 . The present participle Passive, "blessed, praised," is especially used of Christ in Matthew 21:9 ; 23:39 , and the parallel passages; also in John 12:13 ; (c) "to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God's blessing on a thing," e.g., Luke 9:16 ; 1 Corinthians 10:16 ; (d) "to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on," said of God, e.g., in Acts 3:26 ; Galatians 3:9 ; Ephesians 1:3 . Cp. the synonym *aineo*, "to praise." See [Praise](#). ([Bless, Blessed, Blessedness, Blessing - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

**Friberg** (summarized) - (1) of man's duty to speak well of God in the form of praise or thanksgiving praise, extol (Lk 1.64); give thanks (1Cor 14.16); (2) as calling down God's gracious power on persons bless, invoke a blessing on (Lk 24.50); on things bless, consecrate, pronounce blessing on (Mt 26.26); (3) of God's action in bestowing blessing confer favor or blessing on, graciously benefit, act kindly toward (Heb 6.14); passive be blessed, be favored (Lk 1.42)

**BDAG** (summarized) - 1. to say something commendatory, speak well of, praise, extol 2. to ask for bestowal of special favor, esp. of calling down God's gracious power, bless (LXX) 3. to bestow a favor, provide with benefits: w. God or Christ as subj.

**Thayer - 1.** In Greek writings - to praise, to celebrate with praise (Lk 1:64, 2:28, 24:51, 53, Jas 3:9) absolutely, in the giving of thanks: Mt. 14:19; 26:26 (cf. 3 below); Mk 6:41; 8:7; 14:22 (cf. 3 below); Luke 24:30; 1 Cor. 14:16. **2.** to invoke blessings: upon one, Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:28; Ro 12:14; absolutely, 1Cor. 4:12; 1 Pet. 3:9; of one taking leave, Luke 24:50f; of one at the point of death, Heb. 11:20f (Ge 48:9); in congratulations, Heb. 7:1,6f (Gen. 14:19); Mark 10:16 R G L; Luke 2:34; praised, blessed: Matt. 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9f; Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13 (in all which passages it is an acclamation borrowed from: Ps. 118:26. **3.** with the accusative of a thing, "to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers; to ask God's blessing on a thing, pray him to bless it to one's use, pronounce a consecratory blessing on": Mark 8:7 Luke 9:16; 1Cor. 10:16; 1Sa 9:13; Mt. 26:26; **4.** of God, to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on, Acts 3:26; followed by en with the dative of the blessing, with every kind of blessing, Eph 1:3 Ge 22:17; I will bestow on thee the greatest blessings, Heb 6:14; Gal. 3:8 Gal. 3:9; favored of God, blessed, Luke 1:42b (cf. Dt. 28:4); blessed among women, i. e. before all other women, Lk 1:28, Isa. 61:9; 65:23; appointed to eternal salvation by my father, Mt. 25:34.

Here are the 41 NT uses of **eulogeo** -- Usage: bless(9), blessed(25), blessing(3), giving a blessing(1), praise(1), praising(1), surely\* (1).

Matthew 14:19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He **blessed** the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds,

Matthew 21:9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Hosanna in the highest!"

Matthew 23:39 "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**!"

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are **blessed** of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after **ablessing**, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mark 6:41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He **blessed** the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all.

Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had **blessed** them, He ordered these to be served as well.

Mark 11:9 Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna! **BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; 10 **Blessed** is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!"

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, He took some bread, and after **ablessing** He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body."

Luke 1:42 And she cried out with a loud voice and said, '**Blessed** are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in **praise** of God.

Luke 2:28 then he took Him into his arms, and **blessed** God, and said,

34 And Simeon **blessed** them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--

Luke 6:28 **bless** those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 9:16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He **blessed** them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people.

Luke 13:35 "Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, '**BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**!'"

Luke 19:38 shouting: "**BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Luke 24:30 When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and **blessed** it, and breaking it,

He began giving it to them.

50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and **blessed** them.

51 While He was **blessing** them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

53 and were continually in the temple **praising** God.

John 12:13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! **BLESSED** IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel."

Acts 3:26 "For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to **bless** you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

Romans 12:14 **Bless** those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

1 Corinthians 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we **bless**; when we are persecuted, we endure;

1 Corinthians 10:16 Is not the cup of blessing which we **bless** a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 14:16 Otherwise if you **bless** in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen " at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?

Galatians 3:9 So then those who are of faith are **blessed** with Abraham, the believer.

Ephesians 1:3-note **Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Hebrews 6:14-note saying, "I WILL SURELY **BLESS** YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU."

Hebrews 7:1-note For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and **blessed** him,

6-note But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and **blessed** the one who had the promises.

7 But without any dispute the lesser is **blessed** by the greater.

Hebrews 11:20-note By faith Isaac **blessed** Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, **blessed** each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

James 3:9 With it we **bless** our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

1 Peter 3:9-note not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but **giving a blessing** instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

**Eulogeo** in Septuagint [LEH] = to bless, to praise Ge 1:22; to curse (euph.) 1Ki 21:10 =**249 verses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint** = Ge 1:22, 28; 2:3; 5:2; 9:1; 12:2f; 14:19; 17:16, 20; 22:17; 24:1, 35, 48, 60; 25:11; 26:3, 12, 24; 27:4, 7, 10, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29ff, 33f, 38, 41; 28:1, 3, 6; 30:27, 30; 31:55; 32:26, 29; 35:9; 39:5; 47:7, 10; 48:3, 9, 15f, 20; 49:25, 28; Ex 12:32; 20:11, 24; 23:25; 39:43; Lev 9:22f; Nu 6:23-24; 22:6, 12; 23:11, 20, 25; 24:1, 9f; Deut 1:11; 2:7; 7:13; 8:10; 12:7; 14:24, 29; 15:4, 6, 10, 14, 18; 16:10, 15; 18:5; 21:5; 23:20; 24:13, 19; 26:15; 27:12; 28:3ff, 12; 30:16; 33:1, 11, 20; Josh 8:30; 14:13; 17:14; 22:6f, 33; 24:10; Jdg 5:2, 9, 24; 13:24; Ruth 2:4, 19; 3:10; 1 Sam 2:9, 20; 9:13; 13:10; 23:21; 25:14, 33; 26:25; 2 Sam 2:5; 6:11f, 18, 20; 7:29; 8:10; 13:25; 14:22; 19:39; 21:3; 24:23; 1 Kgs 1:47; 2:45; 8:14, 55, 66; 10:9; 21:10, 13; 2 Kgs 4:29; 10:15; 1 Chr 4:10; 13:14; 16:2, 36, 43; 17:27; 18:10; 26:5; 29:10, 20; 2 Chr 6:3; 9:8; 20:26; 30:27; 31:8, 10; Neh 8:6; 9:5; 11:2; Job 1:10f, 21; 2:5; 11:2; 29:13; 31:20; 42:12; Ps 5:12; 16:7; 26:12; 28:9; 29:11; 34:1; 37:22; 45:2; 49:18; 62:4; 63:4; 65:10; 66:8; 67:1, 6f; 68:26; 72:15, 17; 96:2; 103:1-2, 20ff; 104:1, 35; 107:38; 109:28; 112:2; 113:2; 115:12f, 15, 18; 118:26; 128:4f; 129:8; 132:15; 134:1, 3; 135:19f; 145:1f, 10, 21; 147:13; Pr 3:33; 11:25; 20:9; 22:8; 27:14; 28:20; 30:11; 31:30; Isa 12:1; 19:24f; 25:3, 5; 36:16; 38:18ff; 43:20; 51:2; 61:9; 64:11; 65:16, 23; Jer 4:2; 17:7; 31:23; Ezek 3:12; Dan 2:19f; 4:34; 5:4, 23; Hag 2:19;

**First use in OT Lxx** - Gen 1:22 And God **blessed** them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

**Last use in OT Lxx** - Hag 2:19 'Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, it has not borne fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.'

**Our privilege** - Ps 103:1 [-note](#) A Psalm of David. **Bless** the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, **bless** His holy name. 2 **Bless** the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;

**Spurgeon: Bless the Lord O my soul.** Soul music is the very soul of music. The Psalmist strikes the best key note when he begins with stirring up his inmost self to magnify the Lord. He soliloquizes, holds self-communion and exhorts himself, as though he felt that dullness would all too soon steal over his faculties, as, indeed, it will over us all, unless we are diligently on the watch. Jehovah is worthy to be praised by us in that highest style of adoration which is intended by the term bless—"All thy works praise thee, O God, but thy saints shall bless thee." Our very life and essential self should be engrossed with this delightful service, and each one of us should arouse his own heart to the engagement. Let others forbear if they can: "Bless the Lord, O MY soul." Let others murmur, but do thou bless. Let others bless themselves and their idols, but do thou bless the LORD. Let others use only their tongues, but as for me I will cry, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." And all that is within me, bless his holy name. Many are our faculties, emotions, and capacities, but God has given them all to us, and they ought all to join in chorus to his praise. **Half-hearted, ill-conceived, unintelligent praises are not such as we should render to our loving Lord. If the law of justice demanded all our heart and soul and mind for the Creator, much more may the law of gratitude put in a comprehensive claim for the homage of our whole being to the God of grace.** It is instructive to note how the Psalmist dwells upon the holy name of God, as if his holiness were dearest to him; or, perhaps, because the holiness or wholeness of God was to his mind the grandest motive for rendering to him the homage of his nature in its wholeness. Babies may praise the divine goodness, but fathers in grace magnify his holiness. By the name we understand the revealed character of God, and assuredly those songs which are suggested, not by our fallible reasoning and imperfect observation, but by unerring inspiration, should more than any others arouse all our consecrated powers.

Verse 2. **Bless the LORD, O my soul.** He is in real earnest, and again calls upon himself to arise. Had he been very sleepy before? Or was he now doubly sensible of the importance, the imperative necessity of adoration? Certainly, he uses no vain repetitions, for the Holy Spirit guides his pen; and thus he shews us that we have need, again and again, to bestir ourselves when we are about to worship God, for it would be shameful to offer him anything less than the utmost our souls can render. These first verses are a tuning of the harp, a screwing up of the loosened strings that not a note may fail in the sacred harmony. And forget not all his benefits. Not so much as one of the divine dealings should be forgotten, they are all really beneficial to us, all worthy of himself, and all subjects for praise. Memory is very treacherous about the best things; by a strange perversity, engendered by the fall, it treasures up the refuse of the past and permits priceless treasures to lie neglected, it is tenacious of grievances and holds benefits all too loosely. It needs spurring to its duty, though that duty ought to be its delight. Observe that he calls all that is within him to remember all the Lord's benefits. For our task our energies should be suitably called out. God's all cannot be praised with less than our all. **Reader, have we not cause enough at this time to bless him who blesses us?** Come, let us read our diaries and see if there be not choice favors recorded there for which we have rendered no grateful return. Remember how the Persian king, when he could not sleep, read the chronicles of the empire, and discovered that one who had saved his life had never been rewarded. How quickly did he do him honour! **The Lord has saved us with a great salvation, shall we render no recompense? The name of ingrate is one of the most shameful that a man can wear; surely we cannot be content to run the risk of such a brand. Let us awake then, and with intense enthusiasm bless Jehovah.**

**Wayne Barber** explains that **eulogeo**...

"means to speak good things about this person. Now careful, don't jump ahead with surface interpretation. You may be thinking, "Now wait a minute! Do you mean when somebody, even in the body of Christ, treats me like dirt, I am supposed to say something good about them? That is a lie." Yeah, it sure is. And God is not telling you to lie about them. What does it mean to bless somebody, to speak well of somebody?

You have to read the whole verse. He says, "bless and curse not." The word "curse" means to wish evil upon someone. That is what it means to curse them. It means to say, "Oh, I hope he gets his. I hope this happens in his life," wishing evil upon them. Instead, wish that good things could come upon them. Speak that which is good. Don't lie about them because they are mean people, but speak good. Wish that which is good to come upon them. Now that is the way you treat those in the body of Christ who bring great grief and pain in your Christian walk. You are seeking to walk surrendered to Christ and they treat you as if you are dirt. You don't wish evil upon them.

Now you know, if you didn't understand Romans 1-11, you can't understand this. In Romans 8 we know why we can do this... Because God is causing all things, even those people who bring us grief, to work together for good to those that love God, to



those who are called according to His purpose. You see, you have got to have the first 11 chapters of Romans to even begin to understand chapters 12 through 16. Everything in chapters 12 through 16 hinges on what we have already studied in Romans. God is in charge. He even uses the persecution. To do what? To drive us to the end of ourselves. Why? Because Romans 8:29 says that we might be conformed into the image of Christ Jesus. So the pain and all the things that we go through in this quarry, in this school, in this workshop down here on this earth are all tools that God is using to chip off and to hone and to make us into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. It drives us to the end of ourselves where we learn to decrease and then He is able to increase in our life. That is what life is all about.

So as a believer, when it comes, back off and say,

"God, I don't know what you are doing in this, but thank you that you are in control of it and I am not about to wish evil upon this person. I want them to know the same God I know and trust and walk with day by day."

You don't wish evil upon them. As a matter of fact, it is by the grace of God that you are not like they are. So speak well of them. Speak good of them. That is the response of a person whose love is without hypocrisy. Because you have got the bigger picture, you can see far beyond the pain and what the individual is doing to you in your life.

It is the saddest thing in the world when people live with bitterness inside them. Hebrews says,

"Don't let a root of bitterness grow up thereby defiling many."

Do you know where it comes from? It comes from not being surrendered. It comes from not understanding that only when you are surrendered, this is your logical, reasonable spiritual service of worship. When you make this offering of yourself to God, God can transform you, renew your mind and you are going to think differently from that point on. But a person not willing to live that way is a person who has put himself, his sinful body, right back up under bondage, the same bondage that God has freed him from. He lives in misery, bound to something that he should never be bound to. So, the response. (from sermon Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7)

**Persecute** (1377) (**dioko** [word study] from **dio** = pursue, prosecute) means to follow or press hard after, pursue with earnestness and diligence. In the present context **dioko** means to pursue with repeated acts of enmity. The present tense indicates this is the saint's continual lot in this life (cp Acts 14:22), for as Paul writes to the saints at Philippi "to you it **has been granted** (**charizomai** = a grace gift, freely bestowed!) for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Php 1:29-note)

As noted above, but worth reiterating, obedience to Paul's command (**present imperative**) to bless our persecutors runs counter to the tendency of every believer's **old flesh nature**, (cf Gal 5:17-note) and clearly is **impossible** in our own strength. To **act** (like Christ) rather than to **react** is only possible as we allow His indwelling Spirit to fill us and control us ('**Him-possible**' - Eph 5:18), **walking in the Spirit**. (Gal 5:16-note) **Flesh** cannot *sincerely* (emphasize "sincerely"! ) speak well of those who persecute us. Paul is not calling for "lip service" but an attitude that flows forth from our regenerated (new covenant, spiritually circumcised) heart.

**Dioko** 44x in the NT -- Mt 5:10, 11, 12,, 44; 10:23; 23:34; Lk. 17:23; 21:12; Jn. 5:16; 15:20; Acts 7:52; 9:4, 5; 22:4, 7, 8; 26:11, 14, 15; Ro 9:30, 31; 12:13, 14; 14:19; 1Co 4:12; 14:1; 15:9; 2Co 4:9; Ga 1:13, 23; 4:29; 5:11; 6:12; Php 3:6, 12, 14; 1Th 5:15; 1Ti 6:11; 2Ti 2:22; 3:12; Heb 12:14; 1Pe 3:11; Re 12:13

**Wayne Barber** gives a "Southern" illustration of '**persecution**'...

The word "**persecution**," **dioko**, is something that you need to realize. It is the word that means to follow after, to pursue after. Many times over the years that I have been here, I have talked about a coon hunt. The raccoon, you know, just doesn't bother anybody. He sleeps all day long. He gets up in the evening when everybody else goes home and goes about his business. Then one night, he hears the sound of dogs baying out there in the dark. He says to himself, "Oh, no. I haven't bothered anybody and here we go again." Then that sound gets on his trail! You know what they are like when they are treed. They get that high-pitched sound. That poor little raccoon wasn't bothering anybody.

That is the word for **persecuted**... Do you mean they follow you everywhere you go? Yes, and especially when you seek to live a godly life. Number one, they don't understand this kind of love and they don't understand the God we serve. It is going to follow you and it is going to be within the church walls as much as it is going to be without it. I wish it were not that way. Flesh is inside the church and outside the church. (from sermon Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7)

Torrey's Topic "**Persecution**" emphasizes that our Lord was persecuted and so we as His disciples should expect persecution because all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, but as implied in Paul's exhortation in the present verse, we should bear up under the persecution remembering that the persecution of a saint is ultimately persecution of Jesus (see study on



**The Exchange of Armor** emphasizing the impact a proper understanding of every saint's present protection as a result of our new position in the New Covenant).

By the way, don't think that this persecution only comes from outside the church. Jesus warned His disciples that a time would come in which whoever would kills them would be so deceived that he would truly think that he was offering service to God! (Jn 16:2).

Treat enemies as if they were your friends (Lk 6:27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 cf. Lk 23:34 Acts 7:60 1Pe 2:21-note, 22-note, 23-note).

For those who are bought with a price and are no longer their own but are left here as ambassadors of reconciliation (2Cor 5:18, 19, 20), it is not sufficient to simply abstain from retaliation against those who do us injury. Irregardless of continual persecutions, believers are to go to great lengths, making every effort to seek their persecutors welfare! Try to obey this command in your own strength!

The principle of non-retaliation for personal injury permeates the NT and provides practical guidance when life brings us up against those who care nothing for us and are even opposed to all that we stand for. The practice? Ask that they might enjoy the blessings of God! Love inevitably desires the best for other people regardless of who they may be. So while the old nature says "Curse them" God through Paul says, "Ask Me to bless them."

### **BLESS AND CURSE NOT: eulogeite (2PPAM) kai me katarasthe (2PPMM):**

1Co 4:12, 13 1Th 5:15 James 3:10 1Pe 3:9

1Thess 5:15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.

Jas 3:10 from the same mouth come [both] blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

1Pet 3:9 not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

Notice this is the second command to **bless** (present imperative) in one verse. **Does Paul have your attention?**

The surpassing greatness of the love of Jesus Christ in us is that it can be extended to our enemies even as He Himself did from the Cross (Luke 23:34), especially if we have presented ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice. His will is to be our desire & if His will is that we are to be persecuted, then that is good and acceptable and perfect (Ro 12:2-note).

Paul's exhortation is very practical for it provides guidance when life brings us up against those who care nothing for us and are in fact opposed to all that we stand for. His advice? Ask that they might enjoy the blessings of God! Love inevitably desires the best for other people regardless of who they may be. The old nature says, "Curse them"; God says, "Ask me to bless them." This is a mind no longer being conformed to the world but transformed by the Spirit & the Word.

Note that Paul's exhortation is not simply a passive acceptance. We are not just to endure persecution, not just to refrain from striking back at our persecutors, and not even just to refrain from wishing them harm. Rather, Paul boldly commands us (present tense = the habit of our life!) to pray a prayer of blessing for our persecutors. To "bless" in this sense is to ask God to bestow his favor upon someone. To "curse" would be the opposite, i.e., to call upon God to bring harm upon someone.

To reiterate, obedience to this command is not humanly possible but is supernaturally possible as we present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices, dead to self but alive to God's desires.

**How do you know when you've genuinely forgiven someone?** There are many "markers", but none greater than the supernaturally enabled (from the heart, cp Jesus' words in Mt 18:35) ability to bless rather curse those who've hurt or injured you with their words or actions!

## **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF NON-RETALIATION**

**David's example when Shimei cursed the king** - 2Sa 16:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and after David's return to take his throne - 2Sa 19:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Shimei was eventually killed by King Solomon but after he disobeyed the King's strict command - 1Ki 2:36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46.

**Stephen's example when being stoned:** First see why or how Stephen (**stephanos**) was able to act like he did - Acts 6:3, 4, 5, Acts 7:55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60

**Jesus' example when He was crucified:** Luke 23:34 (the only record of these words in the Gospels), 1Pe 2:21, 22, 23-note, note especially 1Pe 2:23-note

**Barclay** - The Christian must meet persecution with a prayer for those who persecute him. Long ago Plato had said that the good man will choose rather to suffer evil than to do evil; and it is always evil to hate. When the Christian is hurt, and insulted, and maltreated, he has the example of his Master before him, for he, upon his Cross, prayed for forgiveness for those who were killing him. There has been no greater force to move men into Christianity than this serene forgiveness which the martyrs in every age have showed. Stephen died praying for forgiveness for those who stoned him to death (Acts 7:60). Among those who killed him was a young man named Saul, who afterwards became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles and the slave of Christ. There can be no doubt that the death scene of Stephen was one of the things that turned Paul to Christ. As Augustine said: "The Church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen. Many a persecutor has become a follower of the faith he once sought to destroy, because he has seen how a Christian can forgive." ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Curse** (2672) (**kata-rao-mai** from **kata-ra** = a curse from **kata** = down + **ara** = a prayer, a curse) literally is to curse down and so to call a curse down upon someone. The idea is to imprecate (= to invoke) evil on someone saying that a supernatural power will cause harm to someone or something. To pray or wish evil or ruin toward someone or some thing. To call down curses upon someone. To doom or give judgment against. To utter a prayer or invocation for harm or injury to come upon one. To utter a wish of evil against one; to imprecate evil upon; to call for mischief or injury to fall upon; to execrate. A solemn appeal to a supernatural power to inflict harm on someone or something. In the passive voice the idea is to be doomed or accursed (Mt 25:41 = the forever fate of all Christ rejecters!). The antithesis of eulogeo!

For fallen men to **curse** is **NATURAL**, but for fallen men to **bless** is **SUPERNATURAL**! You must be born again in order to bless in those circumstances and situations in which you formerly would curse.

**Other resources on curse:**

- [Curse, Accursed - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Blessing and Cursing - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Curse - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Curse - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Curse - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Curse - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Curse - Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Can a Christian be cursed- Will God allow a curse on a believer?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about breaking "generational curses"?](#)
- [What is imprecatory prayer? Are believer's to pray as David did?](#)

**Louw-Nida** - to cause injury or harm by means of a statement regarded as having some supernatural power, often because a deity or supernatural force has been evoked. ([Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains](#))

**Vincent** - Plutarch relates that when a decree was issued that Alcibiades should be solemnly cursed by all the priests and priestesses, one of the latter declared that her holy office obliged her to make prayers, but not execrations ("Alcibiades").

**Vine's Lexicon...**

**Kata-rao-mai** = primarily signifies to pray against, to wish evil against a person or thing; hence to curse

**Kata-ra** = Noun Feminine — kata, "down," intensive, and No. 1, denotes an "execration, imprecation, curse," uttered out of malevolence, James 3:10 ; 2 Peter 2:14 ; or pronounced by God in His righteous judgment, as upon a land doomed to barrenness, Hebrews 6:8 ; upon those who seek for justification by obedience, in part or completely, to the Law, Galatians 3:10,13 ; in this 13th verse it is used concretely of Christ, as having "become a curse" for us, i.e., by voluntarily undergoing on the Cross the appointed penalty of the "curse." He thus was identified, on our behalf, with the doom of sin. Here, not the verb in the Sept. of Deuteronomy 21:23 is used (see B, No. 3), but the concrete noun. ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary](#))

**Renner** - In the ancient world, it was believed that when a person spoke good words about someone else, those words conveyed a blessing on that other person's life. Conversely, people believed that when someone spoke curses over another person, his very words caused curses to come upon that person's life. This ancient belief in the power of words is actually borne out in the

Scriptures. We should never forget the power that is contained in the words we speak. Proverbs 18:21 makes it very clear that the power of life and death is in the tongue. (Sparkling Gems from the Greek)

**NIDNTT on Curse** - To this day as understood in the East, its aim is to destroy the object of the curse, since it delivers him up to the destructive working of supernatural powers or brings them into action against him... **Ara**, curse is current from the time of Homer. From the 5th-4th cent. B.C. there is also the compound **katara** with the same meaning. **kataraomai**, curse someone (dat.) or to execrate him (acc.), occurs in secular Gk. from Homer.

**Curse** (Webster's 1828 definition) -

1. To utter a wish of evil against one; to imprecate evil upon; to call for mischief or injury to fall upon; to execrate. Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people. Bless and curse not. Curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me. Numbers 22
2. To injure; to subject to evil; to vex, harass or torment with great calamities. - On impious realms and barbarous kings impose thy plagues, and curse em with such sons as those.
3. To devote to evil. - To utter imprecations; to affirm or deny with imprecations of divine vengeance. - Then began he to curse and to swear. Numbers 22.

**Kataraomai** is in the present imperative with a negative which is a command to the saints in Rome to stop cursing, implying they were in fact already responding in this manner (this tense with a negative also means don't let this practice begin). Don't miss the order in this verse - first, bless, then, curse not. It's difficult to curse someone you just blessed beloved! And remember it's all founded on a surrender of your will in Romans 12:1-note, which in turn is founded on the liberating truth in Romans 1-11. You cannot just begin to read Paul's commands in Romans 12-16 and expect that you will be able to obey them unless you understand why it is even now possible for you in Christ to be able to do so (that's Romans 1-11!) It appears that some of the Roman saints were calling down curses on those who persecuted them for the sake of Christ. But Paul says "Stop cursing them!"

The noun **katara** is use in Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under **acurse** (katara); for it is written, "CURSED (epikataratos from epí = upon + katáratos = cursed, thus "under a curse, doomed to punishment") IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Christ redeemed us from this curse (Gal 3:13).

**Kataraomai** - 6x in 6v - Usage: accursed(1), curse(3), cursed(1).

Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, **accursed** ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

Mark 11:21 Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You **cursed** has withered."

Luke 6:28 bless those who **curse** you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not **curse**.

James 3:9 With it (the tongue which is "double" for with it) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it **wecurse** men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

**Kataraomai** - 49 verses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Ge 5:29; 8:21; 12:3; Ge 27:29; Lev 24:11, 14f, 23; Num 22:6, 12; 23:8, 13, 25, 27; 24:9f; Deut 21:23; 23:4; Judg 5:23; 9:27; 1 Sam 17:43; 2 Sam 16:5, 7, 9ff, 13; 19:21; 1 Kgs 2:8, 35; 2 Kgs 2:24; 9:34; Neh 10:29; 13:2, 25; Job 3:1, 6, 8, 24:18; Ps 37:22; 62:4; 109:28; Pr 27:14; 30:10f; Eccl 7:21f; 10:20; Jer 15:10; Mal 2:2

Ge 5:29 Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has **cursed**." (Hebrew = arar; Lxx = Kataraomai)

Ge 8:21 And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again **curse** (Hebrew = qalal; Lxx = Kataraomai) the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Ge 12:3 (repeated in Ge 27:29 = God is serious about cursing those who curse the nation of Israel!) And I will bless those who bless you (Jacob/Israel), And the one who **curse**s (Lxx = epikataratos = epi = upon, so it is picture of a curse upon = accursed, condemned by God) you I will **curse** (Hebrew = arar; Lxx = Kataraomai). And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Nu 22:12 And God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not **curse** (Hebrew = arar; Lxx = Kataraomai) the people; for they are blessed."

**Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** writes that a **curse** is "a prayer for injury, harm, or misfortune to befall someone. Noah, for instance, pronounced a curse on Canaan (Ge 9:25). Isaac pronounced a curse on anyone who cursed Jacob (Ge 27:29). The soothsayer Balaam was hired by Balak, king of Moab, to pronounce a curse on the Israelites (Nu 22:1-24:25). Goliath, the Philistine giant of Gath, "cursed David by his gods" (1Sa 17:43). In Bible times, a curse was considered to be more than a mere wish that evil would befall one's enemies; it was believed to possess the power to bring about the evil the curser spoke."

Note that the Greek idea of **"curse"** does not have the usual present day meaning of speaking profanity, but of **calling down divine curses upon another person**.

**Kent Hughes** - This is the radical way of Jesus as given in his Sermon on the Mount. More than speaking well of one's enemies, it includes praying for their forgiveness and blessing. This is supremely radical. It is one thing not to curse your enemies, but entirely another to pray for their blessing. This is a life-changing call. The Arabs have a custom which (though practiced with differing levels of sincerity) symbolizes what is called for here. They touch the head, lips, and heart indicating, "I think highly of you, I speak well of you, my heart beats for you." What a way to love the world! "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." (Hughes, R. K. Romans: Righteousness from heaven. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books)

To fulfill this command requires right thinking (Romans 1-11 culminating in Romans 12:1-note, Ro 12:2) as we put into practice what we by grace through faith now possess in the New Covenant -- the mind of Christ (1Cor 2:16). With this mindset ("Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34) and with our hearts surrendered to His will, not our will, we repay unkindness and injury with a grace filled and Spirit empowered response instead of the natural response (from our **Old self or old man**) which is to curse and retaliate. (See Torrey's Topic **"Union w/ Christ"**)

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**Steven Cole** - My task is to talk to you about something that I have almost no experience with and neither do most of you. Paul tells us (Rom. 12:14), "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." Most of us in America have not experienced anything comparable to the persecution that our brothers and sisters in other countries are facing. In Nigeria, the extremist Muslim group, Boko Haram, has been slaughtering Christians and destroying churches. In many other countries, numerous Christians have been imprisoned, killed or forced to leave their homes and flee for their lives.

Some of you may have been ostracized at work or suffered discrimination when it came time for a promotion because of your Christian faith. Perhaps family members have been mean to you because you're a Christian. Maybe a professor at the university ridiculed you in front of the class because you believe in God as the creator or you believe that homosexuality is sin. While I'm not belittling such persecution, I think you'd readily agree that it does not compare to seeing your loved ones slaughtered or having your house burned down and being forced to flee with only the clothes on your back. But we may be facing increased persecution and difficult times in the future here in America, so we need to understand how to respond to persecution in a way that pleases God.

In addition to persecution, Paul jumps to two other topics (sympathy and humility) that seem unrelated (12:15-16): "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation."

Are these just random thoughts that Paul throws out without any connection with each other? Perhaps, but there do seem to be some connecting factors. For one thing, each of these commands reflects transformed attitudes. Back in 12:2, Paul said, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Now he is showing what this transformed, renewed mind looks like. It blesses enemies who have persecuted them, it sympathizes with others in their joys and sorrows and it demonstrates genuine humility.

There is another connection between these three seemingly disjointed verses: they all are rooted in selflessness or self-denial. We can only bless our persecutors and not curse them if we are more concerned about their eternal welfare than we are about our suffering. We can only rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep if our focus is off ourselves and on their situation. We can only be of the same mind with one another and not be haughty or wise in our own estimation if our eyes are on the Lord and others, not on ourselves. Selflessness is the thread that ties all three verses together.

Also, there is the connection that if someone persecutes you and then something bad happens to him, you may rejoice at his suffering: "I'm glad that he got what he deserved!" Or, if your persecutor has something good happen to him, you might be angry, not rejoicing, at his good fortune. For example, if someone at work who has slandered you and turned other workers against you, gets a promotion, you wouldn't be rejoicing. But God commands you to bless your persecutor, not to rejoice at his downfall or be unhappy about his success. So verse 15 has a practical link with verse 14.

But how can we possibly rejoice at a persecutor's success or be sorrowful at his troubles? Paul isn't talking about faking it, where you smile at the news of your enemy's promotion, while in your heart you're thinking, "I hope that dirty rat gets what's coming to

him!" No, Paul is talking about genuinely rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. How can we do that from the heart? Verse 16 shows that the only way we can do that is to grow in genuine humility

I also add that while verse 14 may relate to persecution from those outside the church, whereas the next two qualities may apply more to relationships within the church, that isn't necessarily so. Sometimes those who are in the church can wound you much worse than those outside. You kind of expect that outsiders may give you trouble, but you don't expect that those in the church would deliberately try to hurt you. But, sadly, it happens! So these verses are applicable both to situations in the world and in the church. Paul is saying,

The mercies of God call us to bless our enemies, sympathize with others, and practice humility.

You can tell a lot about a person by his or her attitude, especially when he is going through difficult times. The test of genuine change is when our attitudes change. This is especially true when we are treated wrongly and our attitudes reflect the character of Christ. Thus Paul's first command is not easy, but it is one that we need if we want to be like Christ:

**1. The mercies of God call us to bless our enemies.** Romans 12:14: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." Paul repeats the command to bless for emphasis, adding the second time, "Do not curse." This verse assumes that we will face persecution as believers. As Paul wrote (2 Tim. 3:12), "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." The reason people persecute Christians is that people hate God, and we represent God to them. Even when we do what is right, they hate us for it (1 Pet. 3:13-17). So rather than wonder, "What's wrong?" when others mistreat us because of our faith, we should expect such mistreatment. If they hated our Lord, they will hate us, too (John 15:18-21).

By "blessing," Paul means genuinely praying for and seeking the well-being of the persecutor. He means asking God to save the one who has mistreated us, which is the greatest blessing of all. By not cursing, he doesn't mean not swearing at him, but rather, not calling down a curse from God on him. We should not wish that the persecutor rot in hell for what he did. It's not enough just to refrain from retaliating or to get rid of our desire for vengeance. Rather, we are to ask God to bless him. As we have opportunity, we are to seek ways of helping the one who wronged us. We should not speak evil about him or get delight in thinking of evil things that could happen to him. We should bless him. Needless to say, this is not a natural or easy thing to do!

Paul is reflecting the words of our Lord Jesus. He said (Matt. 5:44), "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." In Luke 6:27-28 Jesus put it this way: "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." A few verses later, He added (Luke 6:35-36), "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." In Matthew 5:11-12, He said, "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Regarding his own ministry, Paul said (1 Cor. 4:12b-13), "When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now." Peter also held up the example of Jesus to his readers who were suffering unjustly as slaves (1 Pet. 2:19-23):

For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? 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.

Peter also said that our response to evil should be (1 Pet. 3:9), "not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing." These verses show that the uniform teaching of the New Testament runs contrary to our natural reaction when we're mistreated. We are to respond not only by not retaliating, but positively by blessing those who persecute us.

The reason we should seek to respond to persecution by blessing our persecutors is that we are seeking to reflect the character of Christ to them. We want God to be glorified as we reflect His grace and love to sinners. As Jesus said (Luke 6:35), "He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

A great help in obeying this command is to keep in mind that God was gracious to me when I was a sinner. He continues to be gracious to me when I sin, even as His child. And so I should be gracious to those in Satan's domain of darkness, who are slaves to sin. My blessing those who persecute me may be the startling behavior that opens them up to the Savior.

This is a story that I've shared with you before, but I've never forgotten it since I read it over 30 years ago. And the author, Josephine

Ligon, had not forgotten it, although it had happened to her as a young girl. There was a family named Parsons in her hometown that preached and practiced forgiveness. On one occasion, Josephine and some of her third-grade friends put a handful of pencil shavings into the Parsons girl's sandwich, just to be mean and to make her mad. But she didn't get mad. Instead, the next day, without any sign of repentance from her persecutors, the Parsons girl brought everyone in the class a large, beautiful, hand-decorated cookie that said, "Jesus loves you." With her mother's help, that little girl blessed her persecutors, and those third graders remembered it for the rest of their lives! ("Your Daffodils are Pretty," Christianity Today [3/2/1979], p. 18)

You may wonder whether the New Testament is commanding total pacifism in the face of aggressors. Is it wrong to defend yourself against a bully or an intruder or robber? Is there a place for praying the imprecatory psalms against our persecutors, calling down the judgment of God on them? I can only comment briefly. My understanding is that there is a rightful place for defending your family or your own person from a violent aggressor. If possible, call the police and let them defend you. But if there is not time, it is not wrong to protect yourself or your family against a lawbreaker. But you should use the least amount of force necessary to restrain him and you should not seek to retaliate later.

Regarding the imprecatory psalms, it is important to realize that they were judicial and national, rather than personal cries for vengeance. On a personal level, David often refrained from taking vengeance on his enemies. But as the king over God's people, David was crying out for God to bring justice on evildoers. Also, they reflect the fact that one day Christ will bring judgment on all who do not repent. When we pray for God's kingdom to come, we are praying that He will either save or judge the wicked. So an appropriate prayer for those who have persecuted us may be, "Lord, would You please save him, but if not, I know that You will judge him righteously." The transformed attitude that we are to reflect is: because God was merciful to me while I was His enemy, I need to bless those who have treated me wrongfully. ([Transformed Attitudes Romans 12:14-16](#))

**Romans 12:15** [Rejoice \(PAN\)](#) with those who [rejoice \(PAPMPG\)](#), and [weep \(PAN\)](#) with those who [weep \(PAPMPG\)](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [chairein](#) (PAN) [meta chaironton](#), (PAPMPN) [klaiein](#) (PAN) [meta klaionton](#). (PAPMPN)

**Amplified:** Rejoice with those who rejoice [sharing others' joy], and weep with those who weep [sharing others' grief]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Share the happiness of those who are happy, the sorrow of those who are sad. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Be rejoicing with those who are rejoicing, and be weeping with those who are weeping ([Eerdmans](#))

**Young's Literal:** to rejoice with the rejoicing, and to weep with the weeping,

**[REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE:](#)** [chairein](#) ( [PAN](#)) [meta chaironton](#) ([PAPMPG](#) )

- Isaiah 66:10, 11, 12, 13, 14; Luke 1:58; 15:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Acts 11:23; 1 Corinthians 12:26; 2 Corinthians 2:3; Philippians 2:17,18,28)

While **rejoice** is not a command in Greek, it comes across with the sense of a command, as indeed effusive joy should be the lifestyle of all believers (At least that is our potential in Christ!). How? What is the fruit of the Spirit? If joy is the fruit (Gal 5:22-note), it follows that the only way for a believer to give verbal expression of that joy (especially that which is independent of one's circumstances) is by being continually filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18-note), that we might continually walk (conduct, behave) by the same Spirit, and not act according to the desires of our fallen flesh (Gal 5:16-note).

**Denney** - The infinites (**rejoice... rejoice** - both present infinitives) give the expression the character of a watchword. To weep with those that weep is easier than to rejoice with those who rejoice. Those who rejoice neither need, expect, nor feel grateful for sympathy in the same degree as those who weep. ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Hodge** - Love produces not only the forgiveness of enemies, but a general sympathy in the joys and sorrows of our fellow men, and especially of our fellow Christians. The disposition here enjoined is the very opposite of a selfish indifference to any interests but our own. The gospel requires that we should feel and act under the impression that all men are brethren; that we have a common nature, a common Father, and a common destiny. How lovely is genuine sympathy. How much like Christ is the man who feels the sorrows and joys of others, as though they were his own! ([Romans 12 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))



**Ray Stedman** - True love adjusts to other people's moods: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." When somebody in your office is feeling low and gloomy, don't come in and sit down and whistle away. When they obviously don't respond, don't say, "What's the matter with you? How come you're so down all the time? Why don't you be cheerful like me?" There is nothing worse than a cheerful person when something has gone wrong for you. No, Paul says, adjust yourself. Mourn with those who mourn, and rejoice with those who rejoice. I think he puts rejoicing first because that is so hard to do sometimes -- especially if it awakens our envy or self-pity. If there is something someone else has achieved that we think we ought to have, it is hard to go up to that person and say, "I'm so glad for you." But that is what love does, and it is possible to do it -- for those who walk in the Spirit. ([Romans 12 - Ray C. Stedman](#))

**William Newell** - Now here is a verse that takes us out of ourselves. The literal rendering is, Rejoice with rejoicing ones, and weep with weeping ones. Believers, of course, are especially meant in both cases. There will always be some that are weeping. Blessed is he who, like the Lord at Lazarus' grave, can enter into others' sorrow even unto tears! "Alas, there is such a phenomenon, not altogether rare, as a life whose self-surrender, in some main aspects, cannot be doubted, but which utterly fails in sympathy. A certain spiritual exaltation is allowed actually to harden, or at least to seem to harden, the consecrated heart; and the man who perhaps witnesses for God with a prophet's ardor is yet not one to whom the mourner would go for tears and prayers in his bereavement, or the child for a perfectly human smile in his play. As to the Lord Himself, the little child, the wistful parent, the widow with her mite, the poor fallen woman of the street, could lead away his blessed sympathies with a touch"--Moule. ([Romans 12 - Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

I like **Webster's definition** of **rejoice** as "to give joy to"! **Does your presence in the room bring joy to others? I hope you are convicted because I am! Rejoice** continually (present tense) - only possible when we are "drunk with," filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

**Rejoice** ([5463](#)) (**chairō**) means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off. **Chairō** implies and imparts joy. **Chairō** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. To be in a state of happiness and well being (often independent of what is happening when the Source is the Spirit!). **Chairō** means to enjoy a state of gladness, to be delighted.

Several Greek lexicons (Zodhiates, Liddell-Scott, et al) associate the origin of **chairō** with **charis** or grace as follows - **Chairō** is from the root **char-**, "favorably disposed, leaning towards" and cognate with **charís**, "grace" and so properly means to delight in God's grace ("rejoice") and literally, to experience God's grace (favor) or be conscious (glad) for His grace. It follows that rejoicing ("glad by grace") is principally internal and eternal because it depends only on grace. In contrast, "happiness" is external and temporal (requiring pleasant "happenings"). Thus **Zodhiates** writes "The word **charis** is related to **chairō**, to rejoice, and **chara**, joy, delight, the result of the activity of the grace of God in man."

**Chairō** was used in greetings (welcome, good day, hail to you, I am glad to see you) in the imperative mood implying a wish for well being or happiness to the recipient (Mt 26:49). **Chairō** is used in the introduction to a letter (Ac 15:23; 23:26; James 1:1). **Chairō** is translated "**Hail!**" several times in the Gospels (Mt 26:49, 27:29, Mk 15:18, Lk 1:27).

**TDNT** - **chairō** means "to rejoice," "to be merry." **chaire** serves as a morning greeting. It is above all a greeting to the gods and is a stereotyped ending to hymns. The verb is also an epistolary formula in greetings from sender to recipient.

**Stephen Renner** on **chairō** - Predominant in the usage of **chairō** is the focus on rejoicing over the redemptive deeds of God that come to fruition in the gospel in the person of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. A general feeling of delight and well-being is noted, for example, in Lk 23: 8; Jn 3:29; Ro 12:15. Rejoicing at God's fulfillment of his promise to provide a messianic deliverer for his people is noted in Mt 2:10 (the reaction of the magi at seeing the divinely-guided star); in Jn 8:56 (Jesus' claim that Abraham rejoiced at seeing his day); and in Lk 1:14. Frequently, joy is expressed at the prospect of heaven and eternal life (cf. Mt 5:12; Lk 6:23; Jn 4:36; Ro 12:12). Delight in God's goodness to his people is noted (Acts 11:23; Ro 16:19; 2Co. 7: 7), as is joy in the faithfulness of believers (Col. 2: 5; 1Th. 3: 9; 2Jo. 1: 4; 3Jo. 1: 3). As a corollary to this, rejoicing in the repentance of sinners is described in 2Co. 7: 9. In Acts 8:39; 13:48; Rev. 19: 7, salvation is the focus of people's delight. Paul declares in 1Co. 13: 6 that love rejoices in righteousness, and he rejoices at the spread of the gospel in Php. 1:18. Joy is found even in traumatic circumstances — for example, in Acts 5:41; Col. 1:24; 1Pe. 4:13, which contain evidence of joy experienced in the midst of persecution on account of the gospel, as well as an exhortation to so rejoice. Similarly, 2Co. 6:10 records the apostle Paul's joy in the midst of sorrow. Regarding the person and work of Christ, the joy of the Jewish people in witnessing the miracles of Jesus is noted (cf. Lk 13:17; 19:37). The disciples rejoice at the Lord's resurrection in Jn 20:20. The apostle Paul exhorts his readers to rejoice in the Lord in Php. 3: 1; 4:4, 10. In the parable depicting the immeasurable value of the kingdom of God, joy is expressed in the discovery of the lost sheep, a symbol of that infinite value (cf. Mt 18:13; Lk 15: 5). In a number of negative contexts, wicked people express an evil delight — for example, those who are anticipating the destruction of Jesus Christ through his betrayal at the hands of Judas (cf. Mk 14:11; Lk 22: 5). And in Rev. 11:10 the wicked rejoice over the death of the two prophets. **Chara** [5479] is the noun derived from **chairō**. It occurs



around sixty times and is consistently translated "joy," "gladness." The range of contexts is quite similar to that of **chairō**. (Expository Dictionary Of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words - Stephen D. Renn)

**Wayne Detzler** - The Greek dramatist Aeschylus (525-456 BC) concluded, "Joy [is] a beauteous spark divine." To ancient Greeks it was a greeting, a wish for the happiness of one's friend. It was also the object of fellowship, as seen in the festal joy of religion. Greeks spoke, as we do, of "tears of joy." Homer saw joy as being rooted in human passions, as we may "feel" joyful. On the other hand, the Stoics (who are mentioned in Acts 17:18) were a sour bunch of Greek philosophers. They had no room for joy, which they regarded as a false judgment of reality. If you felt joyful, you must be ignorant of the facts! (Most of us know people like that.) The Greek Old Testament made much of joy. It referred to weddings as joyful feasts. Joy also characterized Israel when they had a great military victory, and joy was part of the true worship of God... **Chairō** the word "gladness" or "joy" is full of meaning for a Christian. The reason is not just cultural, because many Greeks used the word to greet people. For a Christian there is a true Source of joy, none other than the Lord Himself. (New Testament Words in Today's Language)

"It is no accident that the words appear particularly where there is express mention of the eschatological fulfilment in Christ, of being in him, and of hope in him. But it ought not to be overlooked that the whole NT message as the proclamation of God's saving work in Christ is a message of joy." (Beyreuther)

H. W. Webb-Peploe. In speaking of joy he said: "Joy is not gush; joy is not jolliness. Joy is perfect acquiescence in God's will because the soul delights itself in God Himself."

**Luke** uses **chairō** most often of all the NT writers (20 in the Gospel of Luke and 11 in Acts). The most concentrated use of **chairō** by far however is found in Paul's epistle to the Philippians (14x).

**Vine's** discussion of **chairō** ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#)) - "to rejoice," is most frequently so translated. As to this verb, the following are grounds and occasions for "rejoicing," on the part of believers...

- in the Lord, Php 3:1; 4:4 ;
- His incarnation, Lk 1:14;
- His power, Luke 13:17
- His presence with the Father, Jn 14:28
- His presence with them, Jn 16:22 ; 20:20
- His ultimate triumph, Jn 8:56
- hearing the gospel, Acts 13:48
- their salvation, Acts 8:39
- receiving the Lord, Lk 19:6
- their enrollment in Heaven, Lk 10:20
- their liberty in Christ, Acts 15:31
- their hope, Ro 12:12 (cp. Ro 5:2 ; Rev 19:7)
- their prospect of reward, Mt 5:12
- the proclamation of Christ, Php 1:18
- the gospel harvest, Jn 4:36
- suffering with Christ, Acts 5:41 1Pe 4:13
- suffering in the cause of the gospel, 2Cor 13:9 Php 2:17 Col 1:24
- in persecutions, trials and afflictions, Mt 5:12 ; Lk 6:23 2Cor 6:10
- the manifestation of grace, Acts 11:23
- meeting with fellow believers, 1Cor 16:17 Php 2:28
- receiving tokens of love and fellowship, Php 4:10
- the "rejoicing" of others, Ro 12:15 ; 2Cor 7:13
- learning of the well-being of others, 2Cor 7:16
- obedience & godly conduct of fellow believers-Ro 16:19 2Co 7:7,9,13:9 Col 2:5 1Th 3:9 2Jn 1:4 3Jn 1:3

#### BELOW ARE ALL OF VINE'S ENTRIES FOR CHAIRO (THERE IS CLEARLY SOME REPETITION)

See **FAREWELL** ("to joy, rejoice, be glad," is used in the imperative mood in salutations, (a) on meeting, "Hail," e.g., Matthew 26:49 ; or with *legō*, "to say, to give a greeting," 2 John 1:11 ; in letters, "greeting," e.g., Acts 15:23 ; (b) at parting, the underlying thought being joy, 2 Corinthians 13:11 (RV, marg., "rejoice"); (c) on other occasions, see the RV marg. in Philippians 3:1 ; 4:4 .

See **GLAD** = is the usual word for "rejoicing, being glad;" it is rendered by the verb "to be glad" in Mark 14:11 ; Luke 15:32 ; 22:5 ; 23:8 ; John 8:56 ; 11:15 ; 20:20 ; Acts 11:23 ; 13:48 ; in the following the RV has "to rejoice"

for AV, "to be glad," Romans 16:19 ; 1 Corinthians 16:17 ; 2 Corinthians 13:9 ; 1 Peter 4:13 ; Revelation 19:7 .

See **HAIL** = "to rejoice," is used in the imperative mood, **(a) as a salutation**, only in the Gospels; in this respect it is rendered simply "hail," in mockery of Christ, Matthew 26:49 ; 27:29 ; Mark 15:18 ; John 19:3 ; **(b) as a greeting**, by the angel Gabriel to Mary, Luke 1:28 , and, in the plural, by the Lord to the disciples after His resurrection, Matthew 28:9 .

See **JOY** = "**to rejoice, be glad**," is translated "joyfully" in Luke 19:6 , lit., "rejoicing;" "we joyed," 2Corinthians 7:13 ; "I joy," Philippians 2:17 ; "do ye joy," Philippians 2:18 ; "joying," Colossians 2:5 ; "we joy," 1Thessalonians 3:9 . It is contrasted with weeping and sorrow, e.g., in John 16:20,22 ; Romans 12:15 ; 1Corinthians 7:30 (cp. Ps 30:5 ).

See **GREETING** = "to rejoice," is thrice used as a **formula of salutation** in Acts 15:23, "send greeting," "greeting;" so Acts 23:26 ; James 1:1. In 2John 1:10,11 , the RV substitutes the phrase (to give) "greeting," for the AV (to bid) "God speed."

**NIDNTT** - chairō, to be glad, rejoice (related to the Sanskrit haryati, to take pleasure in, and the Old High German geron, to desire), and chara, joy, are attested from Homer onwards. chairein epi (also dia, en, peri) means to rejoice over someone or something. The reason for the joy is introduced with hoti (that) or appears in a participial form. The pres. imperative frequently occurs in the greeting chaire (sing.), chairete (plur.), "Hail!" At the opening of a letter in the infin. chairein, is often used in which case the vb. legei has to be supplied (cf. Funk § 480): "[... says] greetings!" The same formula is used in drinking a toast, "Good health!", and at parting, "Farewell!" The phrases chairein charan megalēn (be filled with intense joy) and chara chairein (rejoice greatly), which occur in the NT, doubtless go back to OT influence (Matt. 2:10; cf. Jon. 4:6; Jn. 3:29; cf. Isa. 66:10). chara denotes both the state and the object of the joy. Also to be noted is the etymological connection with charis (grace) which has not always been clearly distinguished in meaning from chara.

**Rejoice** (Webster's definition of our English word) - **Transitive verb** = To give joy to, To make joyful; to gladden; to animate with lively pleasurable sensations; to exhilarate. **Intransitive verb** = to feel joy or great delight. To experience joy and gladness in a high degree; to be exhilarated with lively and pleasurable sensations; to exult.

**Chairo** - 74 times in 68 verses -- Usage: am glad (1), glad (7), gladly (1), greeted\* (1), greeting (2), greetings (4), hail (4), joyfully (1), make (1), rejoice (33), rejoiced (8), rejoices (2), rejoicing (10).

Matthew 2:10 When they saw the star, they **rejoiced** exceedingly with great joy.

Matthew 5:12-note **"Rejoice"** (chairo) and **be glad** (agalliao) for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 18:13 "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he **rejoices** over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

Matthew 26:49 Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, "**Hail**, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

Matthew 27:29 And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "**Hail**, King of the Jews!"

Matthew 28:9 And behold, Jesus met them and **greeted** them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.

Mark 14:11 They were **glad** when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

Mark 15:18 and they began to acclaim Him, "**Hail**, King of the Jews!"

Luke 1:14 "You will have joy and gladness, and many will **rejoice** at his birth.

28 And coming in, he said to her, "**Greetings**, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Luke 6:23 **"Be glad** in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Luke 10:20 "Nevertheless do not **rejoice** in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

Luke 13:17 As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was **rejoicing** over all the glorious things being done by Him.

Luke 15:5 "When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, **rejoicing**.

Luke 15:32 'But we had to celebrate and **rejoice**, for this brother (prodigal son) of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found."

Luke 19:6 And he hurried and came down and received Him **gladly**.

37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God **joyfully** with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,

Luke 22:5 They were **glad** and agreed to give him money.

**Comment:** Evil rejoicing!

Luke 23:8 Now Herod was very **glad** when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.

**Comment:** Evil rejoicing!

John 3:29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, **rejoices** greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

John 4:36 "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may **rejoice** together.

John 8:56 "Your father Abraham **rejoiced** to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

John 11:15 and I am **glad** for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."

John 14:28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have **rejoiced** because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

John 16:20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world **will rejoice**; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.

22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart **will rejoice**, and no one will take your joy away from you.

John 19:3 and they began to come up to Him and say, '**Hail**, King of the Jews!" and to give Him slaps in the face.

John 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then **rejoiced** when they saw the Lord.

Acts 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, **rejoicing** that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Acts 8:39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way **rejoicing**.

Acts 11:23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he **rejoiced** and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord;

Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began **rejoicing** and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 15:23 and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, **greetings**.

31 When they had read it, they **rejoiced** because of its encouragement.

Acts 23:26 "Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, **greetings**.

Romans 12:12 **rejoicing** in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

15 Rejoice with those who **rejoice**, and weep with those who weep.

Romans 16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am **rejoicing** over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

1 Corinthians 7:30 and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who **rejoice**, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess;

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not **rejoice** in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1 Corinthians 16:17 I **rejoice** over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part.

2 Corinthians 2:3 This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me **rejoice**; having confidence in you all that my joy would be the joy of you all.

2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful yet always **rejoicing**, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 7:7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I **rejoiced** even more.

9 I now **rejoice**, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we **rejoiced** even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

16 I **rejoice** that in everything I have confidence in you.

2 Corinthians 13:9 For we **rejoice** when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.

11 Finally, brethren, **rejoice**, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Philippians 1:18-note What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I **rejoice**. Yes, and I will **rejoice**,

Philippians 2:17-note But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I **rejoice** and share my joy with you all. 18 You too, I urge you, **rejoice** in the same way and share your joy with me.

Philippians 2:28-note Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may **rejoice** and I may be less concerned about you.

Philippians 3:1-note Finally, my brethren, **rejoice** in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

Philippians 4:4-note Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, **rejoice**!

Philippians 4:10-note But I **rejoiced** in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

Colossians 1:24-note Now I **rejoice** in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

**Comment:** Verses such as this one clearly show that Christian rejoicing is not natural but supernatural. Who rejoices in prison? Paul filled with the Spirit (cf Paul and Silas Acts 16:25!)

Colossians 2:5-note For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, **rejoicing** to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3:9-note For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we **rejoice** before our God on your account,

1 Thessalonians 5:16-note **Rejoice** always;

James 1:1-note James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: **Greetings**.

1 Peter 4:13-note but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

2 John 1:4 I was very **glad** to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not **give** him a **greeting** (KJV = "God speed" - means essentially "good cheer!" It is any expression of fellowship and good will, and should not be used to encourage a false teacher);

11 for the one who **gives** him a **greeting** participates in his evil deeds.

3 John 1:3 For I was very **glad** when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.

Revelation 11:10-[note](#) And those who dwell on the earth will **rejoice** over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

**Comment:** Here we see unregenerate [earth dwellers](#) rejoicing, but their joy is dependent (not independent) of circumstances (the murder of the two witnesses who railed against them). Their rejoicing will soon be turned to cries of fear and despair for having rejected so great a salvation in Christ!

Revelation 19:7-[note](#) "Let us **rejoice** and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

**Comment:** Let us practice rejoicing now on earth so that we are prepared for that glorious day in heaven when we shall rejoice in His very presence! C. S. Lewis wrote, "Joy is the serious business of heaven."

**Chairo** - 39 verses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Ge 45:16; Ex 4:14, 31; 1Sa 19:5; 1Kgs 4:20; 5:7; 8:66; 2Ki 11:14, 20; 20:13; Esther 8:12, 15; Ps 96:12; Pr 2:14; 6:16; 17:19; 23:25; 24:19; Isa 13:3; 39:2; 48:22; 57:21; 66:10, 14; Jer 7:34; 31:13; Lam 1:21; 4:21; Ezek 7:12; Hos 9:1; Joel 2:21, 23; Jonah 4:6; Hab 1:15; 3:18; Zeph 3:14; Zech 4:10; 9:9; 10:7.

Here is the only use of **chairo** in the Psalms...

Ps 96:12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy

In Isaiah we find chairo used in the context of God fulfilling His prophetic promises to Israel when the nation returns to the Lord and He returns the land and the city to them...

Isaiah 66:10 "Be joyful (Lxx = euphraino) with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; Be **exceedingly glad** (Lxx has two related words - chairo chara ~ I would paraphrase as "rejoice with joy") with her, all you who mourn over her,

Isaiah 66:14 Then (context - Isa 66:11-13) you will see this, and your heart **will be glad** (Lxx = chairo), And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies.

Again in the context of God fulfilling His promises to Israel...

Zeph 3:14 (context Zeph 3:11-13) **Shout for joy** (Lxx = chairo), O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

**George Fox**, the great Quaker, recorded this prayer in his diary: "I prayed to God that He would baptize my heart into all conditions so I might be able to enter the needs and conditions of all."

At first thought, that principle would seem easy to follow. But when another person's blessing and happiness is at our expense, or when their favored circumstances or notable accomplishments make ours seem barren and dull, the flesh does not lead us to rejoice but tempts us to resent.

**A sorrow shared is  
But half a trouble.  
A joy that's shared is  
A joy made double.**

Paul exhorts us to be considerate of the feelings of others instead of waiting for them to be considerate of our feelings. Because believers are a body, when one part hurts, everyone feels the pain & conversely when one is joyful, should rejoice. (1Co 12:25, 26). Empathy is the capacity for sharing vicariously the feelings and emotions of others. Our tendency even as believers is to be jealous when others rejoice, and to pass them by when they mourn. God's will is that His children become a family where the joys of one become the joys of all and the pain of one is gladly shared by all the others. The elder brother in the account of the prodigal son provides a clear example of the failure to join in rejoicing (Lk 15:25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32). On the other hand, the Gospels

record that upon meeting Mary following the death of her brother, "Jesus wept" (Jn 11:35).

**Wayne Barber** comments on this section...

Could we all be honest? If you would just get flat out honest, that is the way it is. Flesh (Ed note: our old self or old man, our nature inherited from Adam) doesn't rejoice. If somebody in your church whom you know real well inherited a million dollars, could you say, "I am so happy for you"? No, you walk away saying, "God, how come it is him? How come it couldn't be me?" You see, we can't rejoice. Only when God the Holy Spirit is in charge of us can we rejoice when they rejoice. That is the key, not the weeping, but the rejoicing.

But that is not what he is talking about here. I don't believe that has a thing to do with it. I think it is certainly involved in the truth, but he has not left the theme of persecution. He says, "Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice." Now there is a rejoicing and there is a weeping when people go through persecution. We have to understand that.

Look in Acts 5:41 at people together rejoicing because of persecution. You begin to understand the honor of being persecuted. We dread it. Oh, no. We need to look forward to the fact that God exalts us in persecution. He is exalted in persecution, but He is honoring us because He is trusting us by our walk.

"So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name."

Now look at Romans 5:3 (see notes on Romans 5:3). We have looked at this before, but I want you to see it now. Romans 5:3 says the same thing. There is a rejoicing in this. Yes, there is a weeping. It is a two-sided coin. On one side we are weeping because it is painful and it is difficult. On the other side there is a reason that we can rejoice with one another.

"And not only this," it says, "but we also exult in our tribulations," we rejoice in our tribulations, "knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance... hope does not disappoint."

We know those verses. Paul is saying when you go through a trial, God the Holy Spirit begins to show you the honor of going through it. But you also begin to experience and feel the pain of having to go through it. Do you realize when somebody persecutes you, they have honored you and deemed you worthy to be dishonored and shamed for the cause of Christ? We look at it exactly the opposite, but God looks at it this way. Whenever I am being persecuted, I ought to back off and say, "Thank you, God. Thank you, God. Something is going right in my life. And the Christ in me, being manifested in His love through me, is drawing persecution from the world. They can't stand it. They fight against it. Somehow our walk has been deemed worthy so that we might be disapproved and put to shame for the cause of Christ."

But there is also that weeping with others as they weep. There is a weeping and there is a rejoicing that the family of God shares together as they live godly lives, surrendered to the Holy Spirit of God, letting God be who He is in their life.

It is a beautiful picture here, an attitude of understanding each other, an attitude of joining hands and saying, "Okay, man, I am praying for you. You pray for me. I weep with you and you weep with me." But we will all rejoice together when our walk is such that persecution is what is effected and caused because of it. That is the key.

Now, in order for that to happen there is something that God the Holy Spirit does in me and in you. It takes me off the pedestal and puts me down where I belong. All of a sudden down here, I begin to see people who are hurting everywhere. Remember this, I am not always being persecuted, but somebody is. It makes me aware of it because I may be next. There is no time out when I can start thinking about Wayne. We are always considering those who are going through it because, as I said, we may be next. (from sermon Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7)

In an illustration from the sports world we read about Rickey Henderson breaking Lou Brock's stolen base record...

New Record - Forty thousand fans were on hand in the Oakland stadium when Rickey Henderson tied Lou Brock's career stolen base record. According to USA Today Lou, who had left baseball in 1979, had followed Henderson's career and was excited about his success. Realizing that Rickey would set a new record, Brock said, "I'll be there. Do you think I'm going to miss it now? Rickey did in 12 years what took me 19. He's amazing."

The real success stories in life are with people who can rejoice in the successes of others. What Lou Brock did

in cheering on Rickey Henderson should be a way of life in the family of God. Few circumstances give us a better opportunity to exhibit God's grace than when someone succeeds and surpasses us in an area of our own strength and reputation. (Our Daily Bread)

From the world of literature comes the following negative illustration...

Irish novelist and playwright Samuel Beckett received great recognition for his work—but not everyone savored his accomplishments. Beckett's marriage, in fact, was soured by his wife's jealousy of his growing fame and success as a writer. One day in 1969 his wife Suzanne answered the telephone, listened for a moment, spoke briefly, and hung up. She then turned to Beckett and with a stricken look whispered, "What a catastrophe!" Was it a devastating personal tragedy? No, she had just learned that Beckett had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature! (Today in the Word)

#### AND WEEP WITH THOSE WHO WEEP: *klaiein* (PAN) *meta klaionton* (PAPMPG)

- Nehemiah 1:4; Job 2:11; Psalms 35:13,14; Jeremiah 9:1; John 11:19,33, 34, 35, 36; 2 Corinthians 11:29; Philippians 2:26; Hebrews 13:3)

**Barclay** - There are few bonds like that of a common sorrow. A writer tells of the saying of an American negro woman. A lady in Charleston met the negro servant of a neighbour. "I'm sorry to hear of your Aunt Lucy's death," she said. "You must miss her greatly. You were such friends." "Yes'm," said the servant, "I is sorry she died. But we wasn't no friends." "Why," said the lady, "I thought you were. I've seen you laughing and talking together lots of times." "Yes'm. That's so," came the reply. "We've laughed together, and we've talked together, but we is just 'quaintances. You see, Miss Ruth, we ain't never shed no tears. Folks got to cry together before dey is friends." The bond of tears is the strongest of all. And yet it is much easier to weep with those who weep than it is to rejoice with those who rejoice. Long ago **Chrysostom** wrote on this passage: *"It requires more of a high Christian temper to rejoice with them that do rejoice than to weep with them that weep. For this nature itself fulfils perfectly; and thee is none so hard-hearted as not to weep over him that is in calamity; but the other requires a very noble soul, so as not only to keep from envying, but even to feel pleasure with the person who is in esteem."* It is., indeed, more difficult to congratulate another on his success, especially if his success involves disappointment to us, than it is to sympathize with his sorrow and his loss. It is only when self is dead that we can take as much joy in the success of others as in our own. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Weep** (2799) (*klaio*) describes crying or wailing with emphasis upon the noise accompanying weeping. The word can imply not only shedding of tears, also is an external manifestation of grief. *Klaio* can also mean to wail or lament over someone or some thing (Mt 2:18, Re 18:9)

**Klaio** is used 40 times in the NT -- Mt 2:18; 26:75; Mk. 5:38, 39; 14:72; 16:10; Lk. 6:21, 25; 7:13, 32, 38; 8:52; 19:41; 22:62; 23:28; Jn. 11:31, 33; 16:20; 20:11, 13, 15; Acts 9:39; 21:13; Ro 12:15; 1Co 7:30; Phil. 3:18; James. 4:9; 5:1; Re 5:4, 5; 18:9, 11, 15, 19

While it is in one sense easier to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that rejoice, as Chrysostom observed, it is natural to sympathize with sorrow, but it requires a noble soul to rejoice in the joy of others.

The Lord Jesus had a **healing** ministry. With the help of the Holy Spirit and with a compassionate and understanding heart, we can have a **hearing** ministry!

Giv me a heart sympathetic and tender,  
Jesus, like Thine, Jesus, like Thine;  
Touched by the needs that are surging around me, <  
Filled with compassion divine. --Anon.

In a world that couldn't care less, we should care more.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Paul reminded them that they must enter into the feelings of others. Christian fellowship is much more than a pat on the back and a handshake. It means sharing the burdens and the blessings of others so that we all grow together and glorify the Lord. If Christians cannot get along with one another, how can they ever face their enemies? ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

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**Our Daily Bread** - A story is told about a little boy with a big heart. His next-door neighbor was an older gentleman whose wife had recently died. When the youngster saw the elderly man crying, he climbed up onto his lap and simply sat there.



Later, his mother asked the boy what he had said to their saddened neighbor. "Nothing," the child replied. "I just helped him cry."

Sometimes that is the best thing we can do for people who are facing profound sorrow. Often, our attempts to say something wise and helpful are far less valuable than just sitting next to the bereaved ones, holding their hand, and crying with them.

One of the ways we can help our fellow believers is to "weep with those who weep" (Ro 12:15). Jesus demonstrated that principle when He visited Mary and Martha after Lazarus died. Sensing the depths of Mary's despair over her brother Lazarus' death, Jesus shared her grief by weeping (Jn 11:35). Bystanders took note and said, "See how He loved him!" (v.36).

Sometimes the best thing we can do for those who are traveling life's most sad and lonely road is to "help them cry." Jesus showed us that it's important to share another's tears. Is there anyone who needs your tears today? —J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread](#))

A heartfelt tear can show our love  
As words can never do;  
It says, "I want to share your pain—  
My heart goes out to you." —DJD

A sorrow shared is a sorrow halved. —Shakespeare  
(See also [How Can I Live with My Loss](#))

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From the way Job's friends tried to console him, we learn a basic principle about giving comfort to others in their suffering: A comforter's ability to help is not so much his talent for using words as it is his capacity to be sympathetic. That's the type of understanding Job longed for when his friends began trying to correct him.

Dr. Paul Brand has beautifully expressed this truth in his book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. He writes: "When I ask patients and their families, 'Who helped you in your suffering?' I hear a strange, imprecise answer. The person described rarely has smooth answers and a winsome, effervescent personality. It is someone quiet, understanding, who listens more than talks, who does not judge or even offer much advice. 'A sense of patience.' 'Someone there when I needed him.' A hand to hold. An understanding, bewildered hug. A shared lump in the throat."

Sometimes, in trying so hard to say the right thing, we forget that the language of feeling speaks much louder than our words. There are times when the best thing we can do is "weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).

Helping others in distress begins when we share their pain (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). —M R De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread](#))

Lord, keep me merciful and kind,  
With You, O Christ, first in my mind;  
Teach me to feel another's woe,  
And mercy to all people show. —Brandt

**Sympathy is two hearts tugging at one load.**

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The American Hospice Foundation says that bereaved people tend to keep their grieving a secret in the workplace. Many of us have grown up with the idea that sorrow should be overcome quickly. What often happens is that we deny our pain, bottle it up inside, and try to go it alone. A sign that reads "No Grieving Allowed" might as well be posted on the walls at work.

Unfortunately, this same dangerous attitude can invade our homes and communities of faith as well. Grieving presents a dilemma for many Christians. When we feel the deep pain of loss, we often hide it, believing we should be outwardly joyful no matter what has happened. But notice the words of Acts 8:2. Luke wrote that after Stephen was stoned to death by an angry mob, godly men buried him and "made great lamentation over him." Godly men crying and mourning deeply may seem contradictory to some, but the Bible states it plainly in all its emotional impact.

The Lord never asks us to ignore the pain in our hearts. Instead, He calls us to "weep with those who weep" (Ro 12:15). We are to love and support one another as we move together through the process of grieving. --D C McCasland

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**Dave Branon writes:** Following the death of our 17-year-old daughter in a car accident in June 2002, each member of our family handled the loss differently. For my wife, among the most helpful sources of comfort were visits from moms who had also lost a child in an accident. Sue found strength in their stories, and she wanted them to tell her how God had been faithful in their lives, despite the deep sorrow that comes with losing a precious child. Soon Sue became part of a circle of compassion, a small group of moms who could weep, pray, and seek God's help together. That cadre of grieving moms formed a bond of empathy and hope that

provided encouragement in the face of her daily sorrow. Each person grieves uniquely, yet we all need to share our hearts, our burdens, our questions, and our sadness with someone else. That's why it's vital that we find others with whom to discuss our pain and sorrow. In our relationship with Christ, we find encouragement, consolation, love, fellowship, affection, and mercy (Philippians 2:1). God comforts us so that we can comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:4). So let's "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). Then others will find a circle of compassion too." ([Our Daily Bread](#))

A heartfelt tear can show our love  
As words can never do;  
It says, "I want to share your pain—  
My heart goes out to you." —D. De Haan

### **We must learn to weep before we can dry another's tears.**

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**Steven Cole** - The mercies of God call us to sympathize with others. Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." This command is not as difficult as verse 14, but still it isn't necessarily easy, because it requires self-denial. To enter sincerely into others' joys and sorrows, you have to take the focus off yourself. You have to tune in and really listen to what they are saying, both verbally and non-verbally. You have to take the time to understand what they are going through.

To rejoice with those who rejoice sounds easy, but it's often difficult. Chrysostom thought that Paul put it first because it is the more difficult of the two commands. We naturally weep with those who weep, but envy, pride, and a spirit of competition can keep us from rejoicing with those who rejoice. If you think that you deserved the success or blessings that they are enjoying, it takes selflessness and grace to truly rejoice with them. Self is always the major problem that we must battle.

But it's not easy, either, to weep with those who weep. We feel the need to say something wise or appropriate, but we often end up saying something that we shouldn't say. Job's three friends did well when they sat silently with him for a week. They got into trouble when they tried to explain to him why he was suffering. Fewer words are usually better and wiser. Paul doesn't say, "Counsel those who weep," but "Weep with those who weep."

A little girl lost a playmate in death. One day she told her parents that she had gone to comfort the grieving mother. "What did you say?" her parents asked. "Nothing," she replied. "I just climbed up on her lap and cried with her." She was a wise comforter!

Joseph Bayly and his wife lost three of their seven children in death. He wrote (The Last Thing We Talk About [David C. Cook], pp. 55-56), "I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God's dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly. He said things I knew were true.

"I was unmoved, except to wish he'd go away. He finally did.

"Another came and sat beside me. He didn't talk. He didn't ask me leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour and more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, left.

"I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go."

The mercies of God call us to sympathize with others in both their joys and their sorrows ([Transformed Attitudes Romans 12:14-16](#))

**Romans 12:16** Be of the [same mind toward one another](#); do not be [haughty](#) in [mind](#), but [associate](#) with the [lowly](#). **Do not be wise** in your [own estimation](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [to auto eis allelous phronountes](#). (PAPMPN) [me ta hupsela phronountes](#) (PAPMPN) [alla tois tapeinois sunapagomenoi](#). (PPMPN) [me ginesthe](#) (2PPMM) [phronimoi par' heautois](#).

**Amplified:** Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty (snobbish, high-minded, exclusive), but readily adjust yourself to [people, things] and give yourselves to humble tasks. Never overestimate yourself or be wise in your own conceits. [[Pr 3:7](#)] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** Live in harmony with each other. Don't try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people.

And don't think you know it all! ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Live in harmony with each other. Don't become snobbish but take a real interest in ordinary people. Don't become set in your own opinions. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** (be) having the same mind towards one another, not setting your mind upon lofty things, but associating yourselves with lowly things and lowly people. Stop being those who are wise in their own opinion. (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** of the same mind one toward another, not minding the high things, but with the lowly going along; become not wise in your own conceit;

#### BE OF THE SAME MIND TOWARD ONE ANOTHER: to auto eis allelous phronountes (PAPMPN):

- Ro 15:5; 6:2; 2 Chronicles 30:12; Jeremiah 32:39; Acts 4:32; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:27; 2:2,3; Philippians 3:16; 4:2; 1 Peter 3:8)

### HARMONY

**Barclay** - We are to live in harmony with one another. It was Nelson who, after one of his great victories, sent back a despatch in which he gave us the reason for it: "I had the happiness to command a band of brothers." It is a band of brothers that any Christian Church should be. Leighton once wrote: "The mode of Church government is unconstrained; but peace and concord, kindness and good will are indispensable." When strife enters into any Christian society, the hope of doing any good work is gone. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Hodge** - 'Be of the same mind,' i.e. be united in feeling, interests, and object, let there be no discord or disagreement. This idea is then amplified in the following clauses; do not be aspiring, but be humble. Ambition and contempt for lowly persons or pursuits, are the states of mind most inconsistent with that union of heart by which all Christians should be united. ([Romans 12 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Denney** - The idea is that of loving unanimity, and the eis allelous (toward one another) points to the active manifestation of this temper in all the mutual relations of Christians. "Let each so enter into the feelings and desires of the other as to be of one mind with him" (Gifford). It is a more abstract expression of the Golden Rule, Matthew 7:12. The negatives which follow introduce explanatory clauses: they forbid what would destroy the unanimity of love. ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Newell** - Let us quote several comments by beloved writers: "Be of one mind amongst yourselves"--Conybeare. "The harmony which proceeds from a common object, common hopes and common desires"--Sanday. "The loving harmony when each in respect to his neighbor has one thought and endeavor"--Meyer. "Aspiring after the same aims, aiming at the same object for one another as for ourselves. Having the same solicitude for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the brother as for one's own"--Godet. "Actuated by a common and well-understood feeling of mutual allowance and kindness"--Alford. Evidently the reference is not to uniformity of thought, but to charity of attitude. ([Romans 12 - Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Mind** ([5426](#)) (**phroneo** from **phren** = mind) means to think, set one's mind or heart upon something and denotes the whole action of the affections and will as well as the reason. To have an opinion with regard to something (1Co 13:11, Acts 28:22, Php 1:7). The give careful attention to something by setting one's mind on it (Ro 12:16, Php 3:19, Col 3:2). To have an attitude or frame of mind and so to be inclined (Php 2:5). The idea is that our thinking leads us thru process of evaluating a situation. The verb **phroneo** is one of those terms which is difficult to render in English because it includes at once thinking and willing."

**Present tense** = continually be of the same mind (only possible by surrendering to and depending on the Spirit's enablement!)

**Phroneo** 29x in the **NT** -- Matt. 16:23; Mk. 8:33; Acts 28:22; Ro 8:5; 12:3, 16; 14:6; 15:5; 1Co 4:6; 13:11; 2Co 13:11; Ga 5:10; Php 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 16, 19; 4:2, 10; Col. 3:2. The NAS renders **phroneo** - adopt a view(1), conceited (1), concern(1), concerned(1), feel(1), have attitude(3), intent on purpose(1), live in harmony(1), mind(4), observes(2), set their minds(2), set your mind(1), setting your mind(2), think(3), views (1).

Paul does not mean to imply that we must see alike on every non-essential issue. He is not speaking so much of **uniformity** of mind as of a **harmony** in our relationships. To be of the same mind is to show equal regard for others which leads to Paul's next 3 exhortations as a natural outflow of this mindset.

Ponder the following illustration: The sequoia trees of California tower as much as 300 feet above the ground. Strangely, these

giants have unusually shallow root systems that reach out in all directions to capture the greatest amount of surface moisture. Their intertwining roots also provide support for each other against the storms. That's why they usually grow in clusters. Seldom will you see a redwood standing alone, because high winds would quickly uproot it!

Believers are to be like spokes in a wheel that converge at the hub - the closer we are to God the closer we come to one another.

**Wayne Barber** comments on this verse...

**Three things** in this verse form a trio. Verse 16 reads, "Be of the same mind toward one another." That's number one. "Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly." That is the second thing. Then thirdly, "Do not be wise in your own estimation." Some people take one piece of this and make a sermon out of it. Oh, no. That is a completed thought right there. **You need three pieces to complete this puzzle.** It is saying essentially the same thing in Romans 12:3 (see notes on [Romans 12:3-6](#)):

"For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think."

Let's look at this little trio. **First** of all, he says to be of the same mind toward one another. Now he is not talking about a harmonious, mutual relationship here. No, not at all. What he is saying is, the first step is, always want for your brother who is going through this what you would want for yourself if you were in his place. That is the key. It starts there. When you see a brother being persecuted, immediately it ought to prick your heart even though you may not be going through it at that time. You may be next and you want to do whatever it is to help him now so that when you go through it, somebody will certainly want to come and help you. You have that attitude,

"I want for you what I would want for myself if I were wearing the shoes you are wearing, if I was going through what you are going through."

The **second** thing even qualifies it more. **Do not be haughty in mind.** Isn't it amazing how, when you are not going through a trial, how you tend to think?

"Whew, I must be doing pretty good right now. There is no persecution in my life. Things are sweet. Everything is going great. Wow! The church is doing good."

You have a tendency to get a little haughty and you don't seem to understand that if you are not in a storm of persecution, then you are about to go into one. You are in between. Because that is what life is about until Jesus comes back. You begin to start seeking those things for yourself, forgetting your brother who is going through that season of persecution. (from sermon Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7) (Bolding added)

**One another** ([240](#)) (**allelon**) means each other and speaks of a mutuality or sharing of sentiments between two persons or groups of persons. **Allelon** is a reciprocal pronoun which denotes that the encouragement and edification is to be a mutual beneficial activity. As each submits, encourages, loves, etc, the other members benefit. This is the God's description and prescription for a body of believers.

**One another** is a common NT phrase (especially in Paul's letters) with most uses relating to the building up of the body of Christ. As such the "**one anothers**" in the NT would make an excellent Sunday School study (or topical sermon series), taking time to meditate on each occurrence, asking whether it is being practiced (in the Spirit-note) in your local church and seeking to excel still more (cp Php 1:9, 10, 11 -notes; 1Th 3:12-note, 1Th 4:1-note, 1Th 4:10-note). Below is a list of the NT uses of **one another** (be sure to check the context for the most accurate interpretation).

Ro 12:10, 16; 13:8; 14:13, 19; 15:5, 7, 14; 16:16; 1Co 6:7; 7:5; 11:33; 12:25; 16:20; 2Co 13:12; Ga 5:13, 15, 26; Ep 4:2, 25, 32; 5:19, 21; Php 2:3; Col 3:9, 13, 16; 1Th 3:12; 4:9, 18; 5:11, 13, 15; 2 Th 1:3; Heb 3:13; 10:24, 25; James 4:11; 5:9, 16; 1Pe 1:22; 4:8, 9, 10; 5:5, 14; 1Jn 1:7; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2Jn 1:5

#### DO NOT BE HAUGHTY IN MIND : me ta hupsela phronountes ( [PAPMPN](#) ):

- Ro 11:20 12:3) (Psalms 131:1,2; Jeremiah 45:5; Matthew 18:1, 2, 3, 4; 20:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28; Luke 4:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 22:24, 25, 26, 27; 1 Peter 5:3; 3 John 1:9; Revelation 13:7,8

not minding the high things, but with the lowly going along (Literal)

Do not aspire to eminence, but willingly adjust yourselves to humble situations. (Berkeley )

Don't become snobbish, but take a real interest in ordinary people (Phillips)

**Barclay** - We are to avoid all pride and snobbishness. We have always to remember that the standards by which the world judges a man are not necessarily the standards by which God judges him. Saintliness has nothing to do with rank, or wealth, or birth. Dr James Black in his own vivid way described a scene in an early Christian congregation. A notable convert has been made. and the great man comes to his first Church service. He enters the room where the service is being held. The Christian leader points to a place. "Will you sit there please?" "But," says the man, "I cannot sit there, for that would be to sit beside my slave." "Will you sit there please?" repeats the leader. "But," says the man, "surely not beside my slave." "Will you sit there please?" repeats the leader once again. And the man at last crosses the room, sits beside his slave, and gives him the kiss of peace. That is what Christianity did; and that is what it alone could do in the Roman Empire. The Christian Church was the only place where master and slave sat side by side. It is still the place where all earthly distinctions are gone, for with God there is no respect of persons. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Denney** - Selfish ambition in the Church is fatal to perfect mutual consideration.

**Stedman** - Don't be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Don't be conceited." That is amplified in these words, "Don't seek high-up people, but associate with ordinary people." When Jesus came to Jerusalem he stayed with Mary and Martha and Lazarus out in the little suburban town of Bethany instead of at the Intercontinental Hotel in Jerusalem. Many of us have been rejoicing over the way President Carter is seeking to manifest this kind of a spirit in his high office. He is spending the night with the ordinary people in little towns in New England and various other places. The whole nation is caught up with the beauty of that kind of approach -- we love it. This is what the apostle enjoins Christians to do. And he suggests that the real reasons for respecting persons, and for name-dropping and that kind of thing, is really personal conceit. "Don't be conceited," he says. "Don't think highly of yourself." That is what makes you always want to be associated with the high-ups. But if you have an honest view of yourself, you know that you are no better than anybody else and therefore you will be willing just to enjoy the ordinary people. And you will find a rich, rich manifestation of love and humanity among them. ([Romans 12 - Ray C. Stedman](#))

**Newell** - This sixteenth verse is in close connection with the spirit of Ro 12:15. It is the spirit of Philippians 2:2-5 : "Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind [not of one opinion, but one heart-intent]; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "**High things**" are a continual temptation. Carefully read here the excellent remarks of **Godet**: "*There frequently forms in the congregations of believers an aristocratic tendency, every one striving by means of the Christian brotherhood to associate with those who, by their gifts or fortune, occupy a higher position. Hence small coteries, animated by a proud spirit, and having for their result chilling exclusiveness. The apostle knows these littlenesses and wishes to prevent them; he recommends the members of the church to attach themselves to all alike, and if they will yield to a preference, to show it rather for the humble.*" **Lay these words well to heart. They are continually needed.** ([Romans 12 - Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Haughty** (5308) ([hupselos](#) from [hupsos/hypsos](#) = height, elevation) literally means high, raised, elevated, lofty and thus is used in the NT to describe a high place (Mt 4:8), a high wall (Rev 21:12) or a high mountain (Mt 17:1, Mk 9:2, Rev 21:10; Lxx = Ge 7:19; Isa 2:14; Ezek. 20:28). In Heb 1:3 (cf Isa 33:5) **hupselos** refers to the (high or lofty) world above, i.e., heaven. In Heb 7:26 **hupselos** is used as a term of comparison to describe Jesus higher than or above (the heavens). **Hupselos** can refer to that which is thought to be of great value (Lk 16:15). In Acts 13:17 an uplifted (literally "high arm") speaks of power.

**Hupselos** can refer to high things, i.e., (figuratively to) high (proud) thoughts. And so in Romans 12:16 Paul is saying "Do not continually think high, lofty or elevated" thoughts about yourself (arrogant, exalted, proud, haughty). In context of the idea of "one another," Paul admonished his readers not to be proud since pride destroys the harmony of the body. **BDAG** adds that **hupselos** in some contexts pertains "to being of high quality, noble, sublime."

**Vine** - Adjective — **hupselos** — "high, lofty," is used (a) naturally, of mountains, Mt 4:8; 17:1 ; Mk 9:2 ; Rev 21:10; of a wall, Rev 21:12 ; (b) figuratively, of the arm of God, Acts 13:17 ; of heaven, "on high," plural, lit., "in high (places)," Heb 1:3 ; (c) metaphorically, Lk 16:15 , RV, "exalted" (AV, "highly esteemed"); Ro 11:20, in the best texts, "high-minded" [lit., "mind (not) high things"]; Ro 12:16. ([High, Highly - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

Here are the 11 uses of **hupselos** in the NT -- The NAS translates hupselos - conceited(1), exalted(1), haughty(1), high (6), highly esteemed (1), uplifted(1).

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very **high** mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

Matthew 17:1 Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a **high** mountain by themselves.

Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a **high** mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

Luke 16:15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is **highly esteemed** among men is detestable in the sight of God.

Acts 13:17 "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an **uplifted** arm He led them out from it.

**Zodhiates:** Symbolically Acts 13:17 ("with a high arm") meaning an arm uplifted as if about to destroy the enemy, thus emblematic of threatening might; Septuagint: Ex. 6:6; Dt. 4:34; Ezek. 20:33, 34 (**Ed:** Anthropomorphic description of God's "outstretched arm") [cf. Ex. 14:8; Nu 33:3]. For the force of the figure see Isa 5:25; 9:11, 12; 14:26.

Romans 11:20-note Quite right, they were broken off (talking about unbelieving Israel that rejected God's provision of righteousness by faith, found not just in the NT but in the OT Genesis 15:6) for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

**Comment:** Paul is saying in essence in Romans 11:20 "Understand, Gentiles, that there are others out here that God is concerned with. Don't just draw the attention to yourself. Don't put yourself up here to where you can't see anybody else."

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Hebrews 1:3-note And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on **high**,

Hebrews 7:26-note For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

Revelation 21:10-note And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and **high** mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

**Comment:** Christ being made higher than the heavens meaning exalted above the heavens (Heb. 7:26 [cf. Eph. 4:10]).

Revelation 21:12-note It had a great and **high** wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

**Hupselos** - 172 verses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint -Gen 7:19, 20; 12:6; 22:2; Ex 6:1, 6; 14:8; 32:11; Num 33:3; Dt 3:5, 24; 4:34; 5:15; 6:21; 7:8, 19; 9:26, 29; 11:2, 30; 12:2; 26:8; 28:52; 32:27; 1 Sam 2:3; 9:2; 1 Kgs 3:2ff; 9:8; 11:7; 12:31f; 13:2, 32f; 14:23; 15:14; 16:28; 22:43; 2 Kgs 12:3; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 17:9ff, 29, 32, 36; 18:4, 22; 21:3; 23:5, 8f, 15, 19f; 2 Chr 1:3; 6:32; 7:21; 11:15; 14:3; 15:17; 17:6; 20:33; 21:11; 27:3; 28:4, 25; 31:1; 32:12; 33:3, 17, 19; 34:3f, 7; Neh 9:25; Job 5:7; 11:8; 22:12; 35:5; 41:34; Ps 18:33; 89:27; 93:4; 99:2; 104:18; 113:4f; 136:12; 138:6; Prov 8:2; 9:3; 10:21; 17:16; 18:19; 25:3; 30:13; Eccl 5:8; 7:8; Isa 2:11ff; 3:16; 5:25; 6:1; 9:9, 12, 17, 21; 10:4, 33f; 12:5; 14:13, 26f; 22:16; 24:4; 26:5, 11; 28:4; 30:25; 32:15; 33:5, 16; 40:9; 45:14; 57:7, 15; Jer 2:20; 3:6; 19:5; 25:30; 27:5; 32:17, 21; 49:16; 51:58; Lam 3:41; Ezek 6:3, 6, 13; 9:2; 17:22, 24; 20:28, 33f, 40; 21:26; 31:3; 34:6, 14; 40:2; Dan 4:10; 8:3; 9:15; Hos 5:8; Hab 3:19; Zeph 1:16

Paul uses **hupselos** combine with phroneo in 1 Timothy 6:17

"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be **conceited (hupselos)** or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."

**Comment:** In this verse the idea is that of a man going through a good season in his life. The stock market went up and he is just doing well! Look out, because when you start patting yourself on the back because you are doing so well, you may have a fall. Wealth is uncertain and you have put your trust in the wrong thing. So don't be **haughty** in your own mind.

Paul is saying here in Romans 12:16 that when you are not going through something difficult, remember that your brother is. And God puts those people on your heart. You don't have to orchestrate this yourself, but when God does put them on your heart, you begin to become concerned for them and God leads you in how you can minister to them.

In refusing to set our mind on high things and in associating with the humble, we simply imitate Jesus and



"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself" (see notes Philippians 2:3, 4)

#### **BUT ASSOCIATE (KJV= "condescend") WITH THE LOWLY: alla tois tapeinois sunapagomenoi (PPMPN):**

- Job 31:13, 14, 15, 16; 36:5; Proverbs 17:5; 19:7,17,22; Matthew 6:25,26; 11:5; 26:11; Luke 6:20; 14:13; Philippians 4:11, 12, 13; 1 Timothy 6:6, 7, 8, 9; Hebrews 13:5; James 2:5,6 )

associating yourselves with lowly things and lowly people (Wuest)

Don't become snobbish, but take a real interest in ordinary people (Phillips)

Does this not describe the essence of our Lord Jesus Christ? Here Paul is instructing us to imitate our Lord's in attitude and then in action!

**Vincent** - According to the original sense, the meaning will be, being led away with lowly things or people; i.e., being drawn into sympathy with them. Farrar suggests letting the lowly lead you by the hand. Meyer, who maintains the neuter, explains: "The lowly things ought to have for the Christian a force of attraction, in virtue of which he yields himself to fellowship with them, and allows himself to be guided by them in the determination of his conduct. Thus Paul felt himself compelled to enter into humble situations." On the other hand, Godet, maintaining the masculine, says: "The reference is to the most indigent and ignorant and least influential in the Church. It is to them the believer ought to feel most drawn. The antipathy felt by the apostle to every sort of spiritual aristocracy, to every caste-distinction within the Church, breaks out again in the last word."

**Newell** - The word rendered "**carried away with**" really means the opposite of its King James rendering "condescend to." The idea of one pardoned sinner's thinking of "condescending" to another! The word really means "to be carried away along with," as has been every Bernard, Assisi, Luther, Zinzendorf, Bunyan, Wesley, Whitefield, Spurgeon, Moody. All the saints filled with the Spirit have found themselves among the lowly of this earth. For that matter, there is not, and never has been, a real assembly of God of wealthy upper class people only! "Not many mighty, not many noble are called." The rich have to come where the poor are to hear the gospel. Once received, the gospel of Christ is the blessed and only real leveler of us all. Beware always of any "religious" movement cultivating the rich! ([Romans 12 - Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Associate with** (4879) (**sunapago** from **sun/syn** = together + **apágo** [B3] = lead or carry away [apo = away]) means literally in passive to be led together and is used only figuratively in the NT. **Sunapago** means to be led along or be carried away with something or someone. The idea is to experience with others the force of that which carries away, to be "carried away with" as with a flood.

**Thayer** says "to follow the impulse of a thing to what harmonizes with it." (Gal 2:13, 2Pe 3:17). Then he adds that in Ro 12:16 the idea is "to yield or submit oneself to lowly things, conditions, employments, -- not to evade their power."

**Louw-Nida** says that in (Gal 2:13, 2Pe 3:17) **sunapago** means "to cause someone else in addition to change from belief in what is true to belief in what is false—to cause to go astray together, to deceive in addition, to lead astray with." **L-N** adds that in Ro 12:16 the idea of **sunapago** is "to associate with one another, normally involving spatial proximity and/or joint activity, and usually implying some kind of reciprocal relation or involvement—to associate, to be in the company of, to be involved with, association."

The thought in Romans 12:16 is go along with, to be at home with and to associate comfortably with others, specifically the lowly, less fortunate, less advantaged. Accommodate yourself to those who are less fortunate. How are you doing here? If you are a relatively wealthy saint, are their saints in your body you would rather not be seen with because they don't dress with the latest fashion, etc?

**BDAG** - (1). to cause someone in conjunction with others to go astray in belief, lead away with. Passive - to be led or carried away (Gal 2:13, 2Pe 3:17). (2). To adjust to a condition or circumstance, to accommodate. (3). To join the company of others, associate with: associate with humble folk.

**Sunapago** is in the **passive voice** and literally means to **be** led along or **be** carried away with. The **present tense** calls for this to be one's lifestyle or habitual practice. The thought here is to continually go along with, to be at home with, to associate comfortably with or to be drawn into sympathy with the lowly. If you practice this grace (by grace) what is going to obsess your mind? Not the "big I" for Paul says don't be haughty but remember those around you who are lowly and be caught up, obsessed and carried away with the lowly.



NIV = "be willing to associate with people of low position."

The KJV translates **sunapago** with **condescend** (Ro 12:16KJV) which means to descend to a less formal or dignified level or to waive the privileges of rank.

**Sunapago** is used 3 times in the NT - associate(1), carried away(2). The only Lxx use is Ex 14:6 (took = led off his people with him).

Galatians 2:13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was **carried away** by their hypocrisy.

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not **carried away** by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness

**Comment:** The principle is simple but serious -- false teaching (error) can lead one astray.

**Strong** says "to yield or submit one's self to lowly things, conditions, employments: not to evade their power."

**With the lowly** - Literally reads "but the lowly (**tapeinos**) associate with".

**Sunapago** calls for believers to continually be willing to associate with those in humble circumstances or disposition, those who are cast down or of low estate as as opposed to only associating with those who are wealthy or rich. The idea is not restricted to "lowly" people but also includes "lowly" or humble tasks. James minces no words reminding us that

if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors." (Ja 2:1-9)

Believers should avoid even a trace of snobbishness, instead as their lifestyle being as outgoing toward humble, lowly folk as toward those of wealth and position. Paul calls for us as new creatures in Christ, to get off our "high horse" and come to grips with reality. There are both humble tasks and ordinary people who need our attention. To withdraw from either is to allow pride to control our lives and pride disrupts the vital "one another" harmony of the Body.

**Lowly** (5011) (**tapeinos**) which literally means "not rising far from the ground, of low degree." It describes something that has been flattened absolutely flat. The brother you have around you who is going through a trial has just been "flattened" because of that trial. You are to "be caught up" (associate with) with that brother. Don't be caught up with the fact that you are not going through something. You may be next.

**Tapeinos** is used 8 times in the NT -- Matt. 11:29; Lk. 1:52; Rom. 12:16; 2 Co. 7:6; 10:1; James. 1:9; 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5

**Vincent** notes that in "classical Greek **tapeinos** usually implies meanness of condition; lowness of rank; abjectness. At best the classical conception is only modesty, absence of assumption, an element of worldly wisdom, and in no sense opposed to self-righteousness."

**Wuest** - **Lowly things** would be things of no great consequence so far as the spirit of this age is concerned. **Lowly men** would be those who in self-abasement and humility walk this earth with a deep sense of their moral littleness.

**ILLUSTRATION** - When an illustrious Christian arrived at the terminal he was met by leaders from the church where he was to speak. The limousine pulled up to take him to a plush hotel. "Who usually entertains visiting preachers here?" he asked. They mentioned an elderly couple in a modest home nearby. "That's where I would prefer to stay," he said.

**Kent Hughes** - A fitting illustration of this comes from the life of Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes. When Mr. Hughes was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, he moved to Washington and transferred his letter to a Baptist church there. His father had been a Baptist minister, and Hughes had been a lifelong witness to his own faith in Christ. It was the custom in that Baptist church to have all new members come forward during the morning service and be introduced to the congregation. On this particular day the first to be called was a Chinese laundryman, Ah Sing, who had moved to Washington from San Francisco and kept a laundry near the church. He stood at the far side of the pulpit. As others were called, they took positions at the extreme opposite side. When a dozen people had gathered, Ah Sing still stood alone. Then Chief Justice Hughes was called, and he significantly stood next to the laundryman. Christians are to associate with everyone—the ordinary people, the unimportant, the outcasts of society. ([Hughes, R. K. Romans: Righteousness from heaven. Preaching the Word. Crossway Books](#))

**Cranfield** - It is always a sign of the worldliness of the Church when its 'leaders' no longer associate as readily and freely with humble people both inside and outside the Church as with those who are socially superior.

**Nave's Topic Humility:** Deut. 9:7, 9:4-29.; 15:15; Job 5:11; 22:29; 25:5, 6; Ps 9:12; 10:17; 22:6, 26; 25:9; 37:11; 69:32; 86:1; 131:1, 2; 138:6; 147:6; 149:4; Pr 3:34; 10:8; 11:2; 12:15; 15:33 18:12. 16:19; 22:4; 25:6, 7; 27:2; 29:23; 30:32; Eccl. 5:2; Is 29:19; 51:1

Deut. 32:7. Is 57:15; 66:2; Je 45:5; Ezek 16:63; Mic. 6:8; Zeph 3:11, 12; Mt. 5:3 Lk 6:20. Mt 11:29; 18:2, 3, 4 Mark 9:33, 34, 35, 36, 37; Lk 9:46, 47, 48. Mt 20:26, 27 Mk 10:43, 44; Lk 22:26. Mt 23:12 Lk 14:11. 1:52; 10:21; 14:10, 11; Pr. 25:6, 7. Lk 17:10; 18:13, 14 Mt 23:12. Lk 22:24, 25, 26, 27; Jn 13:14, 15, 16; Ro 11:18, 20, 25; Ro 12:3, 10, 16; 1Co 1:28, 29; 2:1, 2, 3; 3:18; 10:12; 13:4; 2Co 11:30; 12:5-12; Ga 5:26; 6:14; Ep 4:2; 5:21; Php. 2:3, 4,5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; Col 3:12; James 1:9, 10, 19; 3:1; 4:6, 10; 1Pe 5:3, 5, 6 **Exemplified** Ge 18:27, 32.; 32:10; Ex 3:11; 4:10; 2Sa 7:18, 19 1Chr 17:17 1Ki 3:7 2Chr 1:10. 1Chr 29:14; 2Chr 2:6; Ezra 9:13; Job 9:14, 15; 33:6; 40:4, 5; 42:4, 5, 6; Ps 8:3, 4 Job 7:17, 18; Ps 144:3, 4. 73:22; 131:1, 2; 141:5; Pr 30:2, 3; Is 6:5; 38:15; Je 1:6; 10:23, 24; Da 2:30 Ge 41:16; Acts 3:12. Mt. 3:14;15:27; 25:37, 38, 29, 40; Lk 7:6, 7 Mt 8:8. Jn 1:27; 3:29, 30; Ro 7:18; 1Co 15:10; 2Co 3:5; 12:7; Ep 3:8; Phil 3:12, 13; 4:12; 1Ti 1:15 1Co 15:9. Re 4:10

**Easton's Bible Dictionary** writes that humility is "a prominent Christian grace (Ro 12:3; 15:17, 18; 1Co 3:5, 6, 7; 2Co 3:5; Phil. 4:11, 12, 13). It is a state of mind well pleasing to God (1Pe 3:4); it preserves the soul in tranquility (Ps 69:32, 33), and makes us patient under trials (Job 1:22). Christ has set us an example of humility (Phil. 2:6-8). We should be led thereto by a remembrance of our sins (Lam 3:39), and by the thought that it is the way to honour (Pr 16:18), and that the greatest promises are made to the humble (Ps 147:6; Is 57:15; 66:2; 1Pe 5:5). It is a "great paradox in Christianity that it makes humility the avenue to glory."

**DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN ESTIMATION : me gineshe ( [2PPMM](#)) phronimoi par heautois:**

- Torrey's Topic [Pride](#)
- Ro 11:25; Proverbs 3:7; 26:12; Isaiah 5:21; 1 Corinthians 3:18; 4:10; 6:5; 8:2; James 3:13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

**Robertson** - "Do not have the habit of becoming (ginesthe)] wise in your own conceits"

**Denney** - "Be not men of mind in your own conceit. It is difficult to put our judgment into a common stock, and estimate another's as impartially as our own; but love requires it, and without it there is no such thing as 'being of the same mind one toward another.' " ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Do not be** ([1096](#)) (**ginomai**) means to come into existence, to cause to be ("gen"-erate), to become. In this verse ginomai is in the **present imperative**, with a preceding negative, a construction in Greek which calls for prohibition of an action which is already taking place. It can also convey the sense of "Do not have the habit of becoming wise." Some of the Roman saints were becoming "wise in their own estimation". Paul says "Stop (or don't begin) this habit of being wise in your own eyes." The realization that believers have nothing of eternal value that we did not receive from the Giver of every good and perfect gift should keep each of us from an inflated ego. And realize that every time you see an imperative for a believer to obey, it is a call to surrender to the Spirit's power, for that is ultimately the only way to truly fulfill the command! Not naturally but supernaturally!

**Wayne Barber** adds that "Paul is saying, "Don't think you have it all put together here. Don't think you understand what that person is going through. You don't know until you get down in the trenches with him (**Ed note**: remember he is "flattened out"!)." Now roll your sleeves up, go get down in the trenches with your brother. Don't be so wise in your own estimation." It is amazing how quick we are to do that (be wise in our own estimation) when we are not going through persecution and everything is calm. We tend to draw in rather than look out. All of a sudden the eye of the storm is gone and boom, we catch those winds that are swirling behind it and it knocks us flat. Then we say, "Oh, help me." Then we begin to understand. We were wise in our own estimation. We really didn't know what was going on until that storm flattened us and we realized that everybody goes through persecution. So the idea is that if we are going to have this attitude towards one another, caring for one another, this has to be our focus... not thinking of ourselves, but letting the Holy Spirit of God open our eyes to the needs and the hurts of others. (from sermon **Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7**) (Bolding added)

Writing to the Corinthian saints **Paul** in describing his own ministry reminded them "Not that we are adequate (**hikanos**) in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2Cor 3:5, 4, 6)

How we think determines how we live. Christians are not to have conceit or feelings of superiority toward fellow believers (Ro 1:22). No one is to assume complete knowledge of the other person's circumstances, background, etc. Isaiah spoke of this folly among the Israelites warning "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight!" (Is 5:21)

**Solomon** advised "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. (Pr 3:7)

**Solomon** later ask the rhetorical question "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. (Pr 26:12)

**Morris** observes that "the person who is wise in his own eyes is rarely so in the eyes of other people." (Gulp!)

**Steven Cole - The mercies of God call us to practice humility.** Romans 12:16: “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.” Paul keeps hammering this theme. In Ro 11:20 he warned the Gentile believers, “Do not be conceited, but fear.” In Ro 11:25, he explained, “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” In Ro 12:3, he hits it again: “For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

The command, “Be of the same mind toward one another” is one that Paul often repeated. He will repeat it in Romans 15:5, “Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.” He repeats the idea three times in the short letter to the Philippians. In 1:27, he writes, “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” In Php 2:2, he repeats, “Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” And again in Php 4:2 he says, “I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.” “Live in harmony” is literally, in the Greek text, “to think the same thing.” (See, also, 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11.)

Paul is not insisting that we all think alike or agree on every issue, which isn’t going to happen in this life. Rather, he is calling us to unity based on our common salvation, our shared purpose in the gospel, and our shared hope in Christ. His command does not suggest that we set aside essential doctrinal truth for the sake of unity, which would be to compromise the gospel. Rather, as in Ephesians 4:2-3, he is saying, “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

When he says (Ro 12:16b), “Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly,” he could mean either lowly things or lowly people, or both. The verb, “associate with,” is literally, “to be carried away by,” as a flood that sweeps someone away (it is used in Gal. 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:17). So the idea is not to resist doing lowly tasks, but to be carried away with doing them. If you see trash on the floor at church, pick it up and throw it away. If you see that the trash bags are full at a church function, carry them out. Or, as applied to people who may be beneath your economic or educational level, reach out in love and make them feel accepted. Put yourself on the same level and relate graciously to them as you would want to be related to if you were in their shoes.

“Do not be wise in your own estimation” comes from Proverbs 3:7, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil.” Leon Morris (The Epistle to the Romans [Eerdmans/Apollos], p. 451) observes, “The person who is wise in his own eyes is rarely so in the eyes of other people.” Even some unbelievers get this. Jay Leno was asked what the secret was to his long marriage. He said (Parade, 5/20/12), “If you don’t fool around, it’s not that hard. I think the key to life is low self-esteem—believing you’re not the smartest or most handsome person in the room. All the people who have high self-esteem are criminals and actors.”

Paul is warning us of the danger of intellectual pride. This was the sin that Adam and Eve fell to in the garden, when they thought that by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they could be like God (Gen. 3:5-6). It is the sin that Paul referred to in Romans 1, of those who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” “Professing to be wise, they became fools” (1:22). Through Jeremiah (9:23-24), the Lord warns, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the Lord.”

Conclusion - How transformed are your attitudes? Are you blessing those who have wronged you? Are you sympathizing with others in their joys and sorrows? Are you practicing humility through true Christian unity, through being quick to take on lowly jobs or to befriend people of no earthly status, and through not being impressed with your own wisdom? If you need to grow in any of these, go often to the foot of the cross, where Christ humbled Himself for your sake (Phil. 2:5-11). ([Transformed Attitudes Romans 12:14-16](#))

**Romans 12:17 [Never pay back evil](#) for [evil](#) to [anyone](#). [Respect what](#) is [right](#) in the [sight](#) of [all men](#). (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** [medeni kakon anti kakou apodidontes](#); (PAPMPN) [pronouomenoi](#) (PMPMPN) [kala enopion panton anthropon](#);

**Amplified:** Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is honest *and* proper *and* noble [aiming to be above reproach] in the sight of everyone. [[Pr 20:22](#)] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn, to anyone. Don't say "it doesn't matter what people think", but see that your public behaviour is above criticism. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** requiting to no one evil in exchange for evil, taking thought in advance with regard to things that are seemly in the sight of all men. ([Eerdmans](#))

**Young's Literal:** giving back to no one evil for evil; providing right things before all men.

## NEVER PAY BACK EVIL FOR EVIL TO ANYONE: medeni kakon anti kakou apodidontes (PAPMPN):

- Ro 12:19; Pr 20:22; Mt 5:39; 1Th 5:15; 1Pe 3:9

### NEVER MEANS NEVER!

**Never... to anyone** - The first words in Greek for emphasis are literally "no one!"

**Denney** says "medeni (no one) is emphatic: to no one, Christian or un-Christian. Nothing can ever justify revenge... Requite evil to no one; let your conduct be such as all must approve." ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**John Calvin** rightly said that "Revenge is a passion unbecoming the children of God."

Regarding the desire to retaliate see the study of Covenant discussing the concept of **The Exchange of Armor and Belts**.

It has been well said that revenge is a dish that should be eaten cold, for the smallest revenge will poison the soul.

**Francis Bacon** had some advice on revenge declaring that "A man who studies revenge keeps his own wounds green. Men must not turn into bees and kill themselves in stinging others."

**Newell** - This (**Never pay back evil for evil to anyone**) takes for granted that some will do you evil. Satan and the world hate God's saints who walk with Him; and will do them all permitted evil. Now do not lay it up against the doer, if evil has been done you. Alas, some real believers are thoughtless; some jealous, some envious, some possibly even spiteful. Put far away the expectation of "getting even" with anybody. "If any man have"--really have--"a complaint against any, even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13). The Lord forgets, as well as forgives! (Hebrews 8:12). ([Romans 12 - Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Ray Stedman** - I think that Paul is telling us not to take silent revenge for imagined or real insults, and not to resort to subterfuges to get even. I remember hearing of some officers during the Korean War who rented a house for themselves and hired a Korean houseboy to work for them. He was a cheerful, happy soul, and they were young and had a lot of fun playing tricks on him. They would nail his shoes to the floor, and they would put water up over the door so that when he pushed it open the bucket would fall on him. They played all kinds of tricks, but he always took them in such a beautiful, good humor that they finally became ashamed for themselves. They called him in one day and said, "We've been doing all these mean things to you and you have taken it so beautifully. We just want to apologize to you and tell you that we are never going to do those things again." He said, "You mean no more nail shoes to floor?" They said, "No more." He said, "You mean no more water on door?" They said, "No more." "Okay then," he said, "no more spit in soup!" So you see, it is possible to take silent revenge. But the Word of God warns us against doing it. Don't be sneaky and underhanded about your actions, it says, but "be careful to do what is right in the sight of everybody." ([Romans 12 - Ray C. Stedman](#))

**Pay back** ([591](#)) (**apodidomi [word study]** from **apó** = from + **didomi** =give) means literally to give back, implying that there is a debt and conveying the idea of an obligation and a responsibility that is not optional. In this context the idea is to recompense in a bad sense, to "reward" them back for what they gave us. It's that spirit of "I'm going to get even no matter what."

**Apodidomi** 48x in the NT - Matt. 5:26, 33; 6:4, 6, 18; 12:36; 16:27; 18:25f, 28ff, 34; 20:8; 21:41; 22:21; 27:58; Mk. 12:17; Lk. 4:20; 7:42; 9:42; 10:35; 12:59; 16:2; 19:8; 20:25; Acts 4:33; 5:8; 7:9; 19:40; Rom. 2:6; 12:17; 13:7; 1 Co. 7:3; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Tim. 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8, 14; Heb. 12:11, 16; 13:17; 1 Pet. 3:9; 4:5; Rev. 18:6; 22:2, 12. The NAS translates **apodidomi** as - account\*(1), award(1), fulfill(2), gave back(2), give(3), give back(1), given over(1), giving(1), make (1), paid(2), paid up(1), pay(2), pay back(4), recompense(1), render(7), repay(10), repayment to be made(1), repays(1), returning(1), sold(3), yielding(1), yields(1).

**Peter** uses **apodidomi** exhorting his tested, suffering readers "not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. (1Pe 3:9-note)

**All men** - This phrase means just that... no exceptions. Saved and unsaved!

This is a difficult verse especially the word "**NEVER**". Let's face it whether its someone verbally abusing us at work or someone rudely cutting in front of us on the freeway, our "lower instinct" (our old self or old man, our nature inherited from Adam) says ""If you don't counter insult with insult, you'll get stepped on even more."

Instead as **Paul** reminds the Corinthians, genuine love is called for for such Spirit borne love "is not provoked (and) does not take into account a wrong suffered"

And **Jesus'** instruction likewise runs counter to the world's wisdom when He says "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. (Mt 5:38, 39-note)

Interestingly the OT law Jesus alluded to above of "**eye for eye, tooth for tooth**" (Lev 24:17, 18, 19, 20, 21) was never intended to be applied by individuals in either the OT or NT; but it was a standard for the collective society to use to enforce good conduct among the people.

### **The best way to get even is to forget and forgive!**

**Jesus** declared "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." (Mt 5:43, 44-note)

All of us have experienced this strong urge to "get back", of repaying in kind or of giving someone what they "deserve". When we respond in this manner, we are simply lowering ourselves to the level of the person who irritates us. Paul makes it very clear that getting even is **NEVER** the answer.

**Peter** also reminded the suffering saints that "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** (read that last phrase again) (1Pe 2:21, 22, 23-note)

When someone does you wrong, what are we to do? Do what's right -- love them even as our Lord loved even Judas to the bitter end of his betrayal. "Overcome evil with good". How is this possible? In our strength it's **not** possible. But each of these "tests" is another opportunity to keep entrusting ourselves to the One Who judges righteously and in so doing to learn the "secret" that we "can do all things through Christ Who continually strengthens us in the inner man" (see Php 4:11, 12-notes; Php 4:13-note)

If you have truly laid your "ALL" on His altar (Ro 12:1-note; Ro 12:2-note), remember that your "ALL" includes your "rights", which are now in His hands. How can you do this? Genuine trust will leave everything in the Father's righteous, just hands, as you understand and believe that vengeance is His not yours (see study on **The Exchange of Armor and Belts**)

We are to love our enemies and treat well those who treat us badly. If yours is a godly life, you will have enemies and be treated unfairly, for **Paul** reminds us "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2Ti 3:12-note)

But **Jesus** also reminds of the reward for suffering patiently even though you are unjustly treated declaring...

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice (Exult, leap for joy, show one's joy by leaping and skipping), and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mt 5:10, 11, 12-note)

Leave all judgment to the Lord. If you let the Lord have His way, He will use your enemies to build you and make you more like Christ.

Many people bury the hatchet, but they leave part of it showing!

**Thomas Fuller** - The noblest revenge is to forgive.

**Thomas Watson** had similar advice noting that "It is more honour to bury an injury than to revenge it."

**Solomon** had a wise instruction writing "Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you." (Pr 20:22)

**Related Resource:** [Developing The Art Of Gracious Disagreement](#) - Booklet from RBC

## Wayne Barber comments on Paul's exhortation to never pay back evil explaining that believers

are being watched. Do you know that? We are being watched? The way you and I respond to persecution is being watched by others. In the sight of all men there is a certain responsibility that we have in our character that is very important to understand.

Persecution is going to come. "Well, I am not in it right now." Well, one of two things is true. One could be you are not surrendered so your life is not yet worthy to be tested like that. But the other could be that you just came out of one trial and you are getting a breather. Hang on, there is another one coming. People are watching how we treat one another and how we respond in the midst of persecution, in times of difficulty and pain...

The word **evil** is inherent evil. What he is saying is, that inherent evil comes from flesh. Flesh can be on both sides of the cross and you have to see that. Romans 7 talks about the inherent evil that is in my flesh today. Paul says,

"I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin." (Ro 7:14-note)

There is something that happened in the past that causes my flesh to be lured and devoted to sin. I have a sinful body. And because of that, I have the potential of doing great harm. But others who are that way have the potential of doing great harm to me within the walls of the church. When they do it, I am never to pay back evil for evil. The word "**pay back**" is recompense. You owe me \$10 or I owe you \$10 so I pay you back \$10.

Now we are going to get to a verse on down where it says,

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay" says the Lord." (Ro12:19-note)

The word "vengeance" is not there. It is a translated word. The word means "out of righteousness" ([ekdikesis](#)). Only God can **pay back** because only God knows how much to pay back. If I paid you back, first of all, it wouldn't be recompense. I would add a little bit on to it. Now, I have wanted to do that. Have you ever wanted to do that? Be honest. Has somebody ever hurt you in the body of Christ? I mean, you just started your quiet time and somebody had the audacity to do this to you. You thought if you got right with God everything would be sweet and rosy, but it wasn't. You lay in bed at night and thought about how you could get them back. It is just not worth it. Somebody said, "You can whip a skunk, but it is just not worth it." When Paul says "Don't repay evil for evil," some people are saying, "No, no, no. That is my protection." But what you are going to receive back for that is just not worth it. Don't repay evil for evil. When evil comes to you, there is a response you have and you are being watched. (from sermon Romans 12:14-17 Responsibilities Under Grace 7) (Bolding added)

### Nave's Topic Revenge:

Forbidden, Lev. 19:18; Pr. 24:29; Ro 12:17, 19; 1 Th 5:15; 1Pe 3:9.

- Jesus an example of forbearing, 1Pe 2:23.
- Rebuked by Jesus, Luke 9:54, 55.
- Inconsistent with a Christian spirit, Luke 9:55.
- Proceeds from a spiteful heart, Ezek. 25:15.
- Punishment for, Ezek. 25:15, 16, 17; Amos 1:11, 12.

### Exemplified

- By Simeon and Levi, Ge 34:25.
  - By Samson, Jdg. 15:7, 8; 16:28, 29, 30.
  - By Joab, 2Sa 3:27.
  - By Absalom, 2Sa 13:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.
  - By Jezebel, 1Ki 19:2.
  - By Ahab, 1Ki 22:27.
  - By Haman, Esther 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.
  - By the Edomites, Ezek. 25:12.
  - By the Philistines, Ezek. 25:15.
  - By Herodias, Mark 6:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.
  - By James and John, Luke 9:54.
  - By the chief priests, Acts 5:33.
  - By the Jews, Acts 7:54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59; 23:12.
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Years ago a man who didn't like having smoke blown in his face developed a way for nonsmokers to fight back. He called his product "**Revenge**." It was a foul-smelling disinfectant that came in a pocket-size spray can. The spray gave cigarette smokers a dose of their own medicine--bad air. Many resented the idea. Some got a laugh out of it. Still others purchased some of the stuff. Its manufacturers were capitalizing on the feeling that I'm sure all of us have experienced: If we don't counter insult for insult, we'll get stepped on. For the Christian, however, there are problems with trying to "get back" at someone. We lower ourselves to the level of the person who irritates us. This makes us vulnerable because we violate the principles of faith and love. Revenge appeals to our lower instincts rather than to the high strategy of goodness found in Christ. The Word of God is clear: Getting even is never the answer.

"'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Ro12:19).

So what are we to do when someone offends us? We must continue doing good, and let God handle vengeance in His perfect time and way. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Ro 12:21-note). --M R De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### **Putting It Into Practice**

Has someone hurt you recently?  
What kindness can you do for that person?  
Ask God to help you show His love.

**When someone does you wrong,  
Do what's right--love him.**

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The infamous 19th-century feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys started with a fight over a razorback hog. It turned into a vendetta that continued unabated for several decades. Members of both clans committed brutal murders, and their fighting brought heartache to every family in the valley of the Tug Fork River, along the border of Kentucky and West Virginia.

The men who started this bitter and destructive violence, William Hatfield and Randolph McCoy, were responsible for scores of deaths, but they were never brought to justice in a court of law. Although they both lived long lives, they had to watch the suffering and death of their loved ones.

Our vengeance—no matter how right our cause may seem to us—always goes wrong. Only God has the wisdom and patience needed to punish evildoers properly and to bring them to justice. He treads the winepress of His wrath alone (Isaiah 63:3), and He doesn't need any help from us.

The world tells us, "Don't get mad, get even!" But Paul gave us this instruction: "Repay no one evil for evil... Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Ro 12:17, 18, 19). —D H R ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Whenever life becomes unfair  
And human judgments fail,  
Remember, God will right all wrongs—  
His justice will prevail. —Sper

**We can endure life's wrongs  
because we know God will make things right.**

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**TRUE FORGIVENESS TO SOME PEOPLE IS SIMPLY "TOO MUCH"!** - Marie de Medicis, the Italian-born wife of King Henri IV of France, became the regent for their son Louis after her husband's death in 1610. In later years her relationship with Louis soured and they lived in a state of ongoing hostility. Marie also felt a deep sense of betrayal when Cardinal Richelieu, whom she had helped in his rise to political power, deserted her and went over to her son's side. While on her deathbed Marie was visited by Fabio Chigi, who was papal nuncio of France. Marie vowed to forgive all of her enemies, including Cardinal Richelieu. "Madam," asked Chigi, "as a mark of reconciliation, will you send him the bracelet you wear on your arm?" "No," she replied firmly, "that would be too much." **True forgiveness is hard to extend because it demands that people let go of something they value**(Ed: The very essence of the verb for forgiveness - Aphiemi = a sending away, letting it go, dropping it, canceling the debt they owe you!) -- **not a piece of jewelry, but pride, perhaps, as sense of justice, or desire for revenge.** (contrast Paul's instructions to believers in Ro 12:17-[note](#), Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note) -- Daily Walk, May 27, 1992.

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**BURYING THE HATCHET** - Old Joe was dying. For years he had been at odds with Bill, formerly one of his best friends. Wanting to straighten things out, he sent word for Bill to come and see him. When Bill arrived, Joe told him that he was afraid to go into eternity with such a bad feeling between them. Then, very reluctantly and with great effort, Joe apologized for things he had said and done. He also assured Bill that he **forgave him** for his offenses. Everything seemed fine until Bill turned to go. As he walked out of the room, Joe called out after him, "But, remember, if I get better, this doesn't count!"

We may smile at this story. Yet what a clear picture this gives of the way we sometimes treat one another. The forgiveness we profess is often superficial (Ed: Not from the heart, Mt 18:35, Ezek 36:26, 27). It may be prompted by fear, or to gain some selfish advantage, or to clear our conscience--not out of genuine love for God (cf Lk 7:41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47) and the one who has wronged us. Yes, we may say we forgive, but when the least little friction arises, we are quick to resurrect past grievances (cf God's forgiveness - Isa 38:7, 44:22, Mic 7:19). In short, **we like to "bury the hatchet" with the handle sticking out.** That way we can easily pick it up again and use it to our advantage. How different is the forgiveness Jesus talked about! (Mt 18:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22).

If our sinless Lord is willing to forgive us--with all our faults--how can we withhold pardon from those who have sinned against us? True Christlike forgiveness buries the hatchet completely.

Those who say they will forgive but can't forget,  
simply bury the hatchet but leave the handle out for immediate use.  
**--D. L. Moody**

Every man should have a fair-sized cemetery  
in which to bury the faults of his friends.  
**--Henry Ward Beecher**

Christ the Lord our debt has paid—  
All our sins on Him were laid;  
We like Him should try to live,  
Always ready to forgive! —Bosch

**To resent and remember brings strife;  
To forgive and forget brings peace.**

**For Further Thought - What happens to your fellowship with God when you hold a grudge? (Mt 6:15-note). Can you think of someone you need to forgive?**

**For Further Thought - What happens to your fellowship with God when you hold a grudge? (see Mt 6:15-note). Can you think of someone you need to forgive? If not would you be willing to pray David's heart searching plea in Ps 139:23, 24?** Forgiveness (releasing the "debt" the other party owes you) will "cost" you -- you will have to deny self (Mk 8:34), to deny "your rights" (Php 2:4-note), something that you can only do after you have presented your body (everything - spirit, soul, mind, emotions, will, etc) to God as a holy sacrifice, for then His Spirit will enable you by grace to freely forgive for the glory of your Father in heaven.

**Garth Brooks** has a song which speaks of the unforgiving heart...

**We bury the hatchet  
But leave the handle stickin' out**  
We're always diggin' up things  
We should forget about  
When it comes to forgettin'  
Baby, there ain't no doubt  
We bury the hatchet  
But leave the handle sticking out

-Garth Brooks, "We Bury The Hatchet" on the Album: Ropin The Wind

One great obstacle of stumbling is non-forgiveness. The hatchet might seem to be buried, but people continue to grab hold of the handle when they want to use it against another. Jesus said if a brother repents, forgive him--that is, bury the hatchet and its handle. How many times, you might ask? As often as the brother repents, we are to forgive (Lk 17:3, 4- where "forgive" = **aphiemi [word study]** meaning release him, cancel his debt, let it go!). Don't grab hold of buried hatchet handles, for they become stumbling blocks

to forgiveness.

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I read a humorous story about a little girl who was making angry faces at a bulldog. Her mother noticed and asked her to stop. The girl said, "But Mom, he started it!"

In one sense, the girl was right. A bulldog naturally looks tough and mean. But the girl gained nothing by competing with him in making faces.

So too, the person who thinks he must return every angry look he sees, or repay any hurtful deed that is directed toward him, will have a never-ending and profitless job. In fact, in the end he is the one who will suffer the most.

As heirs of the grace of God, we should be gracious in our attitude toward others. The spirit of the world says, "Get even with those who mistreat you." The Spirit of Christ says, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you" (see Mt 5:44-note).

If you want to know how spiritual you are, ask yourself, "What is my attitude toward those who mistreat me? Am I kind, considerate, and loving in my words and actions toward them?"

To live like Christ is not **natural**; it's **supernatural**. Only as we yield to the Holy Spirit can we ever hope to exhibit the life of Christ. -- Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O let God's Spirit fill your soul  
And cast out every sin,  
Then shall you love both friend and foe  
And know His peace within. --Bosch

**He who throws mud gets dirty hands.**

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#### **Related Resources:** Forgive/Forgiveness

- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15.
- Illustrations and quotes on forgiveness

#### **NT words for forgive/forgiveness:**

- Forgiveness ([859](#)) aphesis
- Forgive (send away from, cancel the debt, release, let go) ([863](#)) aphiemai
- Forgive (grant, freely give, bestow) ([5483](#)) charizomai

**Excellent 5 Part Sermon Series on Forgiveness by Dr Ray Pritchard:** following messages are also in his book -**The Healing Power of Forgiveness** ([see reviews by readers](#))

- [1\) Forgiveness Healing the Hurt We Never Deserved](#)
- [2\) Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer](#)
- [3\) Judge Not!](#)
- [4\) Is Total Forgiveness Realistic](#)
- [5\) The Final Step-Blessing Your Enemies](#)

#### **Other Resources on Forgiveness**

- [Father, Forgive Them by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Forgiving the Unforgivable by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [How Can I Learn to Forgive? by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Unless You Forgive by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Forgiving the Unforgivable article by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#)
- [Forgiveness of Injuries \(Mt 18:21-22\) by John Angell James](#)

- [Forgiveness of Sins by Henry Law - 17 Chapter Treatise!](#)

**RESPECT WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN: pronoooumenoi ( [PMPMPN](#)) kala enopion panton anthropon:**

- Ro 14:16; 1Corinthians 6:6,7; 13:4,5; 2Corinthians 8:20,21; Philippians 4:8,9; Colossians 4:5; 1Thessalonians 4:12; 1Thessalonians 5:22; 1Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:4,5; 1Peter 2:12; 3:16

**Hodge** says **pronoeeo** "signifies also to attend to, to care for. The sense then is, 'Do not resent injuries, having regard to the good opinion of men,' i.e. let a regard to the honor of religion and your own character prevent the returning of evil for evil."

**Respect (4306)** (**pronoeeo** from **pró** = before + **noieo** = think, comprehend, observe, notice) means literally to think before, to observe in advance, to notice beforehand, to plan before, to plan carefully, to perceive in advance, to foresee and so to have regard for. Most of uses in secular Greek convey the idea of to care, to see to it that, make provision for, attend to. The the temporal meaning of observing in advance is rare.

The idea is to think about something ahead of time, giving it careful thought and consideration, with the implication that one can then respond appropriately. As used by Paul in the first epistle to Timothy (see below) **pronoeeo** conveys the sense of thinking about another beforehand in a solicitous (showing consideration, full of concern, attentive) manner and so to care for or look after, with the implication of continuous responsibility. In first Timothy **pronoeeo** describes the forethought necessary to provide care for the widows in one's family. Christians are to continually (**present tense**) be thinking beforehand how they can respond appropriately to another's needs. **Pronoeeo** describes an attitude that motivates one to do the right thing.

The KJV translates this verse "**provide** (pronoeeo) things honest" which **Vincent** explains as follows "The Authorized Version uses **provide** in its earlier and more literal meaning of **taking thought in advance**. This has been mostly merged in the later meaning of **furnish**, so that the translation conveys the sense of **providing honestly for ourselves and our families**. Better, as Revised, **take thought for**. (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament Vol. 3, Page 1-161)

In writing to the Corinthians **Paul** says "we **have regard for** (pronoeeo) what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." (2Cor 8:21)

Writing to Timothy **Paul** says "But if anyone does not **provide for** (pronoeeo) his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." (1Ti 5:8)

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible.** - A Christian should not concentrate on the evil in others, but instead should focus on what is good. By doing so, we encourage others around us to aspire to the good.

**Right (2570)** (**kalos**) also carries the idea of visibly and obviously having the right behavior when they are around others, especially unbelievers. **Kalos** describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit. **Kalos** is good with emphasis on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable. **Kalos** describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good and/or that which provides some special or superior benefit.

In **classical Greek kalos** was originally used to describe that which outwardly beautiful. Other secular uses of **kalos** referred to the usefulness of something such as a **fair** haven, a **fair** wind or that which was auspicious such as sacrifices. **Kalos** referred to that which was "morally beautiful" or noble and hence virtue was called "the good" (to kalon).

The New Testament uses of **kalos** are similar to the secular Greek -- outwardly fair, as the stones of the temple (Lk 21:5); well adapted to its purpose, as salt ("salt is good" Mk 9:50); competent for an office, as deacons ("good servant of Christ Jesus" 1Ti 4:6); a steward ("serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God", see note 1 Peter 4:10); a good soldier (note 2 Timothy 2:3); expedient, wholesome ("it is better for you to enter life crippled" Mk 9:43, 45, 47); morally good, noble, as works ("Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works" see Matthew 5:16-note); conscience ("we are sure that we have a good conscience", see note Hebrews 13:18). The phrase it is good, i.e., a good or proper thing ("It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine", Romans 14:21-note). In the Septuagint (LXX) **kalos** is the most commonly used word for **good** as opposed to **evil** (e.g., see Ge 2:17; 24:50; Isaiah 5:20).

**Wuest** - The word (**kalos**) is one of the two words which the Greeks have of describing that which is good, agathos referring to intrinsic goodness, and **kalos**, our word here, to exterior goodness, or goodness that is seen on the exterior of a person, the outward expression of an inward goodness. When this outward expression conforms to the inward goodness, then that expression which a Christian gives of himself is an honest one, one conforming to the inner facts. The word could be translated in a connection like this by the word "seemly," seemly in that the expression is fitting. But if the Christian assumes an outward expression which is patterned

after this age, that expression not representing what he is, a child of God, but giving the beholder the impression that he is a person of the world, that expression is a dishonest one. Peter exhorts to the same thing in his first letter when he says, "holding your manner of life honest among the Gentiles" (1Pe 2:12). That is, the Christian is exhorted to take careful forethought that his manner of life, his outward expression conforms to, is honestly. (Wuest's Word Studies)

**In the sight of** (1799) (**enopion** from **en** = in + **ops** =face, eye, countenance) means in the face of, in front of, or in the presence (sight) of everyone. The literal idea is that one is in a position in front of an entity (Re 7:15-note) and for all unbelievers before God Himself (Re 20:12-note). Here in Romans 12:17 enopion pertains to exposure of another to a value judgment (cp Heb 31:21).

**Enopion** 91x in the NT -- Lk. 1:15, 17, 19, 75, 76; 4:7; 5:18, 25; 8:47; 12:6, 9; 13:26; 14:10; 15:10, 18, 21; 16:15; 23:14; 24:11, 43; Jn. 20:30; Acts 2:25; 4:10, 19; 6:5f; 7:46; 9:15; 10:30, 31, 33; 19:9, 19; 27:35; Ro 3:20; 12:17; 14:22; 1Co 1:29; 2Co 4:2; 7:12; 8:21; Ga 1:20; 1Ti 2:3; 5:4, 20, 21; 6:12, 13; 2Ti 2:14; 4:1; Heb 4:13; 13:21; James. 4:10; 1Pe 3:4; 1Jn 3:22; 3Jn 1:6; Re 1:4; 2:14; 3:2, 5, 8, 9; 4:5, 6, 10; 5:8; 7:9, 11, 15; 8:2, 3, 4; 9:13; 11:4, 16; 12:4, 10; 13:12, 13, 14; 14:3, 10; 15:4; 16:19; 19:20; 20:12. The NAS translates **enopion** as - before(46), from sight(1), in front of(1), in the presence of(20), in the sight of(21).

Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. Such exterior goodness is necessary because what we do as Christians is observed by those around us, and it is important that our conduct, which is open to "the eyes of everybody," brings honor to our God.

The main point is that, instead of reciprocating evil for evil, we should think out ahead of time how we will respond when others attack us or wrong us in some way. By taking forethought we can be ready to respond aright, with "good things," i.e., in such a way that we bear impressive witness before the world. The idea (from Pr 3:4) is the care which Christians should take so to demean themselves as to command the respect of all men.

**Haldane** writes that "We are not to do our work to be seen of men, but we are to be careful that all our works are done so as to avoid anything that would bring a reproach upon the Gospel."

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**Steven Cole** - What I said last week also applies to this message: I'm speaking on a subject about which I have almost no experience: Doing right when you're wronged. I've had many instances where people did wrong things to me, of course, but rarely anything traumatic. My parents loved me, brought me to faith in Christ, and taught me His ways. I had a relatively easy childhood.

But some of you have suffered traumatic wrongs. You may have had parents who were emotionally, physically, or even sexually abusive. Some of you have suffered (or perhaps are currently suffering) in an abusive marriage. You live daily under a barrage of verbal and emotional attacks that include either threats of physical harm or actual physical abuse. Or, perhaps your mate was unfaithful and you struggle with bitterness over being betrayed.

Some of you have been victims of major fraud or theft. A few may have been the victim of a violent crime, such as rape or assault. Perhaps a loved one was murdered. Some may have suffered injury or trauma serving our country in the military.

But here in America, few of us have suffered as much as our brothers and sisters in countries where there is open hostility toward the gospel. John Piper ("Do not Avenge Yourselves, but Give Place to Wrath," on DesiringGod.org) tells the story of the martyrdom of Graham Staines and his two sons:

In January, 1999 Graham Staines and his two sons, Phillip (10) and Timothy (6) were mobbed by radical Hindus, trapped inside their vehicle in ... 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. ... 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."

Wow! That is a God-thing! There is no other way to explain it. A similar thing happened in 2007 in Turkey, where Islamic militants

mutilated and murdered German missionary Tilman Geske, a father of three, and two Turkish believers, one of whom had two young children. Geske's widow also publicly forgave the murderers and vowed to continue her ministry in Turkey.

That's the high biblical standard that we're called to! I'm not going to tell you that I could respond as those godly widows did, unless God gave me unusual grace. But we need to understand how God wants us to respond when we are wronged, whether in a relatively minor or in a major way. We need to practice with the minor wrongs that we suffer so that we'll be prepared for the major wrongs. In Romans 12:17-21, Paul teaches that...

The Christian response to being wronged is to do right toward your enemy, leaving all vengeance with God.

As with the previous section (Ro 12:14-16), the thread of selflessness or self-denial runs through our text. Our aim must be (as Paul's was; Phil. 1:20), to exalt Christ in our bodies, whether by life or by death. Our desire should be that our enemy would come to know the same mercy and grace that we found at the cross. And so, rather than responding to the evil done against us with evil or with vengeance, we are commanded to respond with the radical love of Christ that overcomes evil with good. The world says, "Don't get mad; get even!" But our Lord says (Luke 6:27), "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you."

1. The wrong response to being wronged is to pay it back with wrong.

Paul says this three times in slightly different ways for emphasis: Romans 12:17a: "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone." Verse 19a, "Never take your own revenge, beloved..." Ro 12:21, "Do not be overcome by evil..." Paul gives a similar command in 1 Thessalonians 5:15, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people." (See, also, 1 Peter 3:9.)

John Calvin points out that returning evil for evil may not be as severe as seeking revenge, but it is still forbidden. For example, your husband snaps unkindly at you and you respond by being cold to him or by not speaking to him. You aren't plotting revenge, but you're not exactly blessing him. You're returning evil for evil. Or, if someone makes a cutting remark and you try to counter it, even in jest, you're returning evil for evil.

I still remember when the Lord convicted me of this. When I was in college, a bunch of guys met weekly for dinner and Bible study. While we were waiting for dinner and exchanging small talk, it often devolved into a "chop" session, where one guy would make a humorous put-down about another guy, and he would respond with a funny put-down of the first guy. We all would laugh and sometimes pile on with more humorous put-downs.

Then one night, a newer Christian in our group said with a serious look on his face, "Guys, we're sinning to talk like this." We all jumped on him with our excuses: "Come on, we're just having fun." But he stood his ground and cited verses like Ephesians 4:29, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." One by one, we all finally admitted that he was right. We asked forgiveness of one another and the chop sessions ended that night.

Revenge, which goes a step beyond returning evil for evil, is motivated by pride. Someone's sinful actions against us wound our pride, so we want to get even to restore our honor. Many cultures around the world are driven by these honor codes. One family or tribe offends another tribe, so the offended party retaliates by inflicting revenge. This momentarily puts them on top, but only until their rival can devise a way to get even. Sometimes these feuds go on for centuries, resulting in needless bloodshed and warfare. The same mindset is behind the Muslim "honor killings," where a family member who shames the family is killed to restore the family's honor. It all stems from sinful pride.

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**Pastor Bob Deffinbaugh** ([Loving Your Enemies- Overcoming Evil With Good](#)) shows four reasons from these verses that it is always wrong to take your own revenge. (1) "Revenge runs contrary to what society deems to be right." Note verse 17b: "Respect what is right in the sight of all men." Our laws prohibit vigilante justice, where one person takes it upon himself to right some perceived wrong. And, while we sometimes chuckle at the absurd extremes that people take to get revenge, at least our culture usually knows that their behavior is wrong. The world generally knows that revenge solves nothing.

(2) "Revenge does not promote peace but incites men to hostility." In verse 18, Paul says, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Vengeance doesn't lead to peace, but to further vengeance. It keeps the vicious cycle going.

(3) "Revenge usurps a task which belongs only to God." In Ro 12:19, Paul says, "Leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written,

'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." We are incompetent to carry out personal vengeance, because we cannot know all of the motives and circumstances that were behind a person's wrongful action towards us. Besides, our emotions get involved and cloud our judgment. Only God, who knows all things, is a competent and righteous Judge.

(4) "Revenge succumbs to evil rather than overcoming evil with good." As Paul commands (12:21), "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." To take revenge is to respond to sin with more sin. It puts you on the same level as the one who sinned against you.

And so, as difficult as it is (and it is difficult!), it is always wrong to respond to wrong with more wrong. Paying back evil for evil or taking revenge is always motivated by selfishness or pride. It does not honor our merciful God. It will not lead to the conversion of the one who sinned against you. So you have to determine in advance that when you are wronged, you will not retaliate with more wrong.

2. The right response when you are wronged is to do what is right toward your enemy.

Paul states the right response to wrong several times for emphasis: Romans 12:17b: "Respect what is right in the sight of all men." Ro 12:18: "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Ro 12:20: "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink ...." Ro 12:21b: "Overcome evil with good."

Again, I would emphasize that this is not our natural reaction. Our natural reaction is: He hit me; I'll hit him back even harder! He yelled at me; I'll yell at him even louder! He cursed me out; I'll let that no good bum hear a few choice words from me! It requires submission to the indwelling Spirit of God to respond to wrongs by doing what is right.

#### A. DOING WHAT IS RIGHT REQUIRES SOME FORETHOUGHT.

Ro 12:17b should literally be translated, "Take thought in advance for what is visibly good in the sight of all people." In New Testament Greek there are two words that convey the idea of goodness. One refers to inherent goodness. The other, the word used here, refers to external or visible goodness. It means good "in the sense of right, fair, noble, honorable" (A Manual Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, G. Abbott-Smith [Charles Scribner's Sons], p. 229).

When Paul says that we should take thought for what is right in the sight of all people, he does not mean that we should determine our behavior by public opinion. Public opinion may run contrary to God's Word. Rather, he means that we should think about our testimony to a watching world. What idea of the Christian faith will the world form when it sees or hears about how we responded to the wrong that was done to us? If we react with rage, we're not being a good witness. If we stop to think about our witness, we can then respond in a Christlike manner.

Somewhere in his writings (I could not find the exact source) the late Chinese sufferer for Christ, Watchman Nee, tells of two Chinese terrace farmers. The farmer whose field was higher up the hill was a Christian. He would get up early and work hard to pump water by hand for his crops. But his shifty neighbor below him would cut a path through his upper neighbor's dikes and let the water flow down to his lower field. This happened more than once and the Christian farmer was quite irritated with his lazy neighbor.

But rather than going down and yelling at his neighbor, the Christian farmer started pumping water first for his neighbor's field and then for his own. As I recall the story, the lazy neighbor soon came under conviction, went to the Christian and apologized, and then listened to the Christian's witness about Christ and came to faith in Christ himself.

You may wonder, what should I do if I've already blown it? Maybe you didn't stop to think about how you should respond and so you exploded in anger at a difficult neighbor or family member. You pretty much ruined your testimony. Now what?

The answer is, humble yourself, go to the person you wronged, and ask forgiveness. Don't try to use your apology to witness to him, because he will think you're just apologizing so that you can give him the religious pitch. Just ask forgiveness and leave it with him to ask about your faith.

I've told you before about my own embarrassing failure. In California, we had a collie that was a good dog, except that whenever the neighbor drove by in his truck or the UPS truck went by, this dog would go into a frenzy of barking. It must have really bugged our neighbor, because one morning when our daughter Christa, who was about 12, went out to feed the dog, the neighbor came outside and started yelling at her, with a lot of profanity, to keep our dog quiet.

I was inside and could hear what was going on and it made me mad that he would use such foul language on my sweet daughter. So I went outside and yelled back at him to keep his filthy mouth shut around my kids. He yelled back at me and I went back inside.

This was Sunday morning and I had to preach God's Word in a few minutes! God was convicting me about my angry exchange with my neighbor. The church was only about a quarter mile away, so I walked to church. As I came out of the house with my tie on and briefcase in hand, the neighbor and his daughter's live-in boyfriend drove by. The dog was going crazy. I raised my hand to signal my neighbor to stop. He and the boyfriend looked like they were ready to pile out of the truck for a fight. Before they did, I said to the neighbor, "I'm really sorry that I yelled at you as I did, and I'm sorry about our dog. I ask your forgiveness. I don't know how to get him to stop barking at your truck."

His countenance changed instantly. He apologized for yelling at our daughter. And from then on, we always exchanged a friendly wave whenever we crossed paths. I never got to share the gospel with him, but I'm sure that he knew I was a pastor. At least he knew that I wasn't a religious hypocrite. Give thought to what is right in the sight of all men. ([Doing Right When You're Wronged Romans 12:17-21](#))