

I. Introduction and review.

II. The world will hate you. v. 12b, 14a, 17a, 18a, 20 John 15:19

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

1. You will endure tribulation. v. 12b Acts 14:22 John 16:33
2. You will be persecuted. v. 14a II Ti. 3:12
3. People will do evil to you. v. 17a, 21a
4. Some will treat you as an enemy. v. 20a
5. No matter how hard you try, there are some people with whom it is impossible to make peace. v. 18a Mt. 10:34-36 Luke 12:51-53

B. You are not the first to face these difficulties.

How are modern believers persecuted?

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

A. You will be tempted to fight fire with fire.

1. When wronged you have a (correct) sense of a judicial imbalance. Ps. 37 73
2. You want vindication.
3. Humanly speaking, anger and vengeance may get results (in the short term).
4. You cannot achieve God's righteousness through revenge. Js. 1:20

B. Don't retaliate. I Pe. 3:9a Lu. 9:55-56

1. Do not curse those who curse you. v. 14b Mt. 5:22
2. Never pay back evil for evil. v. 17a
3. Never take your own revenge. v. 19a Lev. 19:18a Pr. 20:22 24:29 II Chr. 28:8f

C. Why is revenge wrong?

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

D. Leave vengeance to God. v. 19b

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

E. Questions:

1. What about righteous anger? Eph. 4:26 John 2:14f
2. Does the principle of not taking revenge apply to governments? 13:4
 - a. What is forbidden is private vengeance.
 - b. When the government punishes evildoers, they do so on God's behalf.
3. How does the principle of not seeking revenge apply to parents? Pr. 13:24 19:18
 - a. Parents, like government, are authorized by God to deal with sin.
 - b. Parental discipline is not retaliation or personal revenge.

- F. Examples of those who refused to seek personal vengeance: Joseph, David, Abigail, and Jesus. Ge. 50:15f I Sam. 24:3-7 26:8-12 25:26,33-34 II Sam. 16 I Pet. 2:23

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

- A. It is not enough to merely refrain from revenge. Positively do good.
- B. Fight fire with water. I Pe. 3:9b
1. Bless those who persecute you. v. 14a Mt. 5:43-44 Acts 7:60
 2. Instead of retaliating, determine to live nobly before the watching world. v. 17b Pr. 3:4 II Co. 8:21 4:2 Titus 2:10 Col. 4:5 I Ti. 3:7
 3. Actively seek peace. v. 18b Mt. 5:9 Js. 3:17 Heb. 12:14 Pr. 15:1 26:20
 4. Generously meet your enemy's needs. v. 20b-21 Pr. 25:21-22
 5. Conquer evil with good.
- C. Why should you do good to those who hurt you?
1. This is how God treats His enemies, including you! Mt. 5:45 Col. 1:21-22
 2. Perhaps your goodness will lead your enemy to repentance. v. 20b-21 I Pe. 3:1-2
 3. Your choice to love instead of taking revenge is a victory! v. 21 Pr. 16:32
 4. Your goodness reflects great honor on Christ. God will reward you. Pr. 25:21-22
- D. Examples of the power of goodness: Joseph, David, Elisha, Stephen and Jesus.
Ge. 50:21 I Sam. 24:17 II Ki. 6:20-23 Acts 7:59-60 Lu. 23:34

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

- A. Our present joy is grounded upon our future hope. 8:24f 15:4,13 I Pe. 1:3-9
Mt. 21:21 Jo. 14:1-3 16:20,22 Titus 2:13 I Th. 5:8 I Jo. 3:1-3 I Co. 15:58 II Ti. 4:8
- B. Hope enables us to endure tribulation. 5:2-5 8:18,35 II Co. 4:17 I Pe. 4:13 Heb. 11:10
1. Your enemies cannot take away the joy of your hope.
 2. Those who deny the future return of Christ destroy hope.
- C. Hope is kindled through prayer. I Th. 5:17 Phil. 4:6
1. A benefit of tribulation is that it drives us to pray more faithfully and fervently.
 2. The early church was devoted to prayer. Acts 2:42 1:14 6:4 I Ti. 2:1.8 Col. 4:2
 3. Are you devoted to prayer?

VI. Concluding applications: supernatural virtue.

Discussion questions.

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