

## 1 Thessalonians 5:15

## First RPC Durham

**I. Do Not Render Evil For Evil.**

**A.** There are times when we will be sinned against.

**B.** There is a response forbidden by God's Word

**1)** What this does not mean:

**a)** We are not forbidden from defending ourselves (Lk 11:21; Acts 25:10-11)

**b)** We are not prohibited from praying for the destruction of Christ's enemies (Psa 109:5-7).

**2)** What this does mean: We are not permitted to take personal vengeance (Lev 19:18)

**a)** We are not to respond insult for insult (Pr 26:4)

**b)** We are not to respond deceit for deceit (Gen 31:20; Mt 22:46)

**c)** We are not to retaliate sin for sin (2 Chr 24:29).

**C.** Reasons to encourage not rendering evil for evil:

**1)** Because God has forbidden sin (Psa 119:113)

**2)** Because God's curse is upon the wicked and we are therefore to be patient (Gen 4:15).

**3)** Because God will repay the wicked at the last day, even if they do not receive any judgment in this life (Rom 12:17, 19)

**4)** Because of the proper order and jurisdiction God has established (Rom 13:3-4; Mt 16:19)

**D.** Further applications for not rendering evil for evil

**1)** Guard your tongue (Jms 1:19, 3:6; Pr 21:23).

**2)** Rather than return evil with evil, warn them of their sin and God's wrath (1 Thes 5:14; Psa 141:5; Heb 12:7, 11).

**3)** If necessary, warn others (2 Tim 4:14-15)

**4)** Flee bitterness which leads to a vengeful spirit (Heb 12:14-15)

**II. Pursue That Which Is Good**

**A.** The nature of God's commands (Eph 4:22-24)

**B.** This is a duty always required

**1)** What this does not mean:

**a)** That there are not times when the best thing to do is walk away (Mt 10:14)

**b)** That the one rendering evil will always repent and you will be at peace again (Rom 12:18)

**2)** What this does mean (Mt 5:44)

**a)** Do not just show their sin, but instruct in righteousness

**b)** Do not just warn of God's wrath, but, if given an opportunity, share the Gospel (Mt 23:27).

**c)** Show kindness through service (Mt 5:41; 2 Kgs 5:2-3)

**d)** Be just in your work (Pr 20:22-23)

**e)** Pray for those who do you wrong (Lk 23:34; 1 Thes 1:3).

**C.** Reasons to encourage pursuing that which is good:

**1)** Because God has commanded us to do good.

**2)** Because we are aware of our own sins, and are exhorted to have humility (Mt 7:3-4)

**3)** Because the Lord is near to the brokenhearted who suffer evil at the hands of others (Psa 34:17-19)

**4)** Because our good works will burn in the wicked's conscience (Rom 12:20)

**5)** Because God could be at work in that person's heart (Acts 9)

**6)** Because our good works keep us above reproach (1 Pt 3:16)

**7)** Because of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pt 2:23; Rom 5:6-8)

**D.** Further applications for pursuing that which is good

**1)** When possible, cover sins in love (1 Pt 4:8; 1 Cor 13:7).

**2)** Draw out and build upon those traits which are good and evidence of grace (Gen 18:12, 1 Pt 3:6).

**3)** Commit the matter to God in prayer (Psa 36:4, 1:2).

**4)** Do not grow weary in doing good, even when it is unappreciated (Gal 6:9-10)

**III. This Command Directs Our Actions Toward Believers and Unbelievers Alike.**

**A.** We are to do good to believers and unbelievers alike (Gen 34:13).

**B.** What is it that is good for us and for all?

**1)** The glory of God manifested through the faithfulness of His people.

**2)** The building up of the Church in both salvation and sanctification.

**3)** The care of our neighbour both body and soul.

**C.** Considering the goodness of God.

**1)** God's Patience

**2)** God's common grace (Mt 5:45)

**3)** God's justice toward the elect and reprobate (Psa 34:21-22)

**D.** Herein we see our need:

**1)** For contentment in the Lord (Lam 3:20)

**2)** For the wisdom to know how to respond in each situation