

BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
EXHORTATION REGARDING REVENGE
1 THESSALONIANS 5:15

Introduction

The terms “*revenge*” and “*vengeance*” are translated from the same Hebrew and Greek words.

According to the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*:
In Scripture we find these two words used in the following ways:

- 1) They speak of repayment for ill treatment or injury or punishment for wrong doing.

Jeremiah 15:15 O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.

Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

When it is used in this sense, the term “vengeance” does not necessarily carry a sense of spite or maliciousness as it normally does in modern usage.

God avenges sin, not out of spite or meanness, but because of His holiness and justice!

- 2) The Old Testament speaks of the “*revenger of blood*”, which was a relative or friend who *avenged* the death of a loved one.
(Numbers 35:19-27; Deuteronomy 19:6, 12; Joshua 20:3-9)

But note also that under the Law, the LORD also provided six cities of refuge to provide a safe haven for the ones who killed without evil intent.

- 3) “*Revenge*” and “*vengeance*” can be speaking of “*justice*” or “*retribution*” in the sense of legal punishment of evil by either civil or ecclesiastical authorities. **(Luke 18:3-5; Romans 13:1-4)**

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Understand and know that the LORD established the Divine institution of government to exact His “*vengeance*” on evil doers when it is needed!

- 4) The time of the Great Tribulation is called the “*days of vengeance*” in **Luke 21:22** because during those days the LORD will pour out His wrath upon this wicked world! (“*The Day Of The LORD*”)
(Isaiah 2:10-22; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Revelation 19:2)

Understanding all that we just said, we see from Scripture that in the sense of paying back ill treatment, the Bible says the believer is to leave *vengeance* to God and God’s Divine institution of government!

I. DON’T RENDER EVIL FOR EVIL UNTO ANY MAN!

A. The Biblical Principles:

1. *Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

Leviticus 19:34 But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

2. *Proverbs 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

3. **Romans 12:17-21**

4. *Hebrews 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.*

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5. *1 Peter 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

B. The Biblical Examples:

1. **Joseph (*Genesis 37 - 50*)**
2. **David (*1 Samuel 24:1-22*)**

DON'T RENDER EVIL FOR EVIL...

II. EVER FOLLOW THAT WHICH IS GOOD!

A. The Biblical Principles:

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity...

1 Thessalonians 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

1 Timothy 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

1 Peter 3:8-13

3 John 1:11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

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B. The Biblical Examples:

1. **Jesus (*1 Peter 2:21-23*)**
2. **Paul (*1 Corinthians 13*)**

DON'T RENDER EVIL FOR EVIL...

EVER FOLLOW THAT WHICH IS GOOD...

III. DO THIS WITH BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS!

A. The Biblical Principles:

1. ***Romans 12:17-18 (Looked at previously)***
2. ***Galatians 6:10***

B. The Biblical Example:

Jesus died for all! All lives matter!

Conclusion

Your life matters to Jesus! Do you know Him? He died for you! Won't you come to Him as He seeks to deal with you in love? Because there is coming a time when He will be dealing in Divine justice! I can assure you that you don't want His justice! You need and should want His mercy and grace!

If you do know Him, are you one that deals out your own brand of revenge and vengeance? Could I tell you that I've found that the LORD can deal it out much better than I can! But you have to let Him! He wants you to have the love and character of Christ in your dealings with all men!

Leave that revenge and vengeance to Him! You'll be better off for it!