

Treating your Persecutors Biblically

Romans 12:14 **Bless** them which persecute you: **bless**, and **curse** not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 **Be** of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* **give** place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, **feed** him; if he thirst, **give** him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not **overcome** of evil, but **overcome** evil with good.

- Sadly though this passage is about being persecuted for serving Jesus most of us will never know anything about that
- This is not really about somebody who mistreated you just like happens to every body at some time or another
- You can however apply the principles

- You are a new creature, the love of God lives and dwells in you and should be shed abroad from your heart to a world that is around you

1. Why might Christians be persecuted? [12:14](#) **Bless** them which persecute you: **bless**, and **curse** not.

- a. Being hated by the world is to be expected [John 15:18](#) If the world hate you, ye know that it **hated me before it hated you.** [19](#) If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but **because ye are not of the world**, but **I have chosen you** out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. [20](#) Remember the word that I said unto you, **The servant is not greater than his lord.** If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. [21](#) But all these things will they do unto you **for my name's sake**, because **they know not him that sent me.** [16:1](#) These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. [2](#) They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will **think that he doeth God service.** [3](#) And these things

will they do unto you, because **they have not known the Father, nor me.**

- b. The world hates us because we do not belong to them, the world
 - i. Not being part of the world makes us different
 - ii. Not fitting their mold bothers them
 - iii. Their persecution of your Christian belief and life is an attempt to bring you into line with them, to force you into their mold
- c. The world hates us because we were chosen out of the world. There is a difference between us. We see it and understand that and so do they. When you say you belong to God they hear that they do not! They do not like that, obviously
- d. The world hates us because we are identified with Christ. We are His. We follow Him. We stand for Him and His causes. It affects every part of our lives so making the world, the antiGod thought pattern very uncomfortable and even angry!
- e. So persecution should come toward us for our faith. For living out who we are in Christ. That should spur us on to

react correctly to their persecution and mistreatment

2. Our attitude towards those that persecute us **12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15** Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
 - a. As believers we do the opposite of what is expected **Matthew 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:** for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if ye love them which love you, **what reward have ye?** do not even the publicans the same? **47** And if ye salute your brethren only, **what do ye more than others?** do not even the publicans so? **48** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

- b. We are to love our enemies-love is an action not an emotion. We are to do what love does
- c. We are to bless them. That is ask God to be good to them and give them what they need. We are not to ask God to curse them
- d. We are to find ways to do good to those that hate us
- e. We are to pray for them.
- f. We are acting like our Father acts. We are living out who we are.
- g. We are to feel what they feel as much as we can **15**
Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.
 - i. We want to be happy when they get the promotion
 - ii. We want to hurt when they hurt
 - iii. This will all be impossible without God doing something in our heart
 - iv. He will have to love through us because it goes against human nature
 - v. This is truly being a servant

- 3. How we are to treat others **16** **Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to**

men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17
Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest
in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth
in you, live peaceably with all men.

- a. The main application of this passage is about those that are persecuting us or mistreating us. These verses are sandwiched in the middle of that thought
- b. Not only are we to love, bless, do good and pray for those that persecute us but also among ourselves
 - i. We could let little things divide us
 - ii. We could expect our brothers and sisters in Christ to treat us right and get offended if they don't but we are not to do that
 - iii. Treat your brothers and sisters in Christ like you want to be treated
- c. The idea is to be friendly, easy to get along with.
- d. Don't consider yourself better than others
- e. Don't practice elitism or superiority with anyone
- f. Associate with people who are not as important as you are
- g. Be humble

h. Be honest and above board. Let them see you doing right

4. Do not seek vengeance **19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather give* place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* **20** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, **feed** him; if he thirst, **give** him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

a. We are not to avenge ourselves, retaliate, get satisfaction, punish in return for our mistreatment

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.

b. God gives us examples of the correct response in the book of Proverbs. **Proverbs 24:29** Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

i. We are to be filled with love not hate **Proverbs 10:12**
Hatred stirreth up strifes: But love covereth all sins.

- ii. We can ignore the insult or act like a fool
Proverbs 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: But a prudent *man* covereth shame.
- iii. I can respond with the right words Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: But grievous words stir up anger.
- iv. I can work at promoting love and understanding or causing division Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; But he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.
- c. We wait on God to take care of us Proverbs 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; **But wait on the Lord,** and he shall save thee.
- d. There is no secret, Christian way of getting vengeance. It is a new and different attitude Proverbs 24:17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, And let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 Lest the Lord see *it*, and it displease him, And he turn away his wrath from him.
- e. We treat our enemy with great kindness. This is not a weapon against him but rather genuinely loving him and praying that God will save him I Thessalonians 5:15 See

that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but **ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.**

- f. Very possibly Saul/Paul got saved because he saw how Stephen reacted to horrible persecution
 - g. Look for ways to show the love of God in the face of horrible mistreatment **Exodus 23:4** If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, **thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.** **5** If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, **thou shalt surely help with him.**
 - h. Your treatment of them is not about you or them but about honoring God in and through you **I 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.**
5. Overcome evil with good **21** Be not **overcome** of evil, but **overcome** evil with good.
- a. You do right knowing that God will reward you.
Proverbs 25:21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread

to eat; And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22

For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, **And the Lord shall reward thee.**

- b. We do not stoop to their level. We are children of our Father.
- c. We not only do not do wrong we do right [Ephesians 4:28](#)
Let him that stole **steal no more:** but **rather** let him labour, **working with his hands** the thing which is good, that he may **have to give to him that needeth.** 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, **but** that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
- d. Biblical Christianity is not about what you **do not do** but rather about what you do. It is not what you do really but who you are
- e. It is not the negative but the positive. We don't just not do wrong we do right
- f. You were not just saved from hell but saved to Him
- g. All of this new behavior is not something we do to be but rather what we do because of who we are

- Who are you angry with?
- Who do you want to get even with?
- Do you recognize who you are and who is living in you?
- Will you live out who you are in Christ?
- The word in the last verse, overcome, is in the imperative form. We are commanded not to let evil overcome us