

ROMANS TWELVE



BLESS, AND DO NOT CURSE

VERSE 14 | PAGE 1616

“Bless those who persecute you;
bless and do not curse.”

ROMANS 12:14

ONE INSTRUCTION, FOUR VOICES

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| ROMANS
12:14 | Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. |
| MATTHEW
5:44 | Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. |
| LUKE
6:27 | Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. |
| 1 PETER
3:9 | Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless... that you may obtain a blessing. |

TWO DISPOSITIONS

Here to bless all people—even enemies.

Never avenging ourselves—ever.

FOUR QUESTIONS

- I What does this literally mean?
- II What doesn't this mean—and what are its limiting principles?
- III Why does Jesus demand this?
- IV What are God's goods to us in this fearful command?



WHAT DOES THIS
LITERALLY MEAN?



“WHO PERSECUTE YOU”

Persecution is the harm of another person for something it is wrong or impossible for them to renounce.

Discrimination is exclusion on the basis of a just identity—Luke 6:22 explicitly includes exclusion “on account of the Son of Man.”

In scripture, persecution is explicitly for belonging to Jesus or doing good that is obedient to Jesus.

Bless

To **call down God's grace** upon someone for their temporal, personal, and everlasting good. To want holistic good to happen to them.

Curse

To **call down God's judgment** to destroy someone's life and condemn them. Its lesser forms: hatred, escalation, gossip, backbiting, detraction, revenge, exclusion.

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil... Do not
be overcome by evil, but overcome evil
with good.”

ROMANS 12:17, 21

AS CHRIST

JESUS “Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.”

STEPHEN “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”—and Saul was there.

PAUL The church's greatest missionary may be the answer to a dying man's blessing.

CHARITY TOWARD ENEMIES

Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Romans 12

Benevolence

Willing good to another, and not willing evil.

Concord

Seeking what we can agree on and cooperate in.

Beneficence

Doing good, and causing no injury to the one loved.

CHARITY TOWARD ENEMIES

Matthew Henry, Commentary on Romans 12

Speak well of

Speak well of them
in all ways possible
and honest.

Speak well to

Speak what you
need to gently
and respectfully

Wish them well

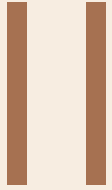
Bless them and do
not curse them in
real sincerity and in
actual prayer.

“Cursing ill becomes the mouths of
those whose work it is to bless God.”

MATTHEW HENRY

WHAT **beneficence** LOOKS LIKE

- No revenge, no matched insults, no evil for evil
- Concord where we can—without yoking
- Speaking well of them, respectfully to them, and to God for their good
- A benevolent attitude: desiring their good
- Beneficence: doing good, causing no injury
- Shrewd throughout—“it is to his glory to overlook an offence” (Prov 19:11)



WHAT DOESN'T
THIS MEAN?



MATTHEW 5:39, READ RIGHTLY

“Do not resist an evil person” **re-teaches “eye for an eye”**—it addresses insult and humiliation, injuries that can be borne and forgiven.

It is **prophetic hyperbole**—like “gouge out your eye”—meant to produce a serious response, not to rule on force.

It does not decide whether a Christian can protect a child, or serve as police, security, or military.

Scripture doesn't set its models
against its commands.

JOHN 18:23 · ACTS 25:11 · MATTHEW 10:23

IT DOES NOT MEAN...

- Lying, or silence in the face of lies or abuse—speak truth “with gentleness and respect”
- Staying put under abuse—“when you are persecuted in one place, flee to another” (Matt 10:23)
- Rejecting vital self-defense, legitimate force, or protecting others (Rom 13)
- It rejects revenge, escalation, and malevolence—wrath in justice requires an objectivity and purity only God has

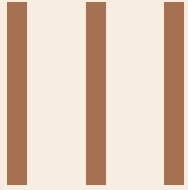
Purity isn't naivety.

Loving our enemies doesn't mean trusting them as friends. We love them as our enemies—until some of them become our friends.

Not weak. Meek.

Meekness governs the manner of engagement, not whether we engage.

Don't take an eye for an eye from
those who already cannot see.



WHY DOES JESUS
DEMAND THIS?



FOUR REASONS

Supernatural light—the Golden Rule is conceivable; a people that love their enemies is startling. It is the Christian's distinguishing characteristic.

Non-hypocrisy—we are redeemed by God loving his enemies. What we have freely received, we must freely give.

Devout humility—we are not just men; we are prone to self-justification, and rarely blameless in the rift.

Love of atonement—God loves paying for the debts of people. To abide in Jesus is to be ready to overcome evil with good.

IV

WHAT ARE GOD'S GOODS TO
US IN THIS FEARFUL
COMMAND?



GOD'S GOODS TO US

To teach us to love—we cannot love anyone like Christ until we learn to love our enemies.

To share the joy of saving God's enemies—kindness, not judgment, leads people to repentance.

To teach us to see—the wicked are under a curse already: blind, pitiable, poor, and lost.

To bless us everlastingly—no one can harm us without disproportionately blessing us for eternity.

To bond us to Christ—one with him in spirit, purpose, and activity.

“Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.”

LUKE 6:23

LUKE 24:51

While he blessed them, he parted from them
and was carried up into heaven.



“Bless those who persecute you; bless and
do not curse.”

ROMANS 12:14