

Transformed Attitudes – Part One

Romans 12:14

Romans 12:9-21 [New International Version]

- 9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.**
10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.
11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.
12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
14 Bless Those Who Persecute You; Bless And Do Not Curse.
15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.
17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.
18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.
20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."
21 Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Introduction:

Our task is to talk to you about something that we have almost no experience with and neither do most of you. Paul tells us in verse 14 to **"Bless Those Who Persecute You; Bless And Do Not Curse."** Most of us in America have not experienced anything comparable to the persecution that our brothers and sisters in other countries are facing.

Some of you may have been ostracized at work or suffered discrimination when it came time for a promotion because of your Christian faith. Perhaps family members have been rude to you because you're a Christian. Maybe a professor at the university ridiculed you in front of the class because you believe in God as the creator or you believe that homosexuality is sin. While I'm not belittling such persecution, I think you'd readily agree that it does not compare to seeing your loved ones slaughtered or having your house burned down and being forced to flee with only the clothes on your back.

But we may be facing increased persecution and difficult times in the future here in America, so we need to understand how to respond to persecution in a way that pleases God.

Let's get to verse 14: **"Bless Those Who Persecute You; Bless And Do Not Curse."**

You can tell a lot about a person by his or her attitude, especially when he is going through difficult times. The test of genuine change is when our attitudes change. This is especially true when we are treated wrongly, and our attitudes reflect the character of Christ. Paul's first command is not easy, but it is one that we need if we want to be like Christ:

1. Bless Our Enemies.

Paul repeats the command to bless for emphasis, adding the second time, "Do not curse." This verse assumes that we will face persecution as believers.

- **2 Timothy 3:12, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”**
- **1 Peter 3:13-17**
- **John 15:18-21**
- **Matthew 5:44, “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”**
- **Luke 6:27-28. “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”**
- **Luke 6:35-36, “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”**
- **Matthew 5:11-12, “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**
- **1 Corinthians 4:12b-13, “When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.”**
- **1 Peter 2:19-23, For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.**
- **1 Peter 3:9, “not returning evil for evil or insult for insult but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”**
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- **Luke 6:25, “He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.”**