# First Thessalonians 5:15

**5:15 <u>Paul exhorts them to avoid revenge and rather show goodness to each other and all men</u>.**

1. Taking the last of four duties in the previous verse, Paul expands on patient suffering.
   a. Being sinners, others will offend and irritate us, which is to be borne patiently.
   b. Since revenge is an instinct of sinful hearts, Paul condemned such conduct.
   c. Do you remember the elements of charity that refer to this action (I Cor 13:4-7)? As "suffereth long," "is not easily provoked," "beareth all things," and "endureth all things."
2. In contrast to revenge, or fighting evil with evil, he exhorts them to goodness instead.
   a. And it is to be done "ever," which indicates our uniform and constant duty to it.
   b. And this duty is to be shown to all church members and also all unbelievers.
   c. Jesus taught this plainly in forbidding the resistance of evil, which by the context is clearly personal offences easily borne by saints (Matthew 5:38-48).
   d. Paul opened this duty further in condemning revenge at Rome (Rom 12:17-21).
   e. The purest form of "revenge" is loving your enemy to death in spite of their evil.
3. The matter at hand is personal offences, not sins against God; and it concerns personal vengeance for personal offences, not the use of godly church censure and judgment.
   a. Effeminate Bible corrupters try to condemn all judgment, though there is nothing here or anywhere to condemn magistrates or other rulers from judgment.
      (1) Should parents stop disciplining children? Should governments stop prosecuting criminals? Should nations not defend themselves?
      (2) The "evil" under consideration here is private and personal offences.
   b. They pervert Matthew 7:1 to damn all judgment, but the close context ("for" and "and") limits it to unmerciful and hypocritical personal judgment (7:2-5).
      (1) With this perversion, Mother Teresa can condemn capital punishment.
      (2) With this perversion, Jane Fonda is a peacenik and opposed the military.
      (3) With this perversion, I can display stickers against corporal punishment.
      (4) With this perversion, I can holler against churches practicing discipline.
      (5) With this perversion, I can ridicule and resent church doctrinal stands.
      (6) With this perversion, I can mock and blaspheme strong Bible preaching.
      (7) With this perversion, I can blast naming and censuring sin and sinners.
      (8) These little perverts conveniently justify their judgment of Bible saints.
      (9) Of course they forget the same Lord blessed judgment (Jn 7:24; Jer 5:1).
   c. There is not one drop of mercy in this text for those sinning against God.
      (1) Nations and rulers are still to judge and punish evildoers (Romans 13:4).
      (2) Churches still judge sinning members and exclude them (I Cor 5:11-13).
      (3) Parents still discipline children for disobedience (Pr 23:13-14; Heb 12:6).
   d. The same Jesus, distorted by most into an effeminate hippie, judgmentally made a scourge for some Christian businessmen and applied judgment (John 2:12-17).
   e. This text does not condemn prosecuting criminals or seeking just damages or obtaining court orders for protection under the law from legitimate danger.
   f. There is a huge difference between a slap on the cheek and raping your wife, so that the first should be borne patiently and the last met with Smith & Wesson.
   g. As is often the case, we must rightly divide Scripture to avoid doctrinal shame.
4. This is one of the most beautiful rules of the Christian religion (Pr 20:22; I Peter 3:9).
   a. Rather than Jihad, or holy war against our enemies, we endure their offences.
   b. Is there a better way in which we can be as our Heavenly Father (Matt 5:43-48)?