

Non-Retaliation

TEXT: Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:17-21

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Acts 7:57-60

KEY VERSE: Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.
— Proverbs 24:17

Down through the ages, Christians have continually been opposed by Satan and his followers. The human instinct, when one has been attacked or injured, is to respond with vengeance and inflict punishment. However, God's Word teaches us that as Christians we are not to retaliate, and that His Spirit dwelling in us will give us power to stand even though we are afflicted or persecuted.

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us many instructions concerning Christian living. What did He say about our attitude toward those who would do us harm?

2. If we show love for our enemies, what has God promised to give us in return? See Luke 6:35,36.

3. What actions will we take toward our enemies if God's love is abiding in us? (Luke 6:27,28) Give an example, Biblical or otherwise, of one who was eventually brought to the Lord through a Christian's acting in this manner.

4. What responsibility does Romans 12:17,18 place on a Christian regarding his actions, whether in the company of believers or non-believers.

5. What is the general attitude of the non-Christian toward someone who does him wrong? (Proverbs 24:29) What should the Christian's attitude be toward someone who does him wrong? See 1 Peter 3:9.

6. How did the Christians retaliate when Satan's efforts threatened the Early Church? See Acts 4:15-31.

7. Previous questions have dealt with our reactions when attacked by an enemy. However, Satan often tries to bring disunity or hard feelings even between the brethren in Christ. When a difference arises, what are some ways we might be tempted to retaliate? What are some of the ways we can resist a response which would not be pleasing to Christ?

8. What should one do if faced with an enemy's threats which could cause one to compromise his Christian principles? See Acts 5:27-29.

9. What does Peter tell us we should do when we are reproached by others and suffer because we are Christians? See 1 Peter 4:12-16.