

# 1 Peter 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

## Analysis

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Peter addresses retaliation. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing" (μὴ ἀποδιδοὺς κακὸν Ἅντι κακοῦ ἐλοιδαρίαν Ἅντι λοιδορίας)—don't repay evil with evil or insult with insult. The command echoes Jesus (Matthew 5:38-42). The alternative: "but contrariwise blessing" (τούναντιν δὲ εὐλογοῦντες)—respond to evil and insults with blessing, prayer, well-wishing. The reason: "knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλέθητε ἡναὶ εὐλογίαν κλέρονομέσετε). Christians are called to bless rather than curse, promised that this behavior results in receiving blessing—from God and sometimes even from transformed enemies.

## Historical Context

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In honor-shame culture, retaliation for insults was expected—maintaining honor required responding to slights. Jesus and Peter radically challenge this, commanding blessing instead of revenge. This supernatural response distinguished Christians from surrounding culture. Early church's non-retaliatory response to persecution perplexed observers and sometimes shamed persecutors into repentance. The promise that blessing others results in receiving blessing demonstrates kingdom economics—giving produces receiving, loving enemies defeats them more effectively than revenge.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What specific situations tempt you toward retaliation rather than blessing, and how can you respond differently?
2. How does knowing you're 'called' to bless (not curse) change your response to insults or mistreatment?

## Interlinear Text

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μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακοῦ ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἢ λοιδορίας ἀντὶ

**Not** **rendering** **evil** **for** **evil** **or** **railing** **for**

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λοιδορίας τούναντίον δὲ εὐλογοῦντες εἰδότες ὅτι

**railing** **contrariwise** **but** **a blessing** **knowing** **that**

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εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε ἵνα εὐλογίαν κληρονομήσητε

**thereunto** **called** **that** **blessing** **ye should inherit**

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## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 20:22** (Evil): Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

**Romans 12:17** (Evil): Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

**Romans 12:14** (Blessing): Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

**1 Thessalonians 5:15** (Evil): See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

**Matthew 5:44** (Blessing): 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;

**Proverbs 17:13** (Evil): Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

**Ephesians 4:32** (Parallel theme): And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

**Matthew 5:39** (Evil): But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

**1 Peter 5:10** (Parallel theme): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

**Romans 8:28** (Parallel theme): And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.