



# Pursue the Good for Others, Even Your Offenders

**1 Thessalonians 5:15**

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See that no one repays another with evil for evil,  
but always seek after that which is good  
for one another and for all people.

# Main Point

God has done good to us through Christ and calls us to imitate Him in doing good to others, even those who wrong us.

# Pursue the Good for Others

Two responses when an offense is given  
or a wrong is done.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

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for one another and for all people.

A faded topographic map of a region, likely in the Balkans, showing a network of rivers and terrain contours. The map is light-colored with blue lines for water and brown lines for land elevation. The text is overlaid on the map.

# Two Responses to Wrongs Done

We return evil for evil.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

See that no one repays another with evil for evil.

## **Proverbs 20:22**

Do not say, “I will repay evil”;  
Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

## **Proverbs 24:29**

Do not say, “Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me;  
I will render to the man according to his work.”

**Clearly, this is a common temptation!**

**Romans 12:17**

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.

**1 Peter 3:8-9**

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;  
**not returning evil for evil or insult for insult.**



# Why is the temptation so great?

- We are moral creatures who still have a strong sense of justice.
- We struggle to trust God to do right.
- We have an inflated sense of self and believe we deserve better.
- Vengeance feeds the flesh.

## **Romans 12:19**

Never take your own revenge, beloved,  
but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written,  
*“Vengeance is mine, I will repay,”* says the Lord.

# **How do we return evil for evil?**

- We insult when insulted.
- We gossip and slander and discredit.
- We accuse when accused.
- We obstruct.
- We withhold or withdraw or ignore.



# Two Responses to Wrongs Done

We return evil for evil.

We pursue the good for the offender.

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## 1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one repays another with evil for evil,

but **always** *persecute the good*

for one another and for all people.

## **Psalm 34:13-14**

Keep your tongue from evil  
And your lips from speaking deceit.  
Depart from evil and do good;  
Seek peace and pursue it.



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The righteous response  
to those who persecute you is to  
“persecute” them with good.

# Pursue the Good for Others

Two responses when an offense is given or a wrong is done.

Why go in pursuit of the good for those  
who wrong you?



# **Why Pursue the Good for Offenders?**

Because this is how God has treated you.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one repays another with evil for evil,  
but **always seek after that which is good**  
for one another and for all people.

The Lord has done good to you and  
is always pursuing the good for you.

**Psalm 119:65 and 68**

You have dealt well with Your servant,  
O LORD, according to Your word.

You are good and do good.

**He does good to you and to all!**

**Matthew 5:47**

He causes His sun to rise on the evil **and** the good,  
and sends rain on the righteous **and** the unrighteous.

If you are a Christ follower, He did the greatest good to you *before* you loved Him and *while* you were hostile to Him.

**1 John 4:10**

In this is love, **not that we loved God**, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**Colossians 1:21-22**

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death.



If we truly understand the good that God has done to us in spite of ourselves, we will be humbled, and we will be filled with grace toward others, even those who wrong us.

## **Matthew 18:32-33**

Then summoning him, his lord said to him,  
“You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because  
you pleaded with me. Should you not also have  
had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way  
that I had mercy on you?”

# Why Pursue the Good for Offenders?

Because this is how God has treated you.

Because we are children of our Father.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

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## **Matthew 5:43-47**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘*you shall love your neighbor* and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

## Matthew 5:43-47

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**so that you may be sons of your Father  
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for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good,  
and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

## **Ephesians 5:1-2**

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;  
and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you  
and gave Himself up for us, an offering  
and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.



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and walk in love, **just as Christ also loved you**

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and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

God *is* love,  
and we are His children.  
This changes everything!

# Why Pursue the Good for Offenders?

Because this is how God has treated you.

Because we are children of our Father.

**Because we have been called  
for this purpose.**

## **Ephesians 4:1-2**

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord,  
implore you to walk in a manner worthy  
of the calling with which you have been called,  
with all humility and gentleness, with patience,  
showing tolerance for one another in love.

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## **1 Peter 2:21-23**

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.

We have been given the glorious calling of imitation so that we might call attention to the glory of Christ, a glory most seen in His love.

It is this Christ-like love that will most distinguish us from the world!

## **Matthew 5:46-47**

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

# Pursue the Good for Others

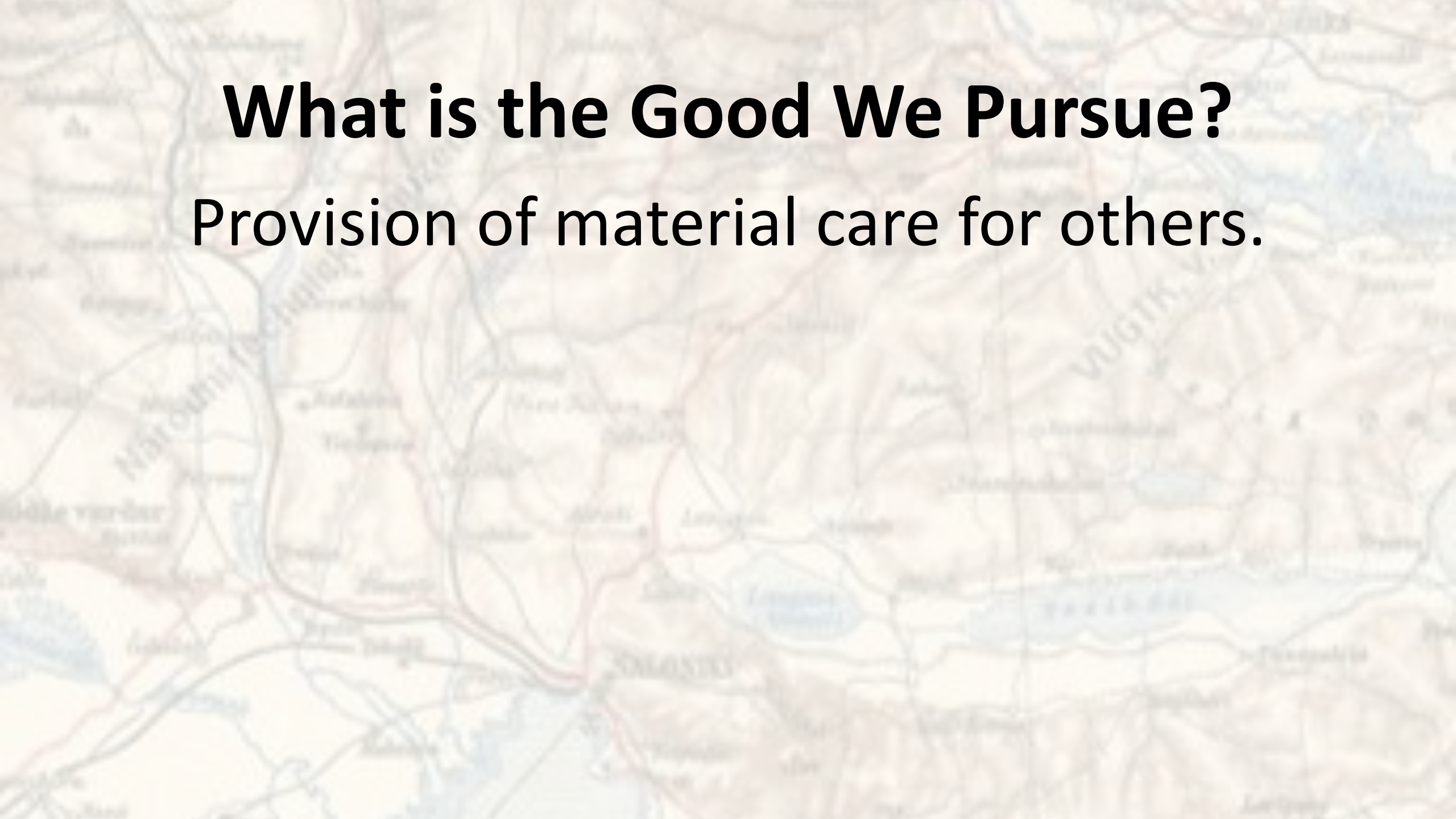
Two responses when an offense is given or a wrong is done.

Why go in pursuit of the good for those who wrong you?

## What is the good that we should pursue?

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# **What is the Good We Pursue?**

Provision of material care for others.

## **Romans 12:19-21**

Never take your own revenge, beloved,  
but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written,  
*“Vengeance is mine, I will repay,”* says the Lord.

*“But if your enemy is hungry, feed him,  
and if he is thirsty, give him a drink.”*

## **Matthew 5:47**

He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good,  
and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

## **Galatians 6:9-10**

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

## **1 John 3:17**

But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?



Providing for the material needs of others is a tangible expression of care and concern for them, and it mirrors the love of God.

# What is the Good We Pursue?

Provision of material care for others.

Provision of spiritual care for others.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

See that no one repays another with evil for evil,  
but always **seek after that which is good**  
for one another and for all people.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:14**

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly,  
encourage the fainthearted, help the weak,  
be patient with everyone.

**Romans 12:14**

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

**1 Peter 3:8-9**

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic,  
brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;  
not returning evil for evil or insult for insult,  
but giving a blessing instead.

**Romans 12:14**

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To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic,  
brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;  
not returning evil for evil or insult for insult,  
but **giving a blessing** instead.

## **Matthew 5:44**

“But I say to you, love your enemies  
and pray for those who persecute you.”

**What do you pray for them?**

## **Ephesians 1:18**

I pray that the eyes of your heart  
may be enlightened.

The greatest need anyone has is Christ;  
so, the greatest good they could receive  
is Christ Himself.

Christ is the greatest good we pursue  
for one another and for everyone,  
even our enemies.



# Conclusion

Are you tempted to return evil for evil?

Are you pursuing the good  
for those around you, even for those  
who wrong you?

Consider your condition when  
Christ loved you.

Consider your calling.