

Bless and Do Not Curse

Christ Fellowship Church | October 18, 2026 | Romans 12:14

_____ and do not _____ those who persecute you. (12:14)

- “*Bless*” means to do something to benefit another person. It is primarily used in the context of the words we use. Therefore, to bless is to speak in a way as to benefit another person. Primarily, this means to speak well of someone or request God’s favor upon them.
- “*Curse*” means to do something to harm another person. It also primarily refers to the words we use. Therefore, to curse is to speak in a way to intentionally harm another person. Primarily, this means to speak bad of someone or request God’s judgment upon them.
- Therefore, bless means to use our words to benefit another person, and curse means to use our words to harm another person.
- “*Persecute*” means to run after or pursue. Specifically, it means to pursue someone for the purpose of doing them harm/evil.
- While we are supposed to bless all people, here Paul is referring to the people that persecute us. We should bless them with our words no matter what persecution they have done to us. Paul will discuss our actions later (12:20).
- This is a revolutionary concept. We are born wanting to return evil for evil – whether we act upon that desire or not. To respond to evil with evil is what the world does. To respond to evil with blessing is what Christians do. But what about an eye for an eye? That applies to gov’t, not individuals. (Ex. 21:23-24)
- This will require much renewing of our minds from God’s Word. I can’t cover every situation and every nuance in this sermon. Let’s start:
- Persecution is guaranteed for all Christians. (2 Tim. 3:12)
- Persecution refers to suffering for acting like a Christian. (1 Pet. 4:12-16)
- Persecution can take many forms. It can be everything from imprisonment and death (Acts 22:4) to slander and reviling (Matt. 5:10-12). It can be in response to sharing the gospel (Gal. 5:11) or how we live our lives (1 Pet. 3:13-17). Generally speaking, persecution is any form of hatred or abuse received for being a Christian (Luke 6:27-28).
- Christians are blessed when we are persecuted for Christ. (Luke 6:22-23)
- It should cause us to pause and evaluate our life if we have never been persecuted for being a Christian. It could mean you aren’t a Christian, or that you claim Christ but aren’t openly living like a Christian, or persecution is just around the corner. (Luke 6:26)

- What would cursing look like? Responding in the same way we were treated, slander, gossip, praying for them to be condemned to Hell, praying for horrible things to happen to them, hateful speech toward or about them, and more.
- What does blessing look like? It is more than just not cursing. It is actively desiring good for those who persecute us. **(Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60)** Blessing persecutors is part of sincere love that abhors evil and clings to good. It doesn't mean that we excuse evil or act as if it's not evil. Rather, we choose to respond to evil according to God's Word.
- Pray for them. Pray for God to convict them of their sin, pray for them to repent and seek forgiveness, pray for their salvation, ask God for opportunities to do them good and/or share the gospel with them. **(Matt. 5:44** same word as "abuse" in Luke 6:28)
- Do not revile in return. Do not criticize, speak about in an insulting way, or use sinful language toward them. Rather, speak kindly to them and respectfully about them. **(1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 3:9; Col. 4:6)**
- Call them to repentance, especially if they claim Christ. **(Matt. 18:15; Jam. 5:19-20)**
- Forgive them if/when they repent and ask for it. **(Col. 3:13)**
- You very well may look foolish choosing to bless instead of retaliate. **(1 Cor. 4:10-13)**

Random thoughts: **1)** The Christian life is to be lived focused primarily on Christ and others. This includes blessing our persecutors. In order to bless persecutors our concern has to be more for the other person than it is on our pain or getting even. **2)** We can't just stop cursing persecutors. We have to replace cursing with blessing (put off put on). Responding in kind is a learned sinful habit. So too, responding with blessing is a godly learned habit. **3)** We must renew our minds in God's Word, then offer our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, ask the Holy Spirit to help us, and then choose to bless rather than curse. **4)** God often uses us blessing our persecutors to bring them to salvation. **5)** God may vindicate you in this life, or He may not. However, He will vindicate you on Judgment Day and eternity. **6)** Blessing persecutors rather than cursing them is what it looks like to follow Christ and His example. **(1 Pet. 2:20-25)**

Study Romans 12:15-16 for next week.