

15.

Bless and do not curse them

Romans 12:14b

Following Christ requires the grace of God. This means that we wake up each morning aware that we are at this moment needing God's grace for this day because yesterday's has all gone. The prayer that sounds like-"God I can't do this!" is the kind of prayer that is actually a plea for God's grace if it is preceded with, "Please help me." And perhaps there is no greater need for God's grace to live the Christian life than when it comes to how we respond to those who demonstrate their hate for us. The Gospel does not call us just to *ignore* them. Neither does it call us simply resist taking revenge.

1. Who is the object of Romans 12:14b?
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It is very difficult to speak evil of someone whom we are praying for God to bless in every way.

2. How does Luke 6:28 make Christianity different to all other religions?
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3. What is one of the most powerful instruments of blessing and cursing according to James 3:10?
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We may be tempted to think that *cursing* is something that only wizards and witches could do. But cursing most commonly involved speaking evil of someone (note Exodus 21:17). It included expressing *hate* for someone (note Job 2:9).

4. How does First Corinthians 4:12 reveal the apostle Paul's spiritual maturity?
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5. Who is changed by applying Romans 12:14b?

How we respond to those who ridicule us and express hatred toward us is often a more powerful witness to those who observe us

6. If you have lived your Christian life by cursing those who have injured you, what should you do now?

Amen.