

Romans even though they were considered as disloyal and betrayers in time of a national crisis. The Christians were more loyal to their Savior than to their nation.

In **Matthew 16:24-26**, the disciples were commanded to take up their cross and follow Christ (not take up their sword). In the first century, the Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods (**Hebrews 10:34**) and loved not their lives unto the death (**Revelation 12:11**). They were counted as sheep for the slaughter, imitating their Lord and Master (**Romans 8:36**), and were more than conquerors through suffering (**Romans 8:38**). In **Acts 7:60**, Stephen prayed for his executioners. Paul, in **II Timothy 4:6**, was willing to lay down his life, and Pricilla and Aquila in **Romans 16:4** jeopardized their lives for the Lord and for their preacher. The churches suffered much for the Kingdom of God (**I Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14-15; Revelation 2:9-11, and Philipians 1:27-29**).

The early church had one sword, the sword of the spirit, and turned the world upside down (**Acts 17:6**). As one writer said, "In less than three hundred years by prayer, teaching and preaching, they won so much of the populous to Christ, from slaves and peasants to those of Caesar's household, that the pagan state wanted to join them, but the state church attempted to use two swords, the sword of the spirit and the sword of the magistrates." The unholy marriage of church and state since Constantine and Augustine's new policy of just wars has been a curse to God's people. Fallen man cannot carry out just war, for evil does not put out evil. The true church does not take up the sword.

## CONCLUSION

The Christian is to leave vengeance and retaliation to God (**Romans 12:14, 17-21**) and realize his battle is spiritual warfare (**II Corinthians 10:1-4**). Again, there is not one verse in the New Testament that gives believers the authority to take up the sword for violence or war. Amen.

*"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (I Peter 2:21-23)*



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*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."  
Acts 16:31*

# The RICHIES

OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed  
December 2012

# Nonresistance

*"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."*

Matthew 5:9

## + The Biblical Doctrine of Nonresistance +

Nonresistance is not a war doctrine but a way of life for the Christian. It is to be practiced in time of peace as well as in time of war, for the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (**Romans 14:17**). This truth will revolutionize our life, home, church, and even society. The New Testament believers are called to a higher standard. The followers of Jesus Christ are sanctified by the blood of Christ under the New Covenant. They have the Word of God written on their hearts and empowered by the Holy Spirit (**Hebrews 10:9-21**). Disciples are to follow their Savior in non-violence for the Kingdom's sake (**I Peter 2:21-25**). This should be the desire of every Christian. Amen.

"If there be anything which the book denounces and counts the hugest of all crimes, it is the crime of war. Put up thy sword into thy sheath, for hath not He said, "Thou shalt not kill", and He meant not that it was a sin to kill one but a glory to kill a million, but He meant that bloodshed on the smallest or largest scale was sinful."

- C. H. Spurgeon

This article is only a brief summary on nonresistance. There has been much written over the centuries by many authors. Please consider a serious investigation of this Biblical Truth. The term nonresistance is derived from the words of Jesus in **Matthew 5:39**, “*That ye resist not evil.*”

### THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST: CHRIST’S WORDS

The sermon on the mount (**Matthew 5-7**) was the first teaching of our Savior for the purpose of instructing His disciples on how to live in view of the coming Kingdom. Virtually every part of this sermon is repeated elsewhere in the New Testament by the apostles. Nowhere did Jesus speak more completely on the Christian life than here. In this sermon, the Lord presents a very high standard for the New Testament believers. From **chapter five** to **chapter seven** there are a number of subjects discussed. The Lord begins with the Beatitudes which are attributes describing character and conduct. In **Matthew 5:9**, the Christian is characterized as a peacemaker, “*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*” The peacemaker is someone who is a promoter of peace, the opposite of war and fighting. According to **verses 10-12**, believers are to endure suffering and persecution with joy knowing that it is a part of the Christian life. The Lord Jesus also taught that to be angry with a brother is equivalent to murder in **verses 21-26**.

We are told to **resist not evil** in **Matthew 5:39**, which speaks against retaliation. The passage prohibits the taking of private vengeance and from **verse 39-42**, there are three examples given. Whether it be personal or judicial injustice, the kingdom saint is to endure patiently the unjust treatment that comes from evil men, **vs. 39**, “*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.*” Also, the followers of Christ are to **love their enemies** in **Matthew 5:44**, “*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.*” To love a person who has cursed you, and hated you, or persecuted you is the highest test of true Christianity. According to **Matthew 5:43-48**, it is common for us to love those who love us, but it is Christian to love those who hate us. When we love this way we resemble our Heavenly Father (**Matthew 5:45**) and we are obedient to the command to be perfect (**Matthew 5:48**). It was God’s love to me as a sinner and enemy of God that drew me to saving faith in the Lord Jesus (**Romans 5:5-11**).

### THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST: CHRIST’S LIFE

In **I Peter 2:21**, Christ is presented as our perfect model or pattern to follow, “*For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.*” The context is the subject of suffering, that is, unjust treatment (**I Peter 2:19-25**). Not only did Christ teach nonviolence, He practiced it in His life and commands us to do the same. We are called unto salvation in **I Peter 2:9** and called to suffer in **I Peter 2:21**. Our Savior did not retaliate when persecuted, but committed Himself to the Father and so should we (**I Peter 2:22-25**). Please keep in mind, that Peter wrote this epistle during the reign of Nero when the church endured much opposition. Throughout the New Testament, we see the peaceable character of Christ as the suffering servant (**Matthew 12:17-21; 21:5; Isaiah 52:13; 53:9**).

In **Matthew 11:28-29**, the Lord said to His disciples “*...Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls....*” This is true manhood and spiritual strength. The Savior was strong, bold, firm, and at the same time, loving, compassionate, gentle, forgiving, kind, peaceful, meek, and lowly. He never defended Himself by violence to save His life, but he did at times escape from violence (**Luke 4:28-30; John 8:59;10:39**). In **Luke 9:55**, Jesus rebuked James and John for the spirit of anger and retaliation toward the Samaritans. In **Luke 23:34**, our Savior prayed for His executioners while on the cross. He said, “*Father forgive them; for they know not what they do....*” The Lord nor His servants took up the sword, for His Kingdom was not of this world (**John 18:36**). Again, Jesus was meek and gentle (**II Corinthians 10:1**), harmless (**Hebrews 7:26**), and suffered in the flesh for us (**I Peter 4:1**). In our last verse we are told to arm ourselves with the same mind. Our Lord and Savior is the Prince of Peace (**Isaiah 9:6**) and everything about Him promoted peace: His birth (**Luke 2:14**), His Gospel (**Romans 10:15**), and His Kingdom (**Romans 14:17**).

### THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST: CHRIST’S CHURCH

From apostolic times throughout church history, the true remnant of God did not take up the sword to kill and murder. In the first century the apostles or the church did not fight. In A.D. 70, the Christians did not fight with the Jewish zealots who were considered patriots of their nation. The believers were commanded by the Lord to flee when they saw the armies of Rome (**Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24**). They did not participate in the wars between the Jews and the