



MERCIFUL LIVING with OUR ENEMIES by the Mercies of God in Christ • Part 2

Lesson 4 • Romans 12:17-21

Two Basic Rules for Handling Those Who Hurt You or Hate You:

- **The Get Even Rule:** Do to others *what* they do to you or even better...do it to them *before* they do it to you!
- **The Golden Rule:** Do to others what you would *want* them to do to you but even better... do for them what God has *already* done for you in Christ! *Romans 12:17-21*

Putting the Passage into Perspective:

- 1) It refers to being hurt or hated due to *Christlikeness*, not our own *foolishness* or *sinfulness*. *1Peter 4:14*
- 2) It focuses on enemies who are outsiders, but it applies to *all* people—even *insiders*.
- 3) It applies to *personal relationships* not *national responsibilities* to protect against enemies. *Romans 13:1-7*
- 4) It presents merciful living for those who have *already received* God's mercy; *it's difficult but doable by the mercies of God in Christ!*

How to Handle Those Who Hurt or Hate Us

1. Resist your instinct for REVENGE. (v. 17)

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ESV

What is the most HONORABLE WAY to respond to the hurt and the hate?

2. Pursue a lifestyle of PEACE. (v. 18)

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ESV

*So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Romans 14:19
Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14
Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. Psalms 34:14*

- Peace is *possible* when you offer it and they *accept* it.
- Peace is *impossible* when you repeatedly offer it and they repeatedly *reject* it.

What is the most PEACEABLE WAY to keep responding to the hurt and the hate?

You can *still live in peace* and *still pursue peace*, even when your enemies *repeatedly reject your offers of peace!*

- 1) Keep *praying* for them! *Philippians 4:6-7; Isaiah 26:3*
- 2) Keep *doing* your part to pursue peace with them! *Philippians 4:9*

3. Get out of _____ . (v. 19)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ESV

Beloved [of God], stop avenging yourselves and never do it again, instead leave room for the wrath [of God], for it is written, MINE is vengeance! I, MYSELF, will repay, says the LORD. CAR

Why Should We Get Out of the Way of God's Judgment?

- 1) His _____ is vengeance; it's not ours!
- 2) His _____ is better than ours—and His mercy is greater than ours!
- 3) His _____ is perfect and His judgments are unsearchable by us!
Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you. Proverbs 20:22
Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. Deut 32:35
- 4) His _____ for us can be trusted, even when we are being hurt or hated!

What is the most TRUSTING WAY to respond to the hurt and the hate?

4. Kill them with _____. (v. 20)

To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

- Mercy is shown in **simple acts of kindness**.
- Mercy shown in simple acts of kindness can be **condemning** or **convicting**.

This is what **"heaping hot coals on their head"** means! *Romans 2:4; 11:22*

"I take a simpler view, that his mind shall be turned to one side or another; for doubtless our enemy shall either be softened by our benefits, or if he be so savage that nothing can tame him, he shall yet be burnt and tormented by the testimony of his own conscience, on finding himself overwhelmed with our kindness." ~John Calvin

"The coals of fire this may heap on him are intended to heal, not to hurt, to win, not to alienate, in fact, to shame him into repentance." ~John Stott

What is the KINDEST WAY to respond to the hurt and the hate?

5. Get the victory by being _____ and doing _____. (v. 21)

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. ESV

What is the most VICTORIOUS WAY to respond to the hurt and the hate?

**Those who delight in giving God the glory He deserves,
will determine to give their enemies the mercy they don't deserve!**

By the mercies of God: Resist your natural instinct for revenge. Pursue a lifestyle of peace. Get out of the way of God's judgment. Kill them with kindness. Get the victory over your enemies by being godly and doing good to them.