

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> helpful response to calm aggression is ...*

### 3. Do all that we can to live peaceably with everyone.

#### a. If possible ... live peaceably with all men.

- 1) The preservation of peace is not always in our control. God knows that some people are so aggressive and evil that peace with them is not possible.
- 2) Even if you do not retaliate, they will keep aggravating and agitating the situation so that peace cannot exist. Jesus lived peaceably, but his life was not one of peace. His enemies never backed off until they had crucified Him.

#### b. "As much as lieth in you" speaks of your part.

- 1) You cannot control how others act or what they say, but you CAN, with God's help, control your input in the situation.
- 2) The phrase "as much as lieth in you" can literally be translated "the part that comes from you".
- 3) If it is impossible to live in peace with someone, God does not want it to be our fault. To this, Charles Hodge comments, "The cause of conflict must not arise from you. Your duty is to preserve peace."
- 4) In concluding his second book to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote, (2 Corinthians 13:11) "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (Psalms 34:14) "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."
- 5) Seek to be a peacemaker, not an agitator.

**Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit has given us three helpful responses to calm aggression from others. 1) Do not retaliate! Yield to the Holy Spirit, not to your flesh. Treat others as you want to be treated. 2) Prepare an excellent response. Meditate on how God wants you to react and respond to that person the next time he or she does evil to you. 3) Do all that you can to live peaceably. Be a peacemaker. Speak softly and kindly. (Colossians 4:6) "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

**Song:** Cleanse Me - 166

# Calming Aggression

*9 October 2022 AM – Romans 12:17-18 – Rom2022 – Scott Childs*

**Introduction:** What are we to do when people are eager to fight, and are trying to stir us up. It might be your boss, a colleague, your spouse, your child or your neighbour. He just keeps pushing all your irritation buttons. She says and does things that get under your skin.

**Transition:** What are we to do when someone becomes aggressive, hurtful or evil toward us? **Read text.** The Holy Spirit guided Paul to give us three responses that will help to calm aggression from others.

*The 1<sup>st</sup> helpful response to calm aggression is ...*

## 1. Do not retaliate!

### a. We must resist our fleshly feelings.

- 1) Our fleshly feeling is to **do to others AS they have done to us**. We learned this as children. "She hit me, so I hit her back." "He said I was fat, so I kicked him."
- 2) The Bible abounds with examples of retaliation. Esau plotted to kill Jacob because he stole his blessing. Simeon and Levi killed all the men of Shechem because one of them men slept with their sister. Samson killed scores of Philistines because they did cruel things to him. Absalom killed Amnon because he raped his sister. James and John asked Jesus if they could call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan city that would not give them lodging (Lu 9:54).
- 3) Jesus admonished in Matthew 5:38, "**Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:**" (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;**"
- 4) God repeats this same warning in 1 Peter 3:9. "**Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.**"

### b. We must apply this rule to every situation.

- 1) The phrase "**to no man**" makes it clear that we must not

retaliate to **anyone**, believer or unbeliever. It is not God's will that we retaliate personally when someone attacks us. If what they did was unlawful, we must let the government handle it.

- 2) Responding properly **is** possible.
  - a) Joseph responded properly to his brother's evil. Once he became the prime minister, he could have easily returned evil for all the evil they did to him, but he forgave them instead.
  - b) David responded right when Saul plotted to kill him. On at least two occasions, David could have killed Saul, but David left Saul in the hands of the Lord.
- 3) **In your life, how might this look?**
  - a) If your spouse hurts your feelings, do not seek to hurt back.
  - b) If your friend is unkind, do not be unkind back.
  - c) If your neighbour is unreasonable, do not treat him the same way.
- 4) A number of years ago I shared this illustration, but it is worth repeating. "A Christian lady owned two prize chickens that got out of their run and busied themselves in the garden of an ill-tempered neighbor. The man caught the hens, wrung their necks, and threw them back over the fence. Naturally, the woman was upset, but she didn't get angry and rush over and scream at him. Instead, she took the birds, dressed them out, and prepared two chicken pies. Then she delivered one of the freshly baked pies to the man who had killed her hens. She apologized for not being more careful about keeping her chickens in her own yard. Her children, expecting an angry scene, hid behind a bush to see the man's face and hear what he'd say. But he was speechless! That chicken pie and apology filled him with a burning sense of shame. But she wasn't trying to get even. Her motive in returning good for evil was to show her neighbor true Christian love, and maybe even bring about a change of heart." – H.V.L. Our Daily Bread, April

<sup>15</sup> So, our 1<sup>st</sup> response ought to be not to retaliate!

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> helpful response to calm aggression is ...*

## 2. Prepare an excellent response to aggression.

### a. This calls for our preparation.

- 1) A closer look at the phrase "**provide things**" give us important insight. It comes from a word that means to foresee or to plan ahead.
- 2) God is asking us to plan ahead in our hearts for times that others will do evil to us. If we do not carefully plan ahead of time, we will often respond to evil with more evil. Retaliation is our natural response, but God wants us to **prepare a better response**. Matthew 7:12 <sup>Therefore all things...</sup>

### b. Our response must be excellent in the sight of all.

- 1) Note the word **honest**. In 83 of the 102 times this word is found in the Bible, the KJV translates it "good". It describes that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, admirable, or commendable. It is outward goodness.
- 2) **We are to respond to evil in such a way that all who see our response will have to admit that it was excellent, good, surpassing or admirable.**
- 3) That kind of excellent response to evil requires inner preparation and planning. It does not just happen.
  - a) When your spouse does something to you that upsets you, is your response excellent in the sight of your children, of your neighbours over the fence and most of all, of God who sees and hears it all?
  - b) When your boss treats you in an unfair way, do your co-workers, family and friends see and hear you respond in an excellent and admirable way?
- 4) Responding in an excellent manner takes careful forethought, prayer and dependence on the Lord. (Proverbs 15:1) "**A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.**" (Proverbs 15:28) "**The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.**"