

- 3) It is the good that God can do through us. The good includes deeds of kindness toward evildoers (v.20).
 - 4) The good includes the many challenges given us in this chapter, beginning with verse 9.
 - a) Agape love (v.9); Brotherly love (v.10); Distributing to the necessity of saints (v.13); Bless your persecutors (v.14); Rejoice with grievors (v.15); Not recompensing evil for evil (v.17); Seeking to live peaceably (v.18).
 - b) By not avenging yourself (v.19).
 - 5) The good includes forgiving evil, as Christ did. (Ephesians 4:32) **"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."**
- b. We must overcome the evil with the good.**
- 1) Joseph was an amazing example of overcoming evil with good. Speaking to his cruel brothers, he said, (Genesis 50:20-21) **"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."**
 - 2) Doing good may convict the offender.
 - 3) Doing good can keep us from sinning.

Conclusion: We have examined the three ways that God wants us to respond to evil. 1) We are to be kind to our enemies. 2) We are not to let evil overcome us. 3) We must overcome evil with good. Underline them in your Bible or write them in the margin of your Bible. You are going to need these. If you live a godly life, evil people will oppose you. You will have some enemies. They may be in your family, on your street, or in your workplace. When someone opposes you, God wants you to flesh out these verses.

Responding in these good ways requires God's help. If you are a Christian, you need to be in fellowship with the Lord. If you are not yet a Christian, I urge you to place your faith in Christ today.

Song: More Like the Master - 325

Responding to Evil

23 October 2022 AM – Romans 12:20-21 – Rom2022 – Scott Childs

Introduction: "After Jim Elliot and four other missionaries were killed by Huaorani tribesmen in 1956, no one expected what happened next. Jim's wife, Elisabeth, their young daughter, and another missionary's sister willingly chose to make their home among the very people who killed their loved ones. They spent several years living in the Huaorani community, learning their language, and translating the Bible for them. These women's testimony of forgiveness and kindness convinced the Huaorani of God's love for them and many received Jesus as their Savior." <https://odb.org/AU/2020/01/18/instead-of-revenge> Elizabeth and her friend responded to evil as God tells us to respond in our text. **Read Romans 12:20-21.**

Transition: In these concluding verses of Romans 12, God specifies three ways that we are to respond to evil.

The first way we are to respond to evil is to ...

1. Be kind to our enemies

a. "Therefore" points us back to Romans 12:19

- 1) We have no right to avenge evil done to us.
- 2) God alone has the right to avenge, and he will.

b. Because of this, we must be kind to enemies.

- 1) The word **enemy** describes one who hates us, opposes us, or is hostile to us. In the context, he is the one on whom we are tempted to take vengeance (v.19).
- 2) Instead of trying to punish him or her, we are to take advantage of opportunities to be a blessing to that person.
 - a) If our enemy might be hungry, we are to feed him.
 - b) If he might be thirsty, we are to give him something to drink.
 - c) Offering food and water are just two examples of the many ways that we may be a blessing to an enemy.
 - d) This reminds me of the old saying, **"You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar."**
- 3) Instead of seeking vengeance, we are to treat that person

with love and kindness. This is possible ONLY if we give the offence and the offender over to God and stop fretting over it. Remember the Christian lady, in my illustration two weeks ago, whose neighbour killed her two prize hens, and she made him a chicken pie?

- 4) Jesus emphasised this during His ministry. (Matthew 5:43-44) "**Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 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;**"
- 5) Solomon's words in Proverbs 15:1 are appropriate in situations like this. "**A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.**"

c. God can use this in your enemy's life

- 1) God tells us that, "**in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.**" Paul is quoting from (Proverbs 25:21-22) "**If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.**"
 - a) The meaning of this is uncertain.
 - b) Warren Wiersbe states, "**The 'coals of fire' refer perhaps to the feeling of shame our enemies will experience when we return good for evil.**"
 - c) Another interpretation is that just as coals of fire on the head are too painful to endure, even so kindness will have the same effect.
 - d) We do know that it is the result of being kind to him.
- 2) Kindness is right because God condemns rejoicing when enemies fall. (Proverbs 24:17-18) "**Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.**"

The second way we are to respond to evil is to ...

2. Not let evil overcome us

a. To do this, we must first identify evil.

- 1) This is not just any evil; it is THE evil.

- 2) It may be the specific **evil done by your enemy**.
- 3) It may be **the evil one, the devil working through your enemy**. (See John 17:15).
- 4) It could be the **evil of your old nature (bad attitudes, hurtful thoughts, angry feelings, vengeful actions)**. Are these the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). No! They are the evil responses of our carnal flesh.
- 5) Without a commitment to obey God, and without depending on the Holy Spirit for help, the evil often overcomes us. We need to be like Daniel the slave in Babylon. Several times, he risked his life to stand for right and for God (Dan 1:8; 6:10).

b. We must not let the evil conquer us.

- 1) The evil will overcome us if we do not fight against it. Remember the victory steps given us by the Apostle James. (James 4:7-10) "**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**"
- 2) We must resist the devil steadfastly. (1 Peter 5:9) "**Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.**"
- 3) We must stand strong against the evil. (Ephesians 6:10-11) "**Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**" (Cf., Eph 6:10-18).
- 4) **BUT** (here again is that strong contrasting conjunction).

The third way we are to respond to evil is to ...

3. Overcome evil with good

a. What is good?

- 1) It is not just any good; it is THE good. The beneficial.
- 2) The good is the opposite of the evil.