

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

Romans Part 27 – Glorifying God through Loving Your Enemies

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INTRODUCTION

Romans 12 begins by urging us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. If we give Jesus permission to live His life through us, He will change how we respond to those who hurt us.

Caveat. Paul is not saying stay in an abusive relationship. He is saying to watch the state of our heart. We can't be at peace with others if we're not at peace within. That peace will come only when we extend grace, pray for, and forgive the person who is abusing or persecuting us. Only then will we be set free to cultivate healthy relationships with God and others.

1. Godly love chooses to bless those who persecute us.

Bless them first by speaking well of them to God. Wish God's very best for them. Pray for their salvation. Show them grace and kindness. Speak to them with gentleness and respect, and speak well of them to others. If you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all.

2. Godly love seeks to understand other's feelings.

Godly love seeks to understand what's behind the anger so you can respond in a God-honouring way. Do not be conceited (v.16). Don't think you are better than those who are persecuting you. Apart from God's grace in your life and the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, you would be no better than they.

Pride is at the root of why we struggle to rejoice or mourn with others. Pride wants what they have and wants the admiration they are receiving. Pride also rejoices when a perceived enemy experiences failure, because their failure makes us think we are better than they are. Christians who are fully surrendered to Jesus Christ are no longer obsessed with comparing and competing with others because their identity is in Christ and not in their accomplishments or in how they are perceived by others.

3. Godly love seeks to understand other's point of view.

"Live in harmony with one another" (v.16). St. Augustine said, "In the essentials, unity; in the nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity." Regarding the truths clearly articulated in Scripture, like the basis of our salvation, we must have unity in the church. Regarding secondary issues on which the Bible is silent or unclear, graciously agree to disagree. IN ALL THINGS we must communicate in love. As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

4. Godly love does not seek revenge. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil." (v.17)

Leave revenge in God's hands. 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord (v.19). God promises to execute perfect justice in the day of judgment. He may enact justice now through the courts of law; but as followers of Christ, we are never allowed to be our own avenger. Instead, we are to forgive.

Why forgive? Because God has forgiven us. So that we have inner peace. And because it breaks the chain of pain and revenge.

Only grace, only forgiveness breaks the cycle of revenge. It does not always settle the questions of blame, justice and fairness. But it does allow relationships to start over. When we trust God to make things right in His time and His way, we will NOT BE overcome by evil but will overcome evil with good.

We must extend the same grace and forgiveness to others that our Lord Jesus died to extend to us. Loving others with a godly love isn't easy. That's why you need Jesus in your life to do what you can't do.

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Are you a cat person or a dog person? Or something else?
2. How easy or hard is it for you to forgive another for the everyday, smaller, 'run-of-the-mill' offenses? Explain.

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 12:14-21

3. In verses 14, 17 and 19-20, what do these verses say we are to do and what not to do? How does speaking well of another and understanding them (v. 15-16) enable one to live at peace (v. 18)?
4. In verse 16, 'pride/conceit' is mentioned twice. Why might pride be a major hindrance to many of the actions and attitudes in this section of Scripture?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Pastor Henry clarified that we'll never be able to do these things in our own strength. Only Jesus can do them in and through us. Read Romans 12:1-2. Taking one of the verses from today's Scripture, share an example of how God has empowered you to extend godly love to someone.
6. What has been your experience of forgiveness, either being forgiven or forgiving another? Is there anyone in your life who you need to forgive? What steps might God be calling you to take?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Someone once said, "The best arguments I ever had never happened." They played out a fantasy of revenge and justice in their head against another who offended them. Is this something you do? Consider determining that each time you find yourself doing this you turn it into a prayer for that person instead.

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 12:14-21

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Jared Harrison and Jorel Quemuel