

Living in Peace with Problem People Romans 12:17-21

Our Lack of Peace

We will struggle to live peaceful lives because of the evil deeds of others. John 16:33

Our Solution to Find Peace

When we are victims of evil deeds, pursue the following steps:

- **First, avoid any sinful response by stopping to consider what is good and honorable.** Romans 12:17
"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone, Respect what is right in the sight of all men."

Respect =

Right =

- **Second, control your actions by pursuing peace even if others do not cooperate.** Romans 12:18
"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

Pursuing peace includes:

- **Do not use the occasion of your pain to seek revenge.** Romans 12:19
"Never take your own revenge"

I Peter 2:21, 23

- **Trust in and wait for God to bring full justice in His time.** Romans 12:19
"...but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,' says the Lord."

I Peter 4:4, 5, 19

- **In love, give what the other person needs which may bring him or her to repentance.** Romans 12:20
"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Romans 2:4

Be encouraged that your good response will overcome evil actions. Romans 12:21

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

Digging Deeper

Even if you live a perfect life, we all know that problem people will commit evil acts that cause us pain. In Jesus' closing hours before His crucifixion, He warned us of about tribulation and loss of peace in John 16:33: *"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."*

When we suffer from the evil actions of others, we need to know the right thing to do in response as Paul says in Romans 12:17, *"Respect what is right in the sight of all men."*

Below is a case study from the life of David that applies the principles of Romans 12:17-21 so we can learn how God works when people commit evil acts against us. David is being attacked by King Saul even though David has done nothing to deserve these attacks.

LifeGroup Discussion:

In I Samuel 18 and 24 we learn how David applied the principles of Romans 12:17-21 in his response to King Saul. *Would you have responded like David? Why or why not?*

We will struggle to live peaceful lives even when we do the will of God. David experienced that in I Samuel 18. Read that passage and discuss how you would feel if these evil actions were against you.

Would this impact your view of God or ability to trust other people in your life? How might you respond to this behavior? Have you been ever dealt with any of these type of actions from another?

I Samuel 18 reflects the evil actions of Saul against David:

- Vs. 8 - anger, resentment, jealousy, strife
- Vs. 9 - suspicion, lack of trust.
- Vs. 10-11 - physical and emotional assaults by Saul
- Vs. 12 - working in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation
- Vs. 13-17 - manipulation, deceit and false promises by Saul

Read I Samuel 24:3-7. David had a chance to hurt Saul but did not. He first considered what was good and honorable. (Romans 12:17) Have you ever been in a situation where you could do evil but chose to do what is good and honorable instead?

Read I Samuel 24:6-11. David chose to pursue peace. He controlled his response even if he could not change Saul. (Romans 12:18) Why did he do that? How would you have responded?

Read I Samuel 24:12-15. David did not seek his own revenge for he knew that God is the one that brings justice and vengeance. (Romans 12:19). Do you trust God to bring justice for evil deeds against you?

Read I Samuel 24:16-22. Saul recognized that David treated him "well," and "good." Because of David's good deeds, if softened the heart of Saul and temporarily he changed and stopped his evil actions. This is consistent with Romans 12:20, 21 where we are told to feed and provide drink to our enemy for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. In ancient Egypt, when a person would carry a pan of burning coals on his head to demonstrate his shame and guilt. The point is to bring about contrition and repentance which seems to be the case with King Saul.

How have you seen "good deeds" done in love cause people that commit evil action, change and even repent? In what ways can you act in a good and honorable way to problem people that have done evil against you?

Next Steps:

1. If you are overcome by a spirit of revenge and anger, seek out biblical counseling to learn how Christ can give you freedom from that attitude. To find out more about Calvary's Care Ministries, call 714.550.2334 or visit calvarylife.org/care
2. Join a LifeGroup for support and encouragement in dealing with those that cause you pain. To find out more about LifeGroups, contact Laura Copeland at 714.550.2398 or visit calvarylife.org/lifegroups
3. Pick up the 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World booklet and pray for people that you might possibly have identified as an enemy. The prayer booklets are available today in the Lobby.