

Reconciliation, not Revenge Romans 12:17-21

You don't get to take revenge. Romans 12:17 & 19

"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone." Romans 12:17a

- **Revenge isn't your job. Vengeance is up to God.**
- **Our question tends to be, what are we going to do about it?**
 - For Paul, that question begins with the question, "What has God done about it?" While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - Revenge keeps evil in circulation. It was an "eye for an eye" but Jesus is changing that and Paul is backing him up.

Do your part to be at peace with everyone. Romans 12:18

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Romans 12:18

- **You can't control what others do. You have to focus on what you can do.**
- **Our part is to forgive and to show love.**

Display love to your enemies. Romans 12:14, 20-21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

- **Who are my enemies? Anyone who has wronged you.**
- **Can you forgive someone who isn't sorry? Even though true reconciliation will be difficult, this passage shows us that we are to go out of our way to show kindness to those who have wronged us.** (v. 20)
 - Heap burning coals on them? Proverbs 25:20-23 gives us the context for this.
A physical image of an emotional reaction we hope to provoke in someone.
- **"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."** -Ian Maclaren
- **Cycle of reconciliation vs. Cycle of revenge**
- **What can we do?**
 - Pray
 - Forgive
 - Colossians 3:12-15
 - Display acts of kindness
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Response: Your response is to do your part. What do you need to do to be at peace with all people? Do you have conflict with people? Do you have people that persecute you? Do you have people who have wronged you?

- **Consider who those people or groups of people are.**
 - **Pray for them.**
 - **Ask God to quench the desire to have revenge on them.**
 - **Watch for opportunities to care for them and display acts of kindness to them.**
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Next Steps:

1. Pray for anyone you might consider an enemy or someone that persecutes you. Pray that God would change your heart toward them and bring reconciliation.
2. 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.
3. List some ways that you could display acts of kindness and love to someone that could be considered an “enemy.” Then do them.

LifeGroup Discussion:

1. Share a story of revenge that either didn't work out well or a story where reconciliation and forgiveness broke the cycle of revenge.
2. Read Proverbs 25:20-22. How do we overcome evil with good?
3. Share some ways that you can display acts of kindness to those that persecute you or are possibly an “enemy.” Help each other find ways to do this appropriately.