

Responding to ENEMIES

Rev. Victor Ramoy | Romans 12:17-21

DISCUSS

It's not uncommon to encounter people who may inflict harm to us, whether intentionally or unknowingly; and, when we are wronged, our natural response is to take revenge, take matters into our own hands, and get even. But it's actually within our power to choose how we respond to those who mistreat us or those we perhaps categorize as our enemies.

- Who do you consider as enemies? How do they affect your life?
- How should you respond to your enemies, whether real or perceived?

As followers of Jesus, how do we respond to our enemies wisely and effectively? Read Romans 12:17-21.

Do not repay them evil, but give them what is good (v. 17-18)

- How did Jesus' ultimate sacrifice of Himself on the cross epitomize this principle of repaying evil with good?
- As a Christian, how can you avoid repaying evil with evil?
- Would the wrong response make the wrong or evil thing done to you right?
- What should you strive to do in the face of mistreatment and evilness?
- What does it mean that our responsibility as Christians is to seek peace and be agents of transformation?

Do not take revenge, but leave justice in God's sovereign hands (v. 19)

- What fuels the natural desire for revenge?
- Share examples of how you naturally respond to negativity of others thrown at you.

- What is the transformative alternative to revenge according to verse 19?
- What does God mean when He says, "Vengeance is Mine!"? Does it mean ignoring or tolerating harmful actions?
- Is it alright to recognize the importance of appropriate actions within human systems of justice? How?
- What would be the effect when instead of seeking vengeance, you release the burden of vengeance by trusting in God's sovereign hands?

Do not provoke them, but show them Christ's transforming love (v. 20-21)

- How do people usually incite or stimulate negative emotions or reactions that provoke more bad feelings instead of resolutions to the problem?
- How could you show maturity to avoid fueling a potentially contentious situation?
- What does verse 20 say you should do to repay evil with good?
- What does it mean, "for in doing so you will heap coals of fire on his head?"
- How does kind actions spark change, even in the most unexpected ways?

REFLECT

The Lord Jesus Christ lived a life that showcased unwavering love and forgiveness even in the face of mistreatment and evil. He didn't seek revenge but left justice in God's hands, His ultimate act of love exemplified overcoming evil with good. How can you respond to your enemies with Christ's love?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I admit that the hardest thing to do is to love and forgive my enemy. Thank You for the reminder that I can stand as an agent of change, by showing that in the face of hostility, I have the power to respond with goodness, forgiveness, and with Christ's love because I have been renewed by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.