

Doing Right When You Are Wronged – Part Two
Romans 12:17-21

Romans 12:9-21 New International Version

- ⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.
¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.
¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
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.

REVIEW: Wrong Response When We Are Wronged.

1. The Wrong Response To Being Wronged Is To Pay It Back With Wrong.

- ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of 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.
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1 Peter 3:9 New Living Translation

- ⁹ Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.

• **Always Wrong To Take Your Own Revenge.**

a) **Revenge Runs Contrary To What Society Deems To Be Right.**

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.

a) Laws prohibit vigilante justice, where one takes upon himself to right a wrong.

b) **Revenge Does Not Promote Peace But Incites Men To Hostility.**

¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

a) Vengeance doesn't lead to peace, but to further vengeance. It keeps the vicious cycle going.

c) **Revenge Usurps A Task Which Belongs Only To God.**

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.

a) We are incompetent to carry out personal vengeance, only God, who knows all things, is a competent and righteous Judge.

d) **Revenge Gives In To Evil Rather Than Overcoming Evil With Good.**

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

a. To take revenge is to respond to sin with more sin and it puts you on the same level as the one who sinned against you.

2. The Right Response When You Are Wronged Is To Do What Is Right Toward Your Enemy.

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.**

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.**

A) Doing What Is Right Requires Some Forethought.

¹⁷ **Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.**

Verse 17b should literally be translated, **“Take thought in advance for what is visibly good in the sight of all people.”**

In New Testament Greek there are two words that convey the idea of goodness. One refers to inherent goodness. The other, the word used here, refers to external or visible goodness. It means good *“in the sense of right, fair, noble, honorable”*

When Paul says that we should take thought for what is right *in the sight of all people*, he does not mean that we should determine our behavior by public opinion. Public opinion may run contrary to God’s Word. Rather, he means that we should think about our testimony to a watching world.

B) Doing What Is Right May Or May Not Result In Peace, But Peace Should Be Your Aim.

¹⁸ **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

Sometimes in spite of all that we do, the other person does not want to make peace. But Paul’s point is, don’t provoke a quarrel by your obnoxious behavior and then claim that you’re being persecuted for righteousness’ sake. Bend over backwards to make peace. Let the difficult person know that you want to be on friendly terms. If he rejects it, at least it’s not your fault.

C) Doing What Is Right Includes Kind, Loving Deeds To Meet The Needs Of Your Enemy.

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.**

Feeding your enemy or giving him a drink represents all kind deeds that you can do to meet your enemy’s needs. Deeds often speak louder than words.

3. Leave All Vengeance To God.

Paul’s command to not to take vengeance relates to personal revenge, not to utilizing proper authorities for protection or redress. If someone is breaking the law, it is right to report him to the authorities. In the local church, the elders sometimes must discipline members who sin against others and refuse to repent. Paul’s point is that God is the final judge who will repay all that do not repent. So, you can leave your case in His hands, knowing that He will be righteous and just in punishing those who have sinned against you. If they refuse to repent, you don’t have to seek revenge, because God will right all wrongs at the judgment.

What does Paul mean, though, when he cites **Proverbs 25:21-22** about your good deeds heaping burning coals on your enemy’s head? Most commentators say that the burning coals are waves of shame that may bring the wrongdoer to repentance. In light of the context, which urges us to overcome evil with good, they argue that it could not mean that our good deeds will result in greater judgment for our enemy.