

"Willing to Lose"

Romans 12:14-21 - Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

There's an internet forum where I hang out. It's a discussion board, and tempers grow hot when an argument is raging. The funny thing is how many people have to have the final word. If their opponent posts, they must write a reply—even if it's three in the morning, even if what the other person wrote is obviously wrong and the whole world can see it. They simply can't leave it alone.

There are a lot of people who have that attitude in real life too, aren't there? People who have never learned the lesson: "You don't have to win every time. You can let someone else have the last word. You can simply walk away."

This is the attitude that Paul is recommending to the Romans. He wants them to be free from this ridiculous compulsion—free to live as children of God, out of the cycle of vengeance and tit for tat. And so he says to them, "Live in harmony with one another ... Repay no one evil for evil ... If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

This is not the way of the world, as you know from your own experience. In fact, it is apt to make your neighbors' eyes bug out when they see you refusing to harm your enemies though it is in your power! But it is the way of Jesus, our Savior. For even though we were formerly enemies of God, rebels with hearts set on our own selfish wishes, God did not wish us evil. Instead, He set out to rescue us. He could have zapped us all from orbit, but instead He entered our world Himself as a tiny baby, born to a poor family in a conquered country. He came to do us good—to teach, to heal, and ultimately to lay down His own life for us on the cross. By His dying He rescued us from death, and by His rising to life again He gave us—even us!—life that would last forever.

Now we are no more enemies of God, but His beloved children. We are not rebels, but citizens of heaven. God has repaid us good for evil, and His Holy Spirit lives in us as a free gift. Now the Holy Spirit can work through us, too, to spread this strange, upside-down Gospel to those who have never yet known it—as we too repay our enemies good for evil, and pray for those who do us harm.

THE PRAYER: Lord, live in me and do this strange loving work through me, so that others will come to trust in You. Amen.

This Daily Devotion was written by Dr. Kari Vo.

Reflection Questions:

1. How hard is it for you to let someone else "win" instead of you?
2. When did someone repay you good for evil?
3. How did that make you feel? What was your relationship like, going forward?

[Today's Bible in a Year Reading: 2 Chronicles 1-3; 1 Corinthians 16](#)