

"The Doctrine of Consecration"

Part 8

Romans 12:1-15:7

Introduction: Many years ago, I heard someone say, "It is easy to act like a Christian, but it is not so easy to RE-ACT like a Christian." But when we are surrendered over to the Lord and we are controlled by the Holy Spirit then our RE-ACTIONS will be like those of our Savior.

1 Peter 2:21-23

²¹ *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

²² *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*

²³ *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

Tonight, in our study of Romans we are going to look at Paul's instructions concerning how we are to re-act when we are offended.

I. The Obligation of Christians Toward Others

Romans 12:9-15:7

Part 3

Notice Romans 12:14

The word "persecute" here in this verse has a very interesting meaning. It means to "pursue after". It is referring to people who "pursue after believers with the intent to do harm". So, the command here is that we are to bless those who are set against us with the intent to harm. We are not to curse them. To curse them would be the natural reaction of the unsaved world. But as believers we are to be different. Neither are we to retaliate. Paul will address this more as we move on in the verses to follow.

The command which Paul gives in this verse comes from the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:44-48

⁴³ *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Notice Romans 12:15

As the body of Jesus Christ this verse should come naturally, but part of what Paul commands here can be difficult. It is easy to weep with those who weep but sometimes it is very difficult to rejoice with those who rejoice. You see, if you are going through a time of great loss in your life and someone else is going through a time of great gain then we can find it difficult to rejoice with them who rejoice. But as the body of Jesus Christ we should share in the emotions of one another.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Blessed is the believer who can be as Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus.

John 11:33-35

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

Notice Romans 12:16

This verse is very important for us to understand. Paul knew there was a great danger that existed within the human heart and he addresses it here.

To be "**of the same mind one toward another**" is to be in harmony with our thoughts and our goals. Paul had the same thought in his letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 2:2-4

² Fulfil ye my joy, **that ye be likeminded**, having the same love, being of one accord, **of one mind**.

³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

The next phrase in the verse is "**Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.**"

"High things" are a major temptation for many people. Instead of minding "high things" the believer is to "**condescend**" to men of low estate. The word "**condescend**" means "**to lead away together**".

Paul is telling his readers here not to be led away with that which the world places great honor on. Things like wealth, position, and power. There is the temptation with many believers to be drawn to people who come in the church who are people of wealth, or people of position, or people of power. When this happens then common and ordinary people get pushed aside. Let us notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 1:26-28

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

The church is made up mostly of people of low degree. It is made up of common ordinary people. Now, there are some who are of the "upper class" of the world but most are lowly people. We are walk alongside fellow believers no matter what class they came from.

James 2:1-6

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

² *For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;*

³ *And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:*

⁴ *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?*

⁵ *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

⁶ *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

There is one more phrase in Romans 12:16, "**Be not wise in your own conceits**". Let us notice what Solomon said concerning someone who is wise in their own conceits.

Proverbs 26:12

¹² *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?* *there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

A person who is wise in their own conceits is someone who thinks very highly of themselves. It would be someone who believes he or she has all the answers and does not need to listen to the advice of others in the body of Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 11:14

¹⁴ *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

Notice Romans 12:17a

The word "**recompence**" means "**to reward**". The idea is that when someone offends us, we are not to reward them with the same pain which they caused us. The religious leaders of Jesus day twisted the Scriptures and taught it was fine to retaliate.

Matthew 5:38-41

³⁸ *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

The statement "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" came from Exodus 21. It was given to be sure the punishment fit the crime. It was never given to justify retaliation. There is a verse in the Sermon on the Mount that brings this all together.

Matthew 7:12

¹² Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

When this verse is lived out it completely eliminates any retaliation because Jesus tells us we are do to others what we would desire for them to do to us.

Notice Romans 12:17b.

The idea here is that we are being watched by others and we have a Savior to show forth to the world and we have a reputation to protect. People know how Christians should respond when they are offended and so they watch to see our reaction.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

¹⁵ See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Notice Romans 12:18

We are to do all we can to live peaceably with all people. But there are times when peace is not possible. The phrase "as much as lieth in you" means we are to exhaust every resource we have to keep the peace. Now there are times when it is NOT possible to live peaceably because there are others who are set on confrontation and disturbance of the peace. In these situations, it is often impossible to live in peace. But let us understand that when peace is dissolved it is because one side chose to initiate their plan to end the peace. Believers are NEVER to be the ones who initiate the disturbance to end the peace. To make it clear, we are never to "throw the first stone", or the "first punch", or "fire the first shot". We are to exercise all self-control and walk away if at all possible.

I must make a clear statement here that in keeping the peace we must never shrink back from standing for the Truth of God's Word and especially the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I

say this because we can be sure that when we stand for the Truth there are going to be people who are offended. The Apostle Paul stirred up trouble almost every place he went to, but he was doing what he was called to do. Let us notice the Words of Jesus.

Matthew 10:34-37

³⁴ *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

³⁵ *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

³⁶ *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

³⁷ *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

Notice Romans 12:19

We as believers are not to take upon ourselves the responsibility of righting matters. Paul tells us to "give place unto wrath". The proper place for wrath is in the court room of God. It is not for us to carry out wrath in order to attempt to right the wrongs.

James 1:20

²⁰ *For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

Notice Romans 12:19 again.

We are to trust the Lord to right all wrongs. For us to seek vengeance is to usurp the authority of the Lord. It is God's responsibility to judge evil. We cannot properly execute wrath for it takes One who knows the entire situation. We cannot know all that was done, or the motives for why it was done, or the thoughts of the person who has brought the evil. Only God knows the situation completely, therefore He alone can bring the wrath which fits the crime.

In our world today where "everyone is doing that which is right in their own eyes", people have forgotten that there is coming a day of reckoning. Every act of evil of the unsaved world will be brought to light and they will experience the wrath of God on that day. Let us know that NO ONE will get away with the evil which they carry out.

Notice Romans 12:20

Instead of seeking vengeance toward our enemies we are to do the opposite. We are to give them what they need. If he is hungry feed him, if he is thirsty give him a drink. This

is like placing hot coals upon his head. What does this mean? To "heap burning coals upon their head" is to bring shame to them for their evil acts. This is love in action. Notice the words of Cole:

*"So the meaning of Romans 12:20 would be that if you do good toward your enemy and he doesn't repent, you can rest assured that God will one day redress your wrong by bringing severe judgment on your enemy. Your motive in doing the good deeds is not to increase your enemy's judgment, but prayerfully to bring him to repentance. But if he doesn't repent, you can know that God will ultimately bring him to justice. In that sense, the righteous will rejoice when God brings judgment on the wicked (Deut. 32:43; Ps. 58:10-11; Rev. 6:10; 18:20). But our job is to bear witness to Christ by doing good towards our enemies and leaving all vengeance with God. **Conclusion** = So the hard question that this Scripture leaves us with is, have I paid back evil with evil to anyone? Is this my pattern with my spouse? Is this the way I deal with my kids? How are my relationships with my extended family? Is this how I deal with difficult people at work or in my neighborhood? If so, first ask God's forgiveness. Then figure out a way to ask forgiveness of those you have wronged. Even if they don't repent, think about ways that you can bless them with kindness. That's how to do right when you've been wronged."*

Conclusion:

Paul ends this chapter with a warning.

Notice Romans 12:21

Be careful not to be overcome with evil. The idea here is that some people get consumed with getting even and desiring to see their enemies pay for what they have done. Let us learn to give place to wrath by trusting it to God. In the right time and at the right place He will deal with the sins of our enemies. Let us focus upon overcoming evil with good.