

Letting Go of Grudges

A Christian's Lifestyle (5)

(Romans 12:17-21)

Survey of Romans part 48

Edwin Gonzalez

March 3, 2019

Introduction: Let Go of Grudges & Let Forgiveness Grow

Text: Romans 12:17-21

- ¹⁷ Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
- ¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God,
- for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.
- ²⁰ "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD."
- ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Introduction: Let Go of Grudges & Let Forgiveness Grow

Text: Romans 12:17-21

Letting go of grudges and bitterness. By Mayo Clinic Staff

- “Who hasn't been hurt by the actions or words of another? Perhaps a parent constantly criticized you growing up, a colleague sabotaged a project or your partner had an affair. Or maybe you've had a traumatic experience, such as being physically or emotionally abused by someone close to you.”

Introduction: Let Go of Grudges & Let Forgiveness Grow

Text: Romans 12:17-21

Letting go of grudges and bitterness. By Mayo Clinic Staff

- “These wounds can leave you with lasting feelings of anger and bitterness — even vengeance, but if you don't practice forgiveness, you might be the one who pays most dearly.”
- “What is forgiveness?”
- Forgiveness means different things to different people. Generally, however, it involves a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge.”

Introduction: Let Go of Grudges & Let Forgiveness Grow

Text: Romans 12:17-21

Letting go of grudges and bitterness. By Mayo Clinic Staff

- “Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting or excusing the harm done to you or making up with the person who caused the harm.”

Introduction: Let Go of Grudges & Let Forgiveness Grow

Text: Romans 12:17-21

Letting go of grudges and bitterness. By Mayo Clinic Staff

Benefits of forgiveness

- Healthier relationships
- Improved mental health
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- A stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Improved self-esteem

Effects of holding a grudge

- Anger & bitterness in relationships
- Become depressed or anxious
- Feels life with lack of meaning or purpose
- Guilt for being at odds with your spiritual beliefs
- Less connectedness with others

Text: Romans 12:17-21

CONNECT: understanding the “mercies of God” ought to produce forgiveness.

1. The parable of the two debtors. *“I will repay you everything”.*

Matthew 18:34-35 “... And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. ³⁵ “So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

Text: Romans 12:17-21

CONNECT: understanding the “mercies of God” ought to produce forgiveness.

2. The end of the Lord’s Prayer: Matthew 6:12-15

“¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... ¹⁴ "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

- Forgiveness is a fruit of salvation, not a requisite to be saved.
- An unforgiving spirit is a sign of not having understood and embraced the Gospel.

Text: Romans 12:17-21

CONNECT: understanding the “mercies of God” ought to produce forgiveness.

Caveat:

- People confuse unforgiveness with feeling the pain
- People confuse forgiveness with stoic resilience.
- Forgiveness “is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge.”
- In the case of believers, forgiveness is God-like.

He will not avenge our sins if we are in Christ. He casts them to the bottom of the sea and doesn't bring them to the discussion.

Ro 12:17-21 Chiastic Structure

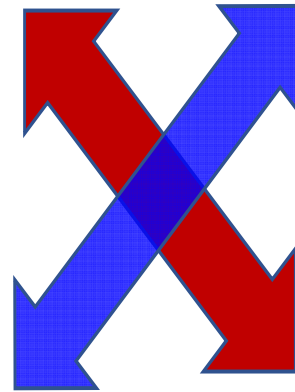
17a Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.

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

20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD."

(+) Positive

(-) Negative



17b Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL

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

What is forgiveness in our text?

1. **Negatively: Do not get even**

- 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.
- I will dare say that the period between “anyone” and “respect”, and the verb “respect” do not help the rendering in the NAS.
- Vs 17 does not have two commandments, but one and the same
- **ESV** “Repay no one evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all men”
- **NIV** “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone”

What is forgiveness in our text?

1. **Negatively: Do not get even**

It is one and the same thought:

a) Do not render evil for evil. Do not pay back evil for evil.

b) Do not live by the rule of “tit for tat”

c) “Lex Talionis” (an eye for an eye) had a context. It was applied by Judges after a trial with careful examination of evidence.

d) In contrast, consider doing that which is good in the sight of all men.

e) Yield to the aggressive driver on the merge lane.



What is forgiveness in our text?

2. Positively: Be a Peace-Maker

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

- a) Be at peace with all.
- b) Paul is realistic: sometimes it is not possible, just make sure that the hindrance is not you.
- c) For clarification: “a proper confession and repentance” are not requisites to be at peace at our end. Our forgiveness is a given (*forgive our debts as we have forgiven*) and our disposition to peace is irrespective of the other side.
- d) Matthew 5:43-45 "You have heard that it was said... ⁴⁴ "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you ⁴⁵ in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

What is forgiveness in our text?

3. Negatively: Do not seek revenge.

19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God,

- a) Never, means never.
- b) Seeking revenge is procuring to deal retribution on our own.
- c) There are subtle ways in which we seek revenge.
 - Silence treatment
 - Victim playing
 - Indifference
 - Temper-tantrums
 - Leaving the scene
 - Hanging up the phone
 - Insults
 - Wives denying intimacy

What is forgiveness in our text?

4. Positively: Do good to those who oppose you.

20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD."

- a) A quote from **Proverbs 25:20-21**. Paul knew his Jewish audience knew.
- b) The text in Proverbs ends: "and the Lord will reward you."
- c) The best you can do for an enemy, is the worst for him, if they do not repent.
- d) Treat them as you would treat a friend!

What is forgiveness in our text?

5. Keep eternity in mind: win forever by losing now.

21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

21 mh. **nikw**/ u`po. tou/ kakou/ avlla. **ni,ka** evn tw/| avgaqw/| to. kako,nÅ



What's that?

Nikos = victorious, winner or conqueror

What is forgiveness in our text?

5. Keep eternity in mind: win forever by losing now.

21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

21 mh. **nikw**/ u`po. tou/ kakou/ avlla. **ni,ka** evn tw/| avgaqw/|to. kako,nÅ

1. Do not let evil (in context your enemy’s evil) beat you.
2. Win over your enemies by beating their evil with good.
3. What good?
4. Outline:
 - a) Do not get even,
 - b) Be a peace maker
 - c) Do not seek revenge
 - d) Do good to your enemy
 - e) Paul is wrapping up

Do you feel the pressure? I do!

- a) This is the Gospel! Love your neighbor as yourself!
- b) This is Jesus' New Commandment! Love one another as I have loved you.
- c) The commandment always has three purposes.
 1. It **condemns** and crushes us; it is a moral mirror
 2. It **points** us to the only One who kept it and embodies it perfectly
 3. And it **shows** us the beauty of God's character and the goodness of His ways

By the mercies of God, present yourselves a living sacrifice to serve God in light of who He is

Do you feel the pressure? I do!

- I am here to tell you about the One who embodied this reality, so that in Him, we may overcome with evil with good.
- Jesus - though He was the Creator - He received insults, rejection and hatred, yet He healed the sick, fed the hungry, raised the dead and died to save His enemies.
- Do not seek revenge, be at peace, do good to all ... Jesus did it for us.
- It is not a *once and for all experience*, but a daily, conscious decision. “Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors, and lead us not into temptation...”
See the connection?

END