

Hallmarks of the Transformed Life Overcoming Evil with Good

Intro: Wouldn't it be wonderful if everybody would just do what they're supposed to do? Unfortunately, such a world does not exist. There is real evil in the world. There are real evil people in this world; and consequently Christians may find themselves becoming the victim of another person's evil deeds. In the final section, of this chapter Paul shows us how to handle this problem as he discusses "overcoming evil with good".

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

What do you do when you are met with evil in others? Paul's answer: "The transformed disciple seeks to overcome evil with good". But Paul more specifically tells us how that is possible!

The transformed disciple refrains from retaliation when wronged.

Repay no one evil for evil.

When someone wrongs us, we can:

Hurt others more; that's vindictiveness

Hurt others the same way; that's retaliation

Have nothing to do with them; that disdain

Love him and serve him; that Christ's way!

The world says, "Revenge is sweet!"; but God calls us to a different course.

So Jesus taught his disciples. The Pharisees conducted their lives by strict justice and taught others to do the same.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. "And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also." And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.

"Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. (Mt. 5:38-42)

not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. (1 Pet. 3:9)

No relationship is improved by the downward spiral of retaliation and one-upmanship.

The transformed disciple makes sure that he is not the cause of another's evil actions!

Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

There is a standard of conduct that all men may agree is good and right. The Christian seeks to find that way so that he is above the reproach of the world.

Don't say "it doesn't matter what people think", but see that your public behavior is above criticism. (JB Phillip's Translation) for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. (2 Corinthians 8:21)

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Paul acknowledges that there are limits to our efforts. We cannot control what others do; we can only control what we do. So peace may not always be possible where evil men lurk.

However, we can do all in our power to live peaceably with others. But what happens when all your efforts seem to fail?

The transformed disciple puts his faith in the justice of God.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Paul borrows the language from the Song of Moses in Deut. 32:35. Moses wanted to impress upon the memory of the Jews God's ultimate control of this world and His action to relieve his suffering people and punish the evil doer.

It takes great faith to entrust your life to God rather than retaliate!

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

But what do you do in the meantime?

The transformed disciple treats His enemies with love!

Jesus taught the need for this divine-like unconditional love of others.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.'" "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? "And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

Again Paul borrows the language of the OT--Prov. 25:21.

Heaping coals of fire--

*An Egyptian ritual in which a man showed repentance by
heaping coals of fire on his head?*

*Causing another to feel shame as the response of undeserved
kindness?*

*Lincoln, "The best way to get rid of an enemy is to turn him
into a friend".*

Take the offensive - overpower evil by good! (JB Phillip's)

**Conclusion: What a remarkable thing this unconditional love of others is!
What power it has when wielded sincerely! Think today of that person who you
may think has the worst attitude toward you and seek to win that person.**

**Invitation: Repeatedly in this series we've ended our lessons being reminded
that all that we have been called upon to do, God has already done! When we
lived in sin we were enemies of God. Our friendship with the world was enmity
with God. And God could have returned evil for evil to us; but instead He
sought to win us back to Him; and with what a price!**