

107. The Book of Romans 12:17-18

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(10-29-25)

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In our study of the Book of Romans, we have come to the application portion of the book. Romans Chapter 12 is without a doubt one of the most practical sections on sanctified living for Christ that you'll find anywhere in the New Testament.

Romans 12:15–17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. ¹⁷

Repay no one evil for evil...

Repaying evil for evil or good for good is normal human behavior—a person doesn't need to be a Christian to do that (return good for good).

Returning evil for good is demonic; returning good for evil is Christ-like and a witness.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

1 Peter 3:8–12 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Romans 12:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. **Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.**

Christians are to do what is "**good**" (*right*—the Greek is *kala*, "*beautiful*," used here in the ethical sense of good, noble, and honorable).

One pastor—

*"Repaying evil for evil is common practice in the world. Men speak of giving tit for tat, of repaying in kind, or of giving someone what he deserves. But this delight in vengeance should have no place in the lives of those who have been redeemed. Instead, they should act honorably in the face of abuse and injury, as in all the circumstances of life. To have **regard** means to take thought for or be careful to do."*

Of course, to do what's *right*, you have to know right from wrong—as defined by God and not by the world.

Romans 12:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.**

Paul strongly advocated being a *peacemaker*—as did Jesus when He said, “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*” (Matthew 5:9) However, neither Jesus nor Paul commanded us to pursue peace at any price.

In some situations, peace might give way to conflict if truth is at stake (Galatians 2:11). Having said that, the believer should not be the instigator of trouble (under normal circumstances), but one who seeks to resolve conflict and promote peace.

Notice how Paul quickly adds a caveat regarding living at peace with others—sometimes it’s not always possible to live peacefully with some people, because they make it impossible. And yet, even though that’s true if we’re going to be peacemakers as Christians we’re going to need to practice ‘*conflict resolution.*’

Conflict resolution isn’t easy and requires humility and hard work—so much so that many people refuse to put the effort in choosing rather to opt out of the relationship and ‘cut ties’ with the person they’re experiencing conflict with rather than trying to work on pursuing peace with them.

One pastor had this to say on the subject—

“Conflict is a natural part of life. Whenever people interact with one another, there is a potential for a difference in opinion that leads to conflict. Most people are able to deal with minor differences—but when major conflicts arise many people don’t know what to do.

Many people fear conflict—some try to avoid it, others react defensively to it which leaves it unresolved and drives the anger and hurt deep inside causing what the Bible calls—“a root of bitterness which grows into the evil fruit of division and discord and in the process defiles many” (Heb.12:15 paraphrase). As a result, valuable relationships are damaged or destroyed, churches are split, marriages are wiped out, friendships are ended—and lawyers wind up getting rich.”

So, conflict is inevitable whether you’re talking about marriage, family, work, or church—but conflict resolution is a learned skill that takes humility and wisdom from God’s Word to accomplish.

The Biblical Guidelines for Resolving Conflict

The Bible contains two basic messages about how believers should seek to resolve conflict in their daily lives—as one author put it:

“First, as with most things in life, God’s Word contains promises, principles and practical steps needed for resolving conflict and reconciling people.

Second, it is clear that peacemaking is an essential discipling ministry of the local church, not a task reserved for professional counselors or lawyers.”

Conflicts are *inevitable* but dealing with them properly is *critical* for the health of a marriage, a family, a church or a friendship—remember:

Galatians 5:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

And therefore—**“Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.” (Romans 12:18 NLT)**

1. See it as an opportunity to demonstrate obedience and be a witness

Sometimes we wonder why God has allowed a certain conflict to come into our lives.

So often the reason is because—not all conflict is bad and in fact much of it can be beneficial in growing us into maturity as Christians, and even in guiding us into God’s will for our lives. Instead of viewing all conflict as something bad, Christians can learn to see it as an opportunity to please God and to draw attention to His love and power to heal and make all things new—

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NLT)

¹ Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

2. Examine your part in the conflict first

This includes examining not only your actions but also your attitudes, motives, and your words—because honest self-examination will reveal our part in the conflict and help us to see where we need to change.

Bottom line—conflict gives us an opportunity to grow and demonstrate humility and obedience which pleases God and is a witness to others. This growth takes place when we follow Jesus’ command to accept responsibility for our own contributions to a problem before pointing out what others have done wrong—

Matthew 7:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Very few conflicts are the total fault of the *other* person so, if you don’t know how you have contributed to the conflict you need to pray and ask God—

Psalms 139:23–24 (NLT)

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

3. Look for steps you can personally take to quickly resolve the conflict

Few things in the Bible are as clear as the steps we are to follow when seeking to resolve conflict—particularly within the Body of Christ (Check out Matthew 18).

Each of us is commanded to make the *first* move when in disagreement with another—we are not to leave the conflict unresolved where it will fester and become a root of bitterness—

Hebrews 12:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT)

²³ “So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴ leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 4:26–27 (NLT)

²⁶ And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

- a. **Look for common ground (something you both have in common) to then use as a ‘launching off point’ to resolve the conflict.**

This is an important step when resolving conflict in your marriage—using your mutual love for your children or for God or some other shared passion or conviction as a starting point in resolving conflict in your marriage.

- b. **Sometimes forgiveness leading to resolution and restoration can be extended ‘unilaterally’. —**

Proverbs 19:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.

If you are angry with someone, first ask yourself if the issue is really worth fighting about—often the best way of dealing with conflict is simply to overlook it and forgive the person.

But if you’re going to do this, ***you must forgive and forget***—no resentment and no remembering of the wrong done to you.

- c. **At other times resolution requires loving confrontation.**

If an offense cannot be overlooked, go privately and express your concerns to them—but don’t assume that the other knows or understands your feelings. You need to explain to them what they did and why it hurt or offended you—

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

If someone is angry with you, go to them immediately ([Matthew 5:23-24](#)), even if you believe the other’s anger is unjustified.

Be sure to affirm the relationship and your desire to work things out lovingly before launching into a discussion of the issues—the goal is restored fellowship and unity (not to ‘blast them’ and prove you’re right and they’re wrong).

Paul did this with the Galatians—

Galatians 4:13–15 (NKJV)

¹³ You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.

¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even as Christ Jesus*. ¹⁵ What then was the blessing you *enjoyed*? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.

Don't get defensive—just because someone comes to you wanting to work something out doesn't mean that you did something deliberately wrong.

One author—

“Sometimes an otherwise innocent word or act can cause an unexpected negative reaction in another leading to serious disagreement and or conflict.

A person can apologize for the trouble a miscommunication has caused simply because they regret the result—but all too often our own sins have played a part either in creating the conflict or in escalating it—*‘Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?’* (James 4:1)

4. Get help from the church if necessary. (only with conflict between two church members)

Private confrontation is a preferable first step, so long as we can speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

But if after a sincere good-faith effort to work things out on your part has failed to resolve the issue—

a. Take two or three with you as ‘witnesses’.—

Matthew 18:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’*

Now don't misunderstand what Jesus is saying here—He's not saying if they won't listen to you then—its war! So, start gathering your troops to go against them by letting everyone know what they did to you, getting people on your side—absolutely not!

In saying this Jesus is picking up on what the law of God specified for dealing with a matter in a Jewish court of law—

Deuteronomy 19:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

In other words, the process now moves from the *informal* to the formal stage of reconciliation. Again, the purpose here is not for *your* benefit as much as it is for *their* restoration back to God.

Therefore, you must take with you spiritually mature believers whose purpose for going with you is not to *‘side with you against them’*—but who desire that this person be brought back into close fellowship with the Lord.

One counselor—

“This can be done with a respected relative, friend or other mature and impartial individual trusted by both parties (preferably a Spirit-filled Christian).”

b. Tell it to the church leadership.

If someone will not listen to you and the witnesses, then, as we are instructed, “*tell it to the church*” (pastors/elders) and allow the leadership to decide the matter for the parties involved (Matthew 18:17) as a matter of church discipline (or not).

Matthew 18:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. **But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.**

In other words, disfellowship them from the local church.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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