

108. The Book of Romans 12:18-19

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(11-5-25)

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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.

Last week we camped on verse 18:

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)

Note how Paul introduces the admonition with an opening 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.*'

As we said last time, 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

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

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.

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.

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

- 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’.**

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.

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 (‘eye’) witnesses with you and go to them**

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.'*

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.

- 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).

5. Treat them as an unbeliever (disfellowship them)

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.**

If a person will not listen to the church leadership, then we are commanded to treat them as an unbeliever (Matthew 18:17)—in other words, disfellowship them from the local church. Sometimes Christians will ask me if taking another Christian to court is forbidden in the Bible (still talking about conflict resolution)—the answer to that question is “No”, but only as a last resort.

(Child custody issues or child molestation in church...etc.)

But in general, Paul said that Christians suing other Christians is a shame since someday we are going to be judging the world and angels (1 Corinthians 6:1-3).

In other words, can't we make wise judgments *now* on earth with regard to the conflict we face with one another?

1 Corinthians 6:7 (NLT)

⁷ Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated?

“So, then what should I do when someone cheats me—just forget it? I have rights!”

When I became a Christian, in a very real way, I gave up my personal rights when I submitted myself to the Lordship of my Master Jesus Christ and became His bond-slave.

One pastor paraphrased what Paul is saying here,

“The minute you go to secular courts nobody wins—the whole church loses. It loses its witness and you lose the opportunity to learn humility by dying to self instead of demanding your rights. Even if you win you’ve lost because you have placed personal gain above your witness to the world. Why don’t you just accept that you’ve been cheated and leave it at that for the sake of God’s glory—He will honor that and take care of you.”

For Paul the greater issue wasn't who was right and who was wrong and that proper justice would be administered.

Paul wasn't an *attorney* he was an apostle, a leader in the Church and as such he was far more concerned that as Christians our witness to the world be maintained, demonstrating the love and character of Jesus more than anything else. Yet today we are so consumed with *our* rights that nothing else matters, not realizing that—you can be *right* without acting righteously!

So today Christians fill court dockets with cases against each other—and all of it taking place before unbelievers! In the eyes of God my witness and His glory are far more important than any personal compensation I can get from suing another Christian.

Therefore, if a Christian brother or sister has wronged us in any way, our response should be to forgive him or her and to leave the outcome in God's hands. He may compensate us or He may not—He is sovereign, and we need to accept whatever He decides to do and move on.

It's really sad how when it comes to money many Christians will suddenly revert back to their "B.C." days and act like the world in that they'll become petty, vindictive, and sometimes lie, cheat, or not keep their word when it comes to winning their case and getting what they think is their right.

A few years ago, I was cheated out of a sizable inheritance by my aunt who was Christian. I was hurt and upset, and I thought about suing but God kept me from doing it—He told me that my witness was far more important than the money

I forgave her and God took care of us.

One pastor shared this—

"An attorney friend of mine says that over the years he has counseled dozens of Christians to drop lawsuits against each other. In some ninety percent of the cases, he has been successful, and he reports that, without exception, those believers have been blessed. Also, without exception, those who insisted on resolving their disputes in court became bitter and resentful—whether they won or lost their cases. If they went to court, they always lost spiritually.

People often define peace as the absence of conflict, but God sees it differently. The absence of conflict is merely a truce, which might end overt hostilities but doesn't resolve the underlying issues. A truce simply introduces a cold war, which often drives the conflict underground, where it smolders until erupting in physical or emotional disaster. James 3:17 says, "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable."

Godly wisdom, purity, and peace go hand in hand. Peace is wisdom in action and is never established at the expense of righteousness. Peace brings righteousness to bear on the situation, seeking to eliminate the source of conflict and to create right relationships. Feuding parties will know true peace only when they are willing to admit that their bitterness and hatred are wrong and humbly seek God's grace to make things right."

Romans 12:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.** ¹⁹ **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 is admonishing Christians to resist the tendency to avenge wrongs that are done to us.

One pastor explains—

"The expression 'give place to wrath' may mean to allow God to take care of it for you, or it may mean to submit passively in a spirit of nonresistance. The rest of the verse favors the first interpretation—to stand back and let the wrath of God take care of it. Vengeance is God's prerogative. We should not interfere with what is His right. He will repay at the proper time and in the proper manner."

Deuteronomy 32:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴ *'Is this not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up among My treasures?'* ³⁵ **Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.'**

One commentator writes:

"God has long ago settled the whole matter about exacting justice from wrongdoers. Not one of them will escape. Perfect justice will be done in every case and will be done perfectly. If any of us interfered, it would be the height of presumption."

And that's why Paul admonished us—

Ephesians 4:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ "Be angry, and do not sin" [by bringing judgment upon another who has wronged you]: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil.

- Some people are taken back by this—that Paul is telling Christians to 'go ahead and get angry— but just don't sin.'
- They're taken back because in their minds anger is sin, but that's not true—it's possible to get angry about something and not sin.
- It is perfectly *righteous*, as you drive by an abortion clinic, to get angry—it is *unrighteous* and sinful to go in and harm those who work there: "*Vengeance is Mine says the Lord—I will repay.*" (Romans 12:19)

But again, anger in and of itself is not sin—there is such a thing as *righteous* anger.

In the Old Testament God got angry many times—

Deuteronomy 9:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Also in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you.

Jeremiah 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth, Lament and wail. For the fierce anger of the Lord Has not turned back from us.

The holy anger of God is connected to His judgment against sin—we see it culminate in the Book of Revelation—

Revelation 15:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, **for in them the wrath of God is complete.**

The idea here is that for the length of the entire 7-year Tribulation Period the wrath of God has been active—but these final 7-Bowl Judgments will now "*fill up*" or "*complete*" the wrath (judgments) of God.

By this time in the Tribulation Period (past the midpoint) every person who will be saved, has gotten saved—and now there is no reason for God to delay pouring out His final and greatest judgments (wrath) full strength (unmixed with mercy) on the remaining rebels including the Antichrist and False Prophet.

The Greek word for God's **wrath** is *thumos*—the same Greek word from which we get the word *thermonuclear*.

There are two words for *anger* in biblical Greek: *thumos* and *orge*.

- **Orge** is the slow building of God's anger against sin—like the pressure building in a volcano.
- **Thumos** is the actual erupting of that anger in judgment.

God's anger is not an outburst of temper (God is not a divine hothead); it is holy indignation against sin that has been building and building (sometimes over the centuries) which He graciously has restrained to give the people of this world time to repent—

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

However, the '*cup of His indignation*' is someday going to be *full*—and then He will pour it out on the inhabitants of the earth *full strength*. (Revelation 14:9-11)

In the New Testament we see God's righteous anger demonstrated in Jesus when He cleansed the Temple—

Matthew 21:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

¹³ And He said to them, "It is written, '*My house shall be called a house of prayer,*' but you have made it a '*den of thieves.*' "

This is *righteous* anger—anger that is kindled when God's name and glory are dragged through the mud or when another is being oppressed or wrongfully treated—

Mark 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

Again, not all anger is sin—there is such a thing as *righteous* indignation (anger).

In fact, I think it's sinful to look at the injustice and oppression in our society and not get angry—indifference is not a virtue!

We should be angry with injustice, hatred, crime, corruption, abortion, racism, immorality, blasphemy, and other sins against the innocent or against Holy God.

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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