

Romans 12:14-21

“The Needs of the Many”

Once I knew I was teaching I asked Rick if there was anything he thought I should teach on and he said “Tithes and offerings”, so turn in your Bibles to...I’m just kidding, well not about him saying that, but thankfully he was joking too. Seriously though, it is a little daunting picking something to teach out of the whole of scripture, not that I could really go wrong, just for that reason how do you decide where to start and end in a single message?

After some prayer and consideration, and maybe casting a few lots, I decided to focus in a chapter that I like to go back to regularly, to meditate on because of my own need for a reminder of how God desires us to respond to conflict in our lives. So, please turn with me to Romans chapter 12.

Tonight we will be focusing on verses 14-21, reviewing a concept that I think embodies one example of circumstances where Jesus’ warning in **Mark 14:38** is especially applicable, “**The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**” Earlier in Romans, in chapter 7 Paul discusses the conflict we deal with internally to deny our flesh and live in the Spirit, here Paul will dig into circumstances where that conflict exists because of what other people are doing.

In Romans 12:14-21 we find direction on how we should respond to people and circumstances that stir up conflict in our lives. Each verse provides a different example of how we should respond to conflict and/or the people causing that conflict. So, if your taking notes, by the end of the study we should have 8 different ways God wants us to respond to conflict.

Starting in verse 14 He says:

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

- I. Paul seems to be certain that people are going to have trouble understanding, believing and fulfilling this instruction, so he repeats himself, essentially says it 3 times in a row.
- II. Now the 3rd time “do not curse” isn’t quite as strong of a directive as “bless”, instead he seems to be hedging his bets that people might think, well if I bless them in one way, I can still curse them in another, our sinful nature is always looking for loopholes.
 - A. In fact I am pretty sure someone in the South might have been trying to find a loophole in this exact directive when they coined or repurposed the phrase “Bless your heart”, which is now considered as much of an insult as a blessing.
- III. Regardless of the reason Paul is explicitly clear, we are supposed to bless **AND** not curse.
- IV. What is it to bless someone? There are three common ways blessing can be defined:
 - A. To do or provide something that improves someone’s well-being
 1. Providing a meal, doing a favor, or saying a kind word
 - B. To pray for their well-being
 1. To intercede with God on their behalf
 - C. To support or encourage them
 1. For example the directive to “not curse” as a blessing falls under this category
 - a) We often don’t want to visibly support someone we don’t agree with, but by just choosing to not to speak ill of someone unnecessarily you are blessing them with your silence

- V. To bless someone really can be the simplest of things, as such the response to persecution is equally as simple, as all it takes is to respond **with kindness**.
- VI. Showing someone kindness, doesn't require us to bless them with all 3 types of blessings, as long as we don't curse them and choose to pray for those who are persecuting us we can show them real kindness.
- VII. Now it's common to note when discussing Romans and conflict that at the time Paul wrote this letter Nero was the ruler of Rome. And the idea of Paul writing this in response to Nero's cruel persecution could seem insensitive.
 - A. However, Paul's letter is thought to be written in 57AD, while Nero's devout persecution of Christians primarily occurred after the Great Fire in Rome, which happened 7 years later in 64AD.
 - B. So, instead of an insensitive response it becomes a Spirit filled encouragement knowing what type of trial the Roman church was going to need very, very soon.
 - C. We can receive it much like the Roman church, and use it as preparation for a time of persecution, because the world is becoming increasingly unfriendly
- VIII. Now, persecution can be received in different forms, it doesn't even have to require a religious undertone
 - A. To Persecute someone means to; pursue, mistreat, or harass
 - 1. That passive aggressive coworker
 - 2. That Neighborhood watch or HOA virtuoso who likes to knock on your door or leave you corrective notes regularly
 - 3. Even a spouse, child or parent who won't let something go

- B. What do those three descriptions (pursue, mistreat, harass) have in common, what do they each require for the persecutor to be successful in their endeavor...focus, their attention must be on you
 - C. When someone is persecuting you they are watching you, more closely than probably anyone else at that moment in your life
 - D. And that's why Paul encourages us to respond **with kindness** because if they are watching us, whether they are willing to listen to us or not, they are watching us and it gives us an opportunity to share God's love and grace through our personal, active testimony in the form of our daily life
 - E. What testimony is your daily life reflecting to those persecutors you have in your life right now?
- IX. We can see an example of responding **With Kindness** in Acts 16:25-28 when Paul and Silas had been jailed in Philippi.
- A. *25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."*
 - B. Paul and Silas actually showed 2 acts of kindness in those moments;

1. They stayed in their cells. They didn't have to stay in prison, they were given clear opportunity, but their escape would have meant the death of the guard for failing in his responsibility
 2. Paul stopped him from killing himself. Before being imprisoned Paul and Silas were beaten and scourged, and whether this guard participated or not he was part of the same team who did. Paul had no worldly obligation to show him any kindness
- C. Paul seizes that opportunity to share the ultimate kindness, and in the following verses he shares the gospel with the guard leading to his and his families salvation
- D. Paul's kindness was a chain reaction:
1. Started with inaction, staying put when he could have fled
 2. Then he escalated his kindness by being proactive, stopping the guard from committing suicide
 3. Followed by him sharing the grace of God through Jesus Christ.
- X. Sometimes just starting with the simplest of kindnesses can result in the greatest of opportunities for the Spirit to move for others.
- Sometimes, the kindness someone needs is for us to be with them, Romans 15 Says...

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- I. This verse doesn't have a label of who deserves this attention, but the lack of label means its an instruction for us to respond whether they are friend or enemy

- II. The direction here is once again selfless, not to be concerned with your own feelings, instead to understand and acknowledging whomever you are engaging.
- III. Here we see a direction to respond to persecutors and friends alike, **with empathy**.
- IV. Scripture is clear we are called to empathy and not just sympathy because scripture doesn't tell us to rejoice or weep for, but **with** others.
 - A. The actual word used, metá, is translated in a few different ways in scripture, but the majority are: with, after, and among
 - B. Our rejoicing and weeping should be based in relationship with the people experiencing these emotions, not just in response to the emotions themselves
 - 1. Sympathy does allow us to acknowledge and address how others are feeling, but it doesn't require us to experience those emotions with them, sympathy leads to pity for what a person is experiencing or relief we aren't in their same position
 - C. Instead, when we empathize with friends or enemies we acknowledge their value to God and to you
 - 1. Often times this world is constantly trying to rob people of their value and our opportunities to empathize with people is the reminder they need to seek God, who values them most
- V. **With Empathy**
- VI. Not all people who bring unrest into our lives will be unbelievers, sometimes, if not often, our conflict will be with another believer.
- VII. Turn with me to **John 21:15-17** to see how Jesus responds **with empathy**

- A. **15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, [son] of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."**
- B. Here we see Jesus approach and encourage Peter, in only the way someone who understood how Peter was feeling could, at this point Peter was still struggling with his denial of Jesus during the crucifixion.
- C. Jesus didn't come in haughty victory and condescension, which was a right He certainly had, but in consideration and gentleness
- D. Also it shows us when weeping with someone doesn't mean you can't bring encouragement and similarly when rejoicing with someone it doesn't mean you can't address responsibility
- E. Sharing in an emotion doesn't limit our conversation it helps compose them
- VIII. Being able to express and share in these emotions, with not only friends, but enemies, prepares our hearts to respond to them as Vs 16 next encourages

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.

- I. At first glance the opening to that verse doesn't compute based on our current use of language, it seems to imply we should agree and think like whomever we are dealing or conflicting with, in fact some interpretations imply as much translating the verse as "live in harmony with one another" and that concept does not seem gel with the rest of scripture.
- II. Instead, if you look at the meaning of the word translated into "mind" you'll see that the definition of the word can be used to describe opinion, understanding, or even judgement. Be of the same judgement toward one another has a different ring to it.
 - A. Whose judgement do you suppose we should use toward each other? God's of course. This verse is espousing that early American concept "All men are created equal" and therefore we should be willing to address each other as such.
- III. Do not let yourself become blinded by "high things"
 - A. What kind of high things can distract us from sharing with or associating with certain people? On the worldly side it could be wealth, cleanliness, education, gender and more.
 - B. Just as similarly we can let our "high" opinion of ourselves deter us letting our salvation also distract us, because we see ourselves as saved, sanctified, righteous, self-righteous and more we sometimes determine some people are unworthy of our time, but...
- IV. we are all started as sinners and we will all be judged the same.
- V. The end of the verse is translated in many different ways, but I think a simple translation of the final word makes it very clear "Do not be wise in yourselves":

- A. Don't rely on yourself, your perspective, your knowledge
 - B. When we start to rely on ourselves, rather than God we are not applying His love effectively, because His love is directed outwards
- VI. To put it simply we are to respond **with humility** when struggling with those who might not agree with us.
- VII. Examples of how our responses should be drenched in humility are numerous in the life of Jesus Christ because in every aspect of his life he lived humbly in human form, even though He was God.
- VIII. Looking outside of Jesus example we see Paul explain in [1Cor 10:32-33](#) "Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."
- A. Not only does this verse reflect Paul's willingness to humble himself, but it brings to light the reason of why we should be willing to do respond in these ways with blessing, Empathy, humility and the others we will look at shortly, "that they may be saved".
- IX. Our actions and responses in conflict all have a testimony and once we are saved and desiring to live a life glorifying to God the testimony we should all desire is one that will lead to the salvation of as many unbelievers as it can.

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

- I. Paul doubles down further on his no cursing statement from earlier, telling us no one deserves to be treated with evil, even if they themselves treated us with evil first.

- II. What is evil? The word has a few different translations in scripture including “harm, ill, or wicked”, which could be summed up as “injurious”
- III. So you could read it “repay no one injury for injury” and it suddenly has a much more clear and widespread application, because there are so many things that can cause us injury and injury is not always intentional, whether you are intentionally injured or not we should not lash back out in way that could injure the other.

1. “Instead have regard for good things in the sight of all men”

- a) Again its in the sight of all men, meaning whether they’re your best friend, family or worst enemy, our actions should be considered in light of “good things”
 - b) So what are “Good things”, well Strong’s has several descriptive words for good: beautiful, handsome, excellent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, commendable, admirable, honorable and praiseworthy
- 2. These descriptions don’t really allow for the passive kindness that might an option in v14
 - 3. And even more while some people might persecute passively this verse is directed at someone who has already treated you with evil, so they have definitely injured you in some way and you are supposed to turn back around and respond in way that shares the “good” things with them, how?

B. By responding with forgiveness

- C. If we don't forgive before we try to act with good intentions our actions are likely to be informed by the bitterness inside ourselves and bitterness only overshadows any good we might want or try to impart.
- D. In **Acts 7:59-60** we see Stephen respond to even his murders with forgiveness:
1. “**And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on [God] and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.**”
 2. Stephen couldn't have called on God's forgiveness for his murderers if he hadn't first chosen to forgive them himself.
 3. Stephens forgiveness was just one drop in the bucket of events that would lead to Paul's salvation
 4. Sometimes that act of forgiveness can be the good thing we share
- E. A more modern example of responding with forgiveness in the face of conflict occurred in 1999 regarding an Australian missionary named Graham Staines
1. He began as a Missionary in India in 1965, from Queensland Australia, and in the early 1980s he began serving in a leprosy home as a missionary to the sick and the local communities.
 2. Then in 1981 He met his wife Gladys Staines while they were both serving in India.
 3. During their time in India they had 3 children; 1 daughter, Esther, and 2 sons, Phillip and Timothy.
 4. On the night of January 22nd, 1999 while Graham was traveling with his 2 sons for a jungle camp that was used as an outreach sharing God with neighboring villages from where they were normally stationed.

5. While they slept in their vehicle a mob of Hindu radicals gathered and eventually set their vehicle on fire after barricading them inside, murdering Graham and his two sons.
 6. The murders were national news, but what stirred the nation more than anything was Gladys Staines response to the murders, which was published across the nation within a week of the event.
 7. When asked what she had to say to the people of India in response to the murder Gladys said “I have only one message for the people of India...I’m not bitter. Neither am I angry. But I have one great desire: That each citizen of this country should establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who gave his life for their sins.... Let us burn hatred and spread the flame of Christ’s love. My husband and our children have sacrificed their lives for this nation; India is my home. I hope to be here and continue to serve the needy.”
 8. Similarly their 13 year old daughter Esther’s was asked how she felt at the time and she said “I praise the Lord that He found my father worthy to die for him.”
 9. After the murder Gladys and Esther served in India 5 more years until in 2004 she returned to Queensland
 10. 20 years later during an interview Gladys reflected on the events saying, “As a family, we gave our lives for His purpose, and this is how He wanted it. The Bible teaches us about forgiveness in small and big situations, and I have looked back onto my life later, after that incident. It was the Lord who enabled me to look into the bigger things in life and to forgive. Not that I always did so perfectly, but I am at peace.”
- F. And so Paul says...

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

- I. According to Gladys she was at peace with the events of her life, even though those events were not peaceful at all.
- II. “If it is possible, As much as depends on you”
 - A. Some people read this and teach that it is referring to the concept that you can only do so much to support peace if the other person is not willing to be peaceful.
 1. If the other person is not willing to be peaceful than at least you did all you could and now since it is no longer”possible” you can act differently.
 2. That there is a point in which you should stop living peaceably because it isn’t possible if the other person isn’t willing
 - B. However, that perspective seems contradictory to me and instead I see it addressing a specific part of a relationship.
 1. Every relationship has at least 2 parts, if not more, and this verse is directing its instruction at you, at us, as believers and followers of Jesus Christ, one party in relation to another party who is likely conflicting with us.
 2. “If it is possible”
 - a) This phrase is not representing the presence of an impossibility
 - b) The word translated “if” can also be translated “that”

(1) A couple examples of this word used as “if” in scripture are **Matt 5:3 and 6 “[3]And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” [6] “And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee”**

(a) In these example Satan isn’t questioning Jesus’ rightfulness as the Son of God he’s tempting Jesus to prove it, “That thou be the Son of God command these stones”.

(2) So, if you look at this scripture similarly, it is not positing whether we can live peaceably, but that we as much as it depends on us, we should live peaceably.

III. So we should respond **with peace** to those allegations, to those experiences of disappointment or surprise.

IV. In **2 Cor. 11:24-28** Paul lists a myriad of ways he has experienced suffering for the kingdom of God, **“From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”**

- V. And yet, with all of those moments of unrest, all of the persecution and suffering Paul was still more concerned with the church and our faith than his own well being.
- VI. Paul was at peace with his circumstances, they didn't control him or his actions, his intent was always influenced by the love of God, just as we need to let peace inform our relationships with others that they might see God more clearly.
- VII. Thankfully we can focus on peace as Paul reassures us next that God is not blind to what we are experiencing.

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.

- VIII. Vengeance is the Lord's, that concept should help give us peace, because God is faithful, but to truly trust in God's vengeance requires us to respond **with patience**, or if you prefer the old English, like I do, it requires **long-suffering**
- IX. God has His own timetable, His own schedule and unfortunately His exact calendar isn't shared with any of us
- X. But, we don't need that calendar if we are willing to wait on the lord, hence the long suffering, because while we wait for His vengeance there's no guarantee we are safe from harm on this earth.
- XI. If we can respond **with patience** scripture reflects at least 3 types of vengeance we can trust and wait for and I'll clarify them briefly from least likely to most likely to experience in our lifetime:

A. The Final Vengeance- Revelation 19-20

1. I'm not saying impossible, because it certainly seems clear we are living in near the end times, since we don't know the day or hour of his return I'd say expecting to see God's Vengeance in the form of Christ's return to be the least likely.

B. The Miraculous Vengeance - Besides old testament examples in Matt 26:51-54 Jesus reassures Peter that if He chose to pray for deliverance God would send 12 legions of Angels to protect him.

1. If we pray for deliverance or justice it is the Lords will then He can smite down any conflict with ease, without any assistance needed from us.

C. The Elected Vengeance- **Romans 13:3-4**

1. **3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.**
2. Some justice can be found in this world through the powers God has placed in authority, and while those powers don't always have our best interests in mind God can still use them for his vengeance

XII. The concept of patience is probably one of the most difficult concepts for American's to live because our country is founded on the concept of taking action, for justice.

XIII. While our country was founded in many biblical truths it was also started contrary to many of the truths outlined in these verses. For example, our nation deemed it more important to demand vengeance and enact justice against England rather than waiting and trusting on the Lord.

XIV. So, what do we do while we are patiently awaiting and long suffering for God's vengeance? Don't worry Paul doesn't want you to get bored, he says...

20 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."

- I. Here Paul is quoting **Prov 25:21-22**
- II. According to this verse our patience should not be practiced while idly sitting by, but instead when we see our enemy in need we are expected to act, thereby responding **with faithfulness**
 - A. See a need, fill a need, whether that cry for help is coming from your brother or sister in Christ, your worst enemy or anyone in between.
- III. One exposition of this verse believes it is implying that treating people kindly can cause guilt and that the guilt will cause its own form of suffering
 - A. This perspective is akin to the phrase "Kill them with kindness", meaning you might be treating them well, but it's only so that they experience the discomfort of "coals" or guilt heaped on their head
 - B. Or similarly the "coals" are seen as a fulfillment of the vengeance that God assured us he would deliver as long as we bide our time doing the right thing beforehand.

- IV. Personally I don't agree with that perspective, because to reassure us with someones suffering in the face of us blessing them is very contradictory to earlier verses, especially v14 that tells us to "bless and do not curse".
- A. Instead I lean towards the perspective that the "coals of fire" being heaped on your enemy are actually another good thing.
1. They are not metaphorical coals, but real coals that neighbors would borrow from each other to help start a fire at home when they let their own fire go out by mistake.
 2. The neighbors would cary them on their head in braziers to keep the smoke from getting in their eyes while still keep it stable.
 3. Heaps of coals would mean your household was providing more than enough to ensure their neighbor could restart their own fire.
 4. I have to say I am also appreciate the symbolism that act reflects of us sharing the warmth and life we have abundantly in Jesus Christ, with those whose fire in life has gone out, without Him.
- V. Another reason I lean toward the second perspective is because of the Vengeance of the Lord promised the verse before, think about it for a moment
- A. Whether literal pain and suffering in this life or emotional and spiritual suffering when they experience complete separation from God.
- B. Do we really wish that on anyone?
- C. Okay, let's say someone has done enough to hurt us where we are unwilling to forgive and wish that type of torment on them, does it change our responsibility to be faithful to reflect the love and grace that God has shown us?

- VI. We should be sharing the warmth of God's love with every unbeliever, and every enemy that we encounter, heaping the coals of God's love into their lives with the hope we might jump start that fire in their own life.
- VII. I don't have a specific verse to provide as an example for responding **with faithfulness**, instead I refer you to the life and ministry of Paul, if you really want to focus on a section I'd say **Acts 26-28**.
- A. There you'll see the faithfulness of Paul to respond to each conflict or trial with unwavering faithfulness to care for or love on the people in his vicinity, most of which were unsaved or his enemy.
- B. Whether it was sharing his testimony and God's grace with those that were judging him, or giving guidance to the soldiers that were transporting him before, during and after the storm and shipwreck or ministering to the guards or believers even while in captivity in Rome.
- C. Each time we respond faithfully it is another reminder of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, who is faithful guide us through every storm in our own lives.

-Finally we come to vs 21...

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

- I. At the end of this chapter it seems Paul is concerned that people might misconstrue his teaching of peace and long-suffering for one of inaction or indifference, so Paul reassures us that he is not encouraging a passive existence.
- II. When looking at this verse I like to consider another definition for the word overcome, subdued.
- III. Do not be subdued by evil, but subdue evil with good.

- IV. We aren't meant to be passive in our lives as Christians, allowing ourselves to be subdued by the weight of the world, instead we are meant to act, react and keep moving forward in this life...as long as we manage our responses to evil **with self-control**.
- V. Whether being overcome or subdued by evil, either way, paints imagery of an unwavering beating or overwhelmed by constant barrages.
- A. Like waves pounding on a wall struggling to remain standing, or water constantly inching higher threatening to overflow the levy.
- VI. How do we overcome these attacks, by staying focused, and responding **with self-control**.
- A. We learn how to reinforce the walls, redirect the waters
- VII. We learn to respond so effectively that not only is the evil no longer a threat, but now our lives and actions are on the offensive line.
- A. The transition is rarely easy, and never finished
- B. Our self-control must become a habit started in the small things of easy kindnesses until the bigger things of forgiving our abusers can be fulfilled
- VIII. Now while there are more calm examples of **self-control** available I love the story of Jesus cleansing the temple, and the self-control he reflects.
- IX. In **John 2:15** it tells us ***“When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.”***
- A. Yes, he overturned tables, and poured out money and released the animals, things that might seem wildish in nature, but only after “he had made a whip of cords”.

- B. Making a whip of cords involves tightly braiding them together, after obtaining the materials to begin with. Tightly braiding them together would have taken time and focus
- C. Now I am not saying we have a right to overturn tables like Jesus, this was His Father's house and had the appropriate authority to say so, but the point remains he uses self-control to see, prepare and react to the circumstances accordingly.

How?

- I. Now, the responses I've outlined from Vs. 14-21 are all well and good, I mean really, there are a lot of opportunities in our lives that can be benefited by self-control but how are we expected to fulfill these lifestyles, make these habits a reality?
- II. While the tool is outlined throughout the New Testament I appreciate that the answer is actually hidden right in the middle of scripture we already read.
- III. Return with me to **Romans 12:18**
 - A. While translations often have variations Romans 12:18 is one of the most consistent out of all of the ones we studied this evening it reads:
 1. **KJV** "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
 2. **NKJV** "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."
 3. **NIV** "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
 4. **HNV(Hebrew Names Version)** "If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at shalom with all men."
 5. And one of the most unique:

a) NLT “Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.”

- B. However, I think there’s a nugget that all of these translations are missing.
1. First let me make it clear I am not a Greek scholar, I have no formal training in Greek language.
 2. I used Blue Letter Bible and Strongs Concordance as the basis for my understanding, so I am not proclaiming anything as hard fact.
 3. However, I noticed this during my study and found it really interesting and so I am sharing it with you tonight
- C. All of those translations are very focused on two things possibilities and our effort.
- D. However, we already discussed how one of those words is regular translated differently making it less a hypothetical attempt and more of a stated instruction, but if you look at each word individually, and their common translations and definitions this verse has an added assurance
- E. Take a look at the KJV breakdown of vs 18...

<u>KJV</u>	- Versus -	<u>AIV (American Idiot Version)</u>
If	- G1487 -	That
It Be possible	- G1415 -	having the power to do so
As much as Lieth in	- G1537 -	within
You	- G5216 -	yourself
Live peaceably	- G1514 -	live in peace
With	- G3326 -	with
All	- G3956 -	every
Men.	- G444 -	person.

F. Now, if you look at the common interpretations and definition of each greek word there is another translation available, I like to call it the AIV, American Idiot Version and it says

1. That having the power to do so within yourself, live in peace with every person.

G. Vs 18, is one of the more controversial verses regarding exactly how peaceful we should try to be in this world, and yet it is actually telling us exactly how to live that peaceful life.

H. It's not a question of if, but how, "Having the power to do so within yourself."

I. And what do we hold within us as born again believers? The Holy Spirit

J. Yes, once again it is the Holy Spirit inside us that makes all of these responses possible

K. That's fantastic, but what if my AIV(American Idiot Version) is completely irrational and those words should never be translated that way? I admit it's entirely possible.

L. Okay, so lets go to a couple verses you are already familiar with **Galatians 5, verses 22-23**

1. "(ASV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law."

2. Now that list seems familiar.

M. Here's the list of reactions I just discussed and their related verse and here are the fruit of the spirit distributed to match

- V14 With Kindness..Kindness
- V15 With Empathy ..Joy
- V16 With Humility ...Meekness
- V17 With Forgiveness Goodness
- V18 With PeacePeace
- V19 With Patience ..Long-Suffering
- V20 With Faithfulness Faithfulness
- V21 With Self-Control Self-Control

- I. It's almost exactly the same.
 - A. I admit, I did change two of my "responses" after I realized how much the list I had made matched the fruit of the Spirit, but I wasn't even referencing the fruit of the spirit in my study until I was 80% finished with my study, it's wonderful when the Lord provides confirmation and reassurance
- II. I realize there are a couple differences still, however I think both of them are still very appropriate
 - A. In Vs 15 Empathy is probably a more appropriate description of how Paul encourages to respond, however we could not properly express, nor successfully experience empathy if we didn't have the Joy of the Lord providing us an emotional and spiritual foundation to relate emotionally to others and unbelievers safely without losing ourselves
 - B. And in v.17 The actual verse itself says we should focus on what is good in the sight of all men, I just felt it was important to point out that unless we first respond with forgiveness we cannot hope to take hold and enact those good things.

III. One of the fruits of the Spirit is missing, Love

A. The truth is this list of responses encourage from vs 14-21 are actually all supported by love both realistically and scripturally.

B. Look at **Romans 12 V. 9**

1. “Let Love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

A. Paul wasn't talking about abhorring just the evil in the world, but the evil within ourselves, the evil that that our sinful nature tries to cling to and retreats to if allowed.

B. So when we respond with Kindness, Empathy, Humility, Forgiveness, Peace, Patience, Faithfulness and Self-Control, we are responding with un-hypocritical Love of God.

Why?

IV. Now, if you know me, you likely know that I'm a fan of movies. I appreciate the art, creativity and emotion of all kinds of movies.

V. One aspect of film I enjoy is seeing God's word expressed in unintended ways. Seeing, His truth spill out on the silver screen where maybe only us believers will catch it.

VI. If you really know me you also know I appreciate Science Fiction a little bit more than the others. So, when working on this study my mind was reminded of a quote from Star Trek 2 the Wrath of Khan, it's actually repeated twice in the movie “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or even the one”

A. When I mentioned to my wife that I was going to use part of the quote as the title for my message and I asked her if she recognized the quote, she asked “Isn't it from a lot of things?”.

- B. It's true the concept has been around a long time it's often acknowledged as blatantly obvious statement, but when I researched the quote to see if Spock or the writers were quoting something else I couldn't find anything. The first time it was expressed so succinctly was in Star Trek II.
- C. And yet like it says in Ecclesiastes there is nothing new under the sun
1. Whether the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the Salvation of mankind or whether we respond in love to all of life's little or big conflicts it's important to remember "The Needs of the many outweigh the need of the few."
 2. Paul recognized this too, he says it in his own way in [1Cor 10:33](#) "Not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

VII. Our sinful nature is to protect, ourselves, our loved ones, our hopes. Self preservation is key to worldly survival

VIII. However, what Paul outlines throughout Romans 12 is the reminder "if" or should I say "that" our hope is in Jesus Christ alone, so we shouldn't build up any hope in our well-being nor hope in other earthly property.

- A. Instead our concern should be with the needs of those persecutors, those injurers, those lost individuals who are in our lives and are currently at risk of losing all hope eternally.
- B. Their need should help us respond to their hurt, anger and confusion with love, peace and grace
- C. That we might heap God's love that was already so impactful in each of our own lives onto theirs

Fun Fact

Live Long and Prosper

- I. Spock's hand symbol and statement was influenced by a ceremony he witnessed while attending a Jewish synagogue. It is highly likely the ceremony was a Priestly Blessing
 - A. The Priestly Blessing reflects the instruction Aaron receives in Numbers 6:23 by reciting Numbers 6:24-26 "The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."
 - B. During the ceremony they recite these verses while raising and lowering their hands towards the congregation, with their hands in the recognizable formation of "live long and prosper".
 - C. The actual meaning behind the hand formation is to represent the letter "Shin", which is an emblem of Shaddai, meaning "Almighty God", as the blessing is actually coming from God through the priests.
- II. So all in all "live long and prosper" is essentially another form of "God Bless You", but in Vulcan.