

Connect Group Discussion Guide – 11/19/2023

Romans 12:17-21 EveryOne

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvR0S5fB8AzraGYts4eQfg> (Posted on Monday)

Audio Only: On Spotify or Apple Podcasts: Connection Point Podcast

Highlights

- **Review:** Romans 12:4-5: each member in the body belongs to one another
 - Romans 12:6: we each have gifts from God for one reason: to show love
 - Romans 12:9: that love must be sincere (unmasked, not fake), we are to hate evil (the nature of evil) and cling to good (the way God intended)
 - Romans 12:16: we are to live in harmony with each other
- **Verse 17** This evil are the things you do that don't honor the Lord (behavior)
 - You don't have to be an evil person to do evil things. Christians do evil things.
 - You can't say, "well he started it."
 - To be careful, you have to have thought about it before hand, be prepared, be intentional.
 - We must choose our posture toward evil, prior to evil being done to us.
 - We have to think about it: this is how I'll react.
 - Loving people like Jesus is not accidental, it's intentional. You have to be ready.
 - **What evil things have you done recently?**
 - **What is your intentional response to evil being done to you?**
- **Verse 18** 'as far as it depends' = as far as you have the capacity to, live in peace
 - Your capacity is dependent on your own relationship with Jesus; it's His peace.
 - **What is your capacity for living in peace with others in all circumstances?**
 - As Jesus is changing your life, your capacity for peace should be growing.
- **Verse 19** to leave room means you have to vacate space to make space
 - What has happened to me no longer needs my attention. It needs yours, God, so I will get out of the way.
 - I no longer have a say in the matter.
 - Paul doesn't say God WILL exercise wrath; it's His choice (and not yours).
 - Make Room: create space for God to have the final say in what happens next.
 - Sometimes our enemies get blessed.
 - Stop giving God ideas on how to avenge
 - The Lord determines what's next in the lives of those who wronged us.
 - The blood of Jesus covers your enemy.
 - **How have you left room for God's wrath? How have you not?**
- **Verse 20** if your enemy has a need, take the food and put it in his mouth!
 - Heap does not mean killing with kindness. God does not want us to "kill" anyone in anyway.
 - In ancient middle east if you didn't take care of the coal you had to heat and cook, you would go to your neighbors and ask each for one piece. After you visited enough neighbors you had enough to heat and cook again.
 - If your enemy asked you, you have three choices:
 - Slam the door in his face
 - Give him one piece
 - Heap coal on him; overwhelm him with coal
 - The way they carried something heavy was on their head.
 - So Paul is saying overwhelm them with love in meeting their need

- When you do, you are face to face with undeserved love
 - Jesus's love is overwhelming and undeserving for me.
- **You are called to consider the need of your enemy. How have you overwhelmed an enemy in meeting their need/with love?**
- Does this mean I have to meet the need of an enemy who is a threat to my safety or is toxic to me?
 - NO! You are part of one body. You can call on other parts of the body to meet the needs of toxic enemies (i.e., abusers)
- **Verse 21** do the opposite of what your flesh wants you to do.
 - How you treat your enemies says a lot about your relationship with Jesus. **What does how you treat your enemies say about your relationship with Jesus?**

Summary

- All believers make up one body. Globally we are an insignificant part of the body. Barely a cell.
- The local church is a representation of the larger body. In this body you are an active piece of the body. Maybe you're a finger or a knee!
- When we gather in smaller circles like Connect Groups we have the greatest opportunity to find and utilize our gifts as we love one another.
 - We find out who we are in the small settings

NOTE: the following are really for people who are not currently part of a Connect Group, but the questions are great for your group to consider how your group is functioning, meeting needs, one anothering one another, etc.

- **Are you experiencing a true life transformation because of Jesus? If not, you should be frustrated.**
- **Is it possible your lack of meaningful connection with others is the piece that's missing? What does that mean for OUR group.**

There is power in moving from rows to circles. It's time to let others in.