

# Responding To Evil

Romans 12:1-2

Introduction: The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans has much to say about what is expected of Christians. In general terms (Rom. 12:1-2):

1. We are to present ourselves as living sacrifices to God.
2. We are not to conform to this world.
3. We are to transform our thinking.
4. We are to prove that good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

In specific terms (Rom. 12:3-16):

1. We are to fulfill our function in the Lord's church.
2. We are to love without hypocrisy while abhorring evil.
3. We are to love brethren as family while esteeming one another highly.
4. We are to serve the Lord diligently and fervently...
5. We are to rejoice in hope, be patient in trials and steadfast in prayer.
6. We are to help other Christians and be hospitable.
7. We are to bless those who persecute us.
8. We are to share our joys and our grief.
9. We are to be of the same mind with humility.

Yet, one of the most difficult things expected of Christians is responding to evil.

I. How are we to respond to evil (Rom. 12:17-21)?

A. "Repay no one evil for evil"

1. Paul repeats this command to the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 5:15).
2. Solomon gave the say advise (Prov. 20:22).
3. Jesus taught this concept (Matt. 5:38-44).
4. Peter even weighed in on the subject (1 Pet. 3:9).

B. Respond to evil with good things.

1. For example, if your enemy is hungry, feed him (Rom. 12:20). This verse was original spoken by Solomon (Prov. 25:21-22).

2. Moses taught this principle (Ex. 23:4-5).

3. David was judged righteous by Saul because David followed this rule (1 Sam. 24:17).

C. Therefore, we learn we are prohibited from responding to evil in kind. Rather, our response should be with good things and blessings.

II. Why are we to respond with good?

A. Vengeance belongs to God.

1. Vengeance is a divine prerogative (Nahum 1:2-3; p. 1335).

2. God has the means to administer vengeance. For example:
  - a. governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).
  - b. giving man up to depravity (Rom. 1:18-32; 2 Thes. 2:11-12).
  - c. the judgment day (2 Thes. 1:7-9).
- B. Our wrath does not produce righteousness (Jas. 1:19-20).
  1. Wrath is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).
  2. We are to hate wrath and being angry (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8).
- C. The most likely way to both overcome evil and change the evil person is by reacting with active good will!
  1. Isn't this how God changed the world (Rom. 5:8, 2:4; John 3:16)?
  2. Isn't this how Christ changed the world (1 Pet. 2:21-24)?

Conclusion: If we respond to evil with good, then we will inherit a blessing (1 Pet. 3:9-12). Do we desire to "love life and see good days?" Then transform our thinking and demonstrate that God's will for responding to evil is best.