

Living Sacrifices

Romans 12

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

8. Resist revenge, really!

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

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

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1. Consider the rationalization of revenge

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

▼ *Is there a right to revenge?* — "I have a right to get even!"

▼ *Is there a religiosity in revenge?* — "Give him a taste of his own medicine!"

▼ *Is there a reveling and rejoicing in revenge?* — "I showed him!"

2. Consider the reality about revenge

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

▼ *A spirit of revenge is always selfish and sinister*

▼ *A spirit of revenge is never like the spirit of the Savior*

3. Consider the retaliation in revenge

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

▼ *Revenge retaliates through intentional actions*

▼ *Revenge retaliates through insolent articulations*

▼ *Revenge retaliates through icy attitudes*

4. Consider the results of revenge

¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (From Deuteronomy 32:35)

▼ *Revenge renews and refreshes the complaint*

▼ *Revenge refuels the conflict*

▼ *Revenge reverses the criminality*

▼ *Revenge reclaims the control* — "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

5. Consider the requirements instead of revenge

²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (From Proverbs 25:21-22)

Directives from Jesus on the subject of revenge

Matthew 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

Luke 6:27 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

▼ *Purge all cursing and complaining about your enemies*

▼ *Pray with compassion and concern for your enemies*

▼ *Pour out care and kindness upon your enemies*

Be grateful for God's mercy — Be generous with mercy — Be gracious like the Master