**Overcome Evil with Good**

*Romans 12:21*

**Introduction**

1. We live in a society which constantly seeks to justify retaliation, and personal vengeance.
   1. If someone has done wrong to you, you can return the favor.
   2. Or even if someone just does wrong, not necessarily to you, you have a free pass to do the same.
2. Especially in our current state in this nation – a perceived injustice is met, not with a resolve to stand against evil that is committed, but with more evil.
3. This is ultimately the product of earthly wisdom – **James 3:14-16**
   1. Such never brings about any good.
   2. **(v. 16)** – disorder and every evil thing.
   3. Evil cannot be overcome by evil.
4. The gospel calls us to think differently – **Romans 12:2**
5. Such a transformation will yield drastically different results. Results that are successful – **Romans 12:17-21** (Speaking especially of peace and unity within a congregation, but can be applied generally)
6. We need to have the proper/scriptural mindset when it comes to the evils of our day, and our responsibility concerning them.
7. Provide for What is Good **(v. 17)**
8. ***“Have regard”*** – *pronoeō* – to consider in advance, i.e. look out for beforehand (actively, by way of maintenance for others; middle voice by way of circumspection for oneself): — provide (for). (STRONG) ***(“providing,”*** **2 Corinthians 8:21**; ***“provide,”*** **1 Timothy 5:8**)
   1. Our thoughts toward others, and in general are with the intent to provide for what is good.
9. **Romans 12:9** – abhor evil and cling to good.
   1. Good determined by God – **Matthew 19:16-17**
   2. Takes thought – **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – thoughts guided by the standard.
   3. **Romans 12:2** – transformed by renewing of mind.
10. ***“Repay no one evil for evil”***
    1. This would contradict our created purpose – **Ephesians 2:10**
    2. Such resolve comes from the aim of being right with God – **1 Peter 3:8-12**
    3. Such resolve comes from knowing nobody can take the reward away from you – **1 Peter 3:13-17**
11. **Romans 12:18** – With all that is in our power we should be seeking peace with all.
12. Give Place to Wrath **(v. 19)**
13. ***“leave it to the wrath of God” (ESV); “leave room for the wrath of God” (NASB)***
    1. There is no room, or place for our wrath.
    2. **James 1:20** – does not produce God’s righteousness.
    3. God’s wrath is always just, and carried out appropriately – **Romans 3:5-6**
14. Vengeance always belongs to God:
    1. Vengeance – *ekdikēsis* – “1 meting out of justice; 2 retaliation for harm done; 3 penalty inflicted on wrongdoers” (BDAG)
       1. Knowing such belongs to the Lord requires humility:
          1. Who is ultimately wronged in all wrongdoing? GOD.
          2. Samuel – **1 Samuel 8:7** (concerning the demand for a king) – not rejected Samuel, but the Lord.
          3. Jesus **– Romans 15:3** – The reproach was against God.
       2. **Psalm 94** – vengeance belongs to God, and He will repay evildoers.
          1. **(vv. 1-2)** – vengeance belongs to Him.
          2. **(vv. 7-11)** – God sees all and will repay.
          3. **(vv. 16, 22-23)** – we turn to God in all such matters, and He carries out justice.
    2. When Saul sought David’s life, and David had opportunity to kill him he refused, and instead placed it in God’s control:
       1. When Saul and his men took shelter in a cave not knowing that David and his men were in the recesses of the cave – **1 Samuel 24:6**
          1. Saul’s reply when David spared him – **1 Samuel 24:17-19**
       2. When Saul sought David in the wilderness, and David came to know he was being pursued, and went to Saul’s camp as he slept – **1 Samuel 26:9-11**
    3. Jesus did not retaliate but gave it to God – **1 Peter 2:20-24** – committed Himself to the righteous judge.
    4. The knowledge that God sees injustices, intends fully to repay them accordingly, and will reward those who do His will, delivering them from any oppression should be enough – **James 5:4-8**
       1. Instead of retaliating, we are to patiently endure as we wait for the coming of the Lord.
15. Overcome Evil with Good **(v. 21)**
16. Goal – Overcome Evil
    1. A personal battle between good and evil – **Ephesians 6:10-13** – we must put on panoply to not be overcome ourselves. (**cf. Galatians 5:16-17**)
    2. Also, a universal battle of which we are participants – “Not only is there a warfare between the evil and the good, a warfare which shall ultimately result in the triumph of what is good; but it is the duty of every Christian to take part in that warfare. This duty applies first to his own character and life.” (Pulpit Commentary)
       1. **Matthew 5:13-16** – seasoning and giving light to the world to attract men to God.
       2. **Ephesians 5:8-14** – light exposing darkness, with the intent of men coming to the light.
          1. This was Jesus’ goal – **John 1:4-5** – ***“and the darkness has not overcome it.” (ESV)***
             1. Darkness did not overcome it because when Jesus was met with evil He did not react with evil, but good.
             2. EX: questioning with evil motives, plots to kill, unjust trial, etc.
    3. Evil is not overcome with evil:
       1. **Romans 12:17** – our whole focus is on good, which leads us to providing for good in all our encounters.
          1. Good is what we want to conserve and promote.
          2. Evil, then, is what we want to do away with.
          3. EVIL CANNOT BE OVERCOME WITH EVIL – IT IS ONLY COMPOUNDED WHEN RESPONDED TO WITH EVIL.
             1. MLK – “Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction.”
       2. **Romans 12:20** – we don’t retaliate against our enemies with wrongdoing but treat them well.
          1. ***“heap coals of fire on his head”*** – MUCH TO DO WITH THE GOAL OF OVERCOMING HIS EVIL – i.e. treating him good when he has treated you with evil will bring shame on him to the end of HIM CHANGING HIS WAYS.
          2. **(v. 21)** – hence, evil is overcome with good.
17. A general principle that applies to many instances: (not only in personal encounters with enemies, or individuals who are treating you wrong)
    1. Overcoming error – not with a misuse of scripture, or with an attack on the person teaching error, but with the truth – **2 Corinthians 10:3-6**
    2. Overcoming sin in the church – not by ignoring the sin, or by changing teaching and practice to make the sinner feel comfortable, but by teaching and enforcing the truth – **2 Timothy 4:2**
    3. Evil cannot be overcome with more evil, but only the good which comes from God.

**Conclusion**

1. As Christians, our focus should always be on the truth of God, and the good which it promotes.
2. When faced with any evil, we should seek to overcome it, but we must not make the mistake of thinking we can do so with more evil.
3. Evil can only be overcome with good.