

# **Burning Coals On Your Enemy's Head**

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## Rom. 12:17-21

It is very difficult — to say the least — to kindly treat a person who continues to mistreat you. This person is your enemy — someone who is antagonistic toward you.

These enemies could be your neighbors, coworkers, supposed friends. How should you respond to people who are your enemies?

If you don't know, then this lesson will help you to see the contrast between how the flesh and spirit works.

If you do know, then this lesson will help to fortify your desire in doing the Lord's will.

## The way the flesh works

When wronged, it is *natural* to seek revenge. Some justify a “cold shoulder” so as not to be guilty of taking “revenge”.

Even if nothing is said or done, the heart may be condemned for not having the right attitude toward your enemy.

Taking the law to a personal level. Matt. 5:38, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.*”

The Law of Moses allowed for the punishment to fit the crime.

- Deut. 19:21, “*And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*”
- Lev. 24:20, “*Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.*”

The Law of Moses did not allow for a person to take vengeance into his own hands.

While there is no excuse before God for such behavior, many Christians have been guilty of transgressing God's will in this situation. Rom. 7:14-15, “*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*”

Some Christians do not think twice about doing that which they would otherwise hate. Other Christians might “think twice” yet still go ahead repaying evil for evil.

No matter how a person tries to justify himself, God's word condemns rendering evil for evil. Rom. 12:17, "*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*"

## **Bless those who persecute you**

Jesus wants His followers to love their enemies. The world loves their neighbors and hates their enemies.

The Christian prays and does good toward his enemies.

- Matt. 5:44, "*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*"
- Luke 6:27, "*But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,*"

This is what our Lord demonstrated to the world. Luke 23:34, "*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*"

Yet, loving our enemies goes against our very nature. Matt. 5:43, "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*"

It is difficult to pray for a leader or government who oppresses your life. 1 Tim. 2:2, "*For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*"

It is difficult to "do good" to the enemy who made you their slave. 2 Kings 5:1-4, "*Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*"

Yet, those who are striving to be like our heavenly Father will strive to do this. Matt. 5:48, "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"

## **Heaping coals on your enemies.**

Doing good to your enemy results in heaping "burning coals on his head." Rom. 12:17-21, "*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much*

*as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Contrary to what some might think, this is not some perverse "godly way" of getting revenge. Following the Lord's will benefits you and your enemy. In other words, treat your enemy as if he were your friend.

This is the type of love God demonstrated to us. Rom. 5:6-10, *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."*

This is the type of sincere love the apostle Paul admonished the brethren at Rome to practice. Rom. 12:9, *"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."*

## Conclusion

It is difficult to treat your enemy with love. Yet, this is what separates a true Christian unto God's eternal kingdom.





