

# FIGHT

FOR YOUR FAMILY  
DECLARING WAR ON OUR SIN



JAN 30 - MAR 1

## (3) "Anger"

### HIGHLIGHT: *Romans 12:9-21 NLT*

H

*Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.*

**9** Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **11** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. **12** Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. **13** When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

**14** Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. **15** Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

**17** Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. **18** Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

**19** Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,  
"I will take revenge;  
I will pay them back,"  
says the Lord.

**20** Instead,  
"If your enemies are hungry, feed them.  
If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.  
In doing this, you will heap  
burning coals of shame on their heads."

**21** Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

## EXPLAIN

*The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.*

Paul, in the doctrinal section of Romans (chapters 1-11) goes to great pains to portray the cosmic struggle between good and evil. The devil is real and he is dangerous (1 Peter 5:8) but the truth is *he is defeated; his days are numbered*. He is on a short leash and the hand that holds it is the hand of God. But Paul reminds us in the practical section (chapters 12-16) that until that "crushing" comes (16:20) the conflict between good and evil will still rage. In today's Scripture Paul, in no uncertain terms (*hate what is wrong...hold tightly to what is good...bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them....never pay back evil with more evil....do what is right....don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good*), counsels the believer to make a decision about good and evil and to come down firmly on the side of good and in opposition to evil.

### Romans 12:9-21

**vv.9-13** We are confronted once again with the necessity of a transformed life that comes as a result of a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1-2). The fellowship of the church can be healthy only as long as **genuine love** animates my being. The mind of Christ must possess me (Philippians 2:1-5; Galatians 2:20; Luke 6:43-45). **Evil must be hated** rather than treated with courteous civility. **Good must be held tightly**—firmly embraced rather than regarded as a nice idea. There must be an all-out attack on anything in my life that smacks of **laziness** or lukewarmness in living out my faith. Fighting for my family demands an **enthusiastic** and white-hot diligence—no pretending (**genuine**). Evil crouches at the door unless we come down firmly on the side of good.

**vv.14-16** Keith often says that *discipleship is messy*. And it's really easy to react in a worldly way when the crap hits the fan. To hit back in reflex action those who have hit us (**persecute**) only serves to perpetuate the problem—not solve it. **Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them**. Again, the necessity of a renewed mind—a mind filled with Christ—is made clear (1 Peter 2:21-25). Paul, knowing the chaos created when we revert to the flesh (Ephesians 4:26-27; James 1:20), cautions us against **thinking we know it all (pride)**. Someone quipped, *There's so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it hardly behooves any of us to think badly of the rest of us*. The best way to respond to those who run against us is to remember that we are *all* people for whom Christ died.

**vv.17-21** It will be good to remember that Paul is speaking in this paragraph about personal relationships. Paul treats governmental responses to evil in 13:1-7. In these five verses Paul is speaking to me as a man/woman in Christ and how I deal with those whose evil creates a hardship for me. The Christian response—the response that glorifies God—is not to **pay back evil with more evil, but to respond in a way that is honorable—to everyone**. Paul gives us three guidelines that will show that Christ is living in us. **(1) Live in peace with everyone. Do all you can** as much as it depends on you. I am not in charge of the other person. I am to be an ambassador of Christ to speak and respond as if it were Christ himself standing before the one who is doing harm. **(2) Never take revenge**. While evil actions must be punished, that does not mean that I am the punisher. An old gospel song speaks of Christ on the cross: "He could have called 10,000 angels to destroy the world and set him free. He could have called 10,000 angels, but he died alone for you and me." The one who had every right to be angry, every right to squash like bugs, left the punishment with God (1 Peter 2:23). **(3) Overcome evil with good**. Anyone

can carry a soldier's backpack one mile (that's the law), but it takes someone special to carry it the second mile. Most anyone has the composure to restrain himself when he is slapped on the cheek, but it takes someone special to offer the other cheek. This can only be done by the power of the Holy Spirit. And Christ calls us to that (Matthew 5:39-41). Anyone can love their friends, but "if I only love my friends how am I different from anyone else? Even pagans do that" (Matthew 5:47). This takes a renewed mind. Paul was not speaking from the ivory tower of a university campus. He understood what it was like to have friends who betray you, to bear the pain of persecution, to feel the cold of being alone (2 Corinthians 11:23-27; 2 Timothy 4:9-18). We need Paul's blessing: "May the Lord be with your spirit. And may his grace be with you all" (2 Timothy 4:22).

## A

### APPLY

*Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.*

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. Why do you think Paul tells us to hate what is wrong/evil?
3. Have you ever blessed or prayed for someone who has wronged you? Why is that so difficult for us?
4. Paul tells us not to avenge ourselves, but to leave it to the wrath/righteous anger of God. How does knowing that God will avenge give you peace?

## R

### RESPOND

*Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.*

1. On the cross, Jesus took the wrath of God for our sin. Jesus was our *substitute*. He died a death that we deserved, taking the punishment for everyone who would believe/trust in Him. This was God's plan from before the foundation of the world—to turn enemies of God into children of God (John 1:12-13). God did not wait until we deserved His love (we never would have measured up) but he loved us while we were His enemies. How can God's love motivate you to move toward an enemy, the way He moved toward you? Who is that person? How can you begin to pray for them and bless them?

2. We can be tempted to believe that if we don't repay the person who sinned against us, he or she might get away with it. Maybe it was a secret sin or maybe it was public and just not dealt with. Paul is compassionate to remind us of some of God's attributes here—God is just and God is angry (righteously toward sin). Every single sin that has ever been committed will be paid for. God sees all. God cares for His children. God never allows evil to go unpunished. Either Jesus Christ took the punishment on the cross (and the person who wronged you believes in Jesus, has repented and changed) or the person will take the punishment, eternally in Hell (John 3:36, Matthew 25:31-46, etc). In either case, God deals with sin. Journal below about how this truth can be a comfort to you and help you not to plot revenge.