

**Introduction: How to treat your enemies**

*<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’*

*<sup>44</sup>But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

*<sup>45</sup>that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?*

*<sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?*

*<sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Jesus, Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV)

***Becoming a Romans 12 Christian is NOT difficult....***

***...it is \_\_\_\_\_!***

### Important review: The Romans 12 Christian

1. The commands of Romans 12 are our faith response to Romans chapters 1-11 of God's grace and mercy toward us.
2. R12 Christians focus on \_\_\_\_\_ not rules or religious activity.
3. R12 Christians highest aim is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Loving God through a **surrendered** life.
  - Refusing to love the **world's** false promises.
  - Loving ourselves for who God made us to be.
  - Loving fellow believers through **sacrificial service**.
  - Loving our enemies by **supernaturally** returning good for evil.

### Supernaturally responding to evil:

Romans 12:14-21

*<sup>14</sup>"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

*<sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup>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. <sup>20</sup>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."*

*<sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

**A Romans 12 response to personal attack:**

**Positive Command = “\_\_\_\_\_ them that persecute you.”**

- Forgiveness – Romans 12:14
- Identification – Romans 12:15
- Association – Romans 12:16

**Negative Command = “Don’t take your own \_\_\_\_\_.”**

- Personal retaliation is a prohibited response for God’s people – Romans 12:17-18
- Two compelling reasons why personal retaliation is prohibited – Romans 12:19-20
  1. It usurps God’s role as \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. It is an ineffective means to bring about \_\_\_\_\_.

**Supernatural result = \_\_\_\_\_ will overcome evil. Romans 12:21**

## **Personal Application Questions:**

1. How are we to respond to personal attack and injustice according to Romans 12:14-21? How does this differ from civil issues or violations of the law?

2. How did Jesus model this concept of overcoming evil with good in His life?

In His death?

3. What person(s) or circumstances in your life (past or present) have you had the greatest difficulty in “blessing” as defined in this passage?

4. Why is it so difficult to genuinely forgive and even bless those who have deeply wounded us?

5. What new insight have you gained to help you deal with the evil and/or injustice you have experienced in the past?

6. What is your first step in overcoming evil with good?

7. Who might help you take this first step and keep your commitment to God?