

# A Believer's Conduct

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles tonight and let's open to Romans chapter 12 and find verse 9.

! Romans chapter 12 verse 9 and I promise you tonight we're going to take verses 9 through 21. That's all the way to the end of the chapter. I'm not setting a precedence that I'm going to take that many verses every time I preach.

In fact, this will be kind of an unusual, you're going to feel it's kind of an unusual sermon. The verses here through to the end of the chapter, quite frankly, speaking from a preacher's perspective, these verses don't lend themselves homiletically to a sermon because they're a list of things.

And we're just going to go through them bit by bit tonight, all right? But now, before we do that, let's remember, let's keep this tied to verse 1.

Well, verses 1 and 2. The opening verses of chapter 12. I've said that chapter 12 marks a shift in Paul's focus, his objective, his concerns.

[1:29] A shift from decidedly theological to now very practical. Now, I mentioned last week that does not mean that Paul is going to stop being theological.

It does not mean from now on that you're not going to hear your pastor point out some doctrinal truth along the way. You can't read any part of Scripture and avoid doctrine.

And that doctrine is not a bad thing. It's a very good thing. Theology is not, you know, just for the classroom, for the scholars, for the PhDs.

Theology is for all of us. We need theology. We would not know anything of God apart from theology. All right, so we're not going to leave that.

But from chapter 12, verse 1 on to the end of the book, Paul is going to be very practical, extremely practical. And remember in verse 1, that famous passage, present your bodies.

[2:31] This is his admonition to the people. It's really a command. Present your bodies. That is, every part of you. Everything that is you. Present it.

Like the high priest, the priest would present the sacrifice on the altar. Present every part of you as a living sacrifice. Holy, a holy sacrifice.

One that is acceptable to God. I'm kind of paraphrasing. Which is your spiritual act of worship. And this is what Paul said there at the beginning of the chapter.

And I've asked the question, what should that look like? I mean, the imagery is very clear. We should understand by now what that image is.

The image of the sacrifice. And then we add to that a unique element. And that is that the sacrifice continues to live. And that's what we are. We're sacrifices, but we continue to live.

[3:32] We live as sacrifices unto the Lord. What does that look like in practical terms? Living sacrifice.

Holy sacrifice. One that is always acceptable to God. What does that or should that look like? Well, again, Paul tells us here in Romans 12 what that looks like.

And not just in this chapter, but on to the end of the letter. And first of all, and we've already covered this ground. He shows us what it looks like in the church.

In the context of the fellowship of the church. The body of Christ. The local assembly of the body of Christ. Verses 3 through 8 deals with that.

Specifically in the area of spiritual giftedness. And the using of those gifts. And I asked the question, and hopefully we answered the question. The question is, what makes a healthy church? And the answer is healthy Christians.

[4:33] Make a healthy church. And we could, I guess, spend a great deal of time defining what a healthy Christian is. But in the context of what Paul is writing, a healthy Christian is one that has

discovered his or her spiritual gifts.

And is using them. Using them for God's purpose in the church. For the common good, not only of the body, but further than that supremely, for the work of the Lord.

His desire for the church. Alright, now as we move from there. Verses 9 through 21. Paul's focus is not so much away from the church.

But his focus is to the individual believer. To the individual believer in the church. And how each individual believer should conduct himself or herself.

How we should conduct ourselves. That's his focus here. And how we're to conduct ourselves in at least three major or broad categories or contexts of life.

[5:47] So let's read it. And it's a rather lengthy passage. But that's okay. Verse, excuse me. 8, no, 9 of chapter 12.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love. In honor giving preference to one another.

Not lagging in diligence. Fervent in spirit.

Serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. Continuing steadfastly in prayer.

Distributing to the needs of the saints. Given to hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice. And weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another.

[6:45] Do not set your mind on high things. But associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil.

Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible as much as depends on you. Live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves.

But rather give place to wrath. For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.

Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink.

For in so doing, you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil. But overcome evil with good. There it is.

All of it. And, you know, the apostle Paul, it seems as though Paul is just rattling off things as they come to his mind.

[7:45] I mean, do you get that impression as you read this? Just boom, boom, boom. Little short little phrases. And at first glance, really even after second and third glance, they don't necessarily seem to relate to one another in the sense that there's some kind of scheme here.

You know, some kind of logical progression. You know, those are the things that preachers look for in a text. We want some clearly defined, logical progression of thought, you know, and some theme that's woven through.

I mean, those are the kind of things that make great sermons, we think. And I'm just speaking, you know, off the top of my head. And I'm thinking that Paul is just speaking on the top of his head. But that's not the case.

It may seem like there's no rhyme or reason here. It may seem that there is no organized scheme or outline that there is. There is.

That's not the kind of outline that I would wish. You know, some neat little thing, you know, that we can just see so clearly. But there is a scheme.

[8:54] There is an outline here. The Apostle Paul has, without a doubt, has issued here a very lengthy list of exhortations.

That's clear when you read it. Just exhortation. One right after the other. And as a matter of fact, there are 25 of them in all. Exhortations in these verses.

And they divide really rather naturally into three sets or divisions. Three divisions that we could identify here.

First, there are three exhortations issued to self. All right, let's just define it that way.

There are exhortations that are directed toward the individual. Self. That cause each of us to look inward. To look at ourselves.

[9:53] All right, there are three that deal with self. Then there are exhortations related to the saints. You knew I'd find some way to alliterate this sermon, did you not?

And then third, there are exhortations, a number of them. In fact, there are more for this third category than the other two. There are exhortations related to the society.

Beyond our church. So, see, and in that order. This is how Paul unfolds these things. He starts here.

Here. And then out there. And the exhortations kind of flow in that direction. From self to the saints to the society.

All right? Now, first, what are Paul's exhortations to self? That is, to each of us as individual believers. Verse 9 contains three exhortations.

[11:04] Or we might maybe better call them precepts. That should be, we should apply to our lives. Precepts. Three of them. And they're really very clear.

In fact, really all the way through, as we look at all of these exhortations, very little explanation is needed. I'll throw a little Greek out there just to show you how smart I am.

But, you know, really, you wouldn't even need that. Three exhortations. For self. Number one. It's right there. Plain English. Let love be without hypocrisy. Let love be without hypocrisy. And I'll say on the front end that that very phrase is utterly self-contradictory.

The two don't go together. Love and hypocrisy. And so it's as if Paul really is trying to appall us.

[12:09] That he would put those two words in the same verse. And I'll show you what I mean. The word love, of course, you would probably guess, is that famous word for love, agape.

Agape. And we know what agape means. I mean, my goodness, if you've been in church very long, you've heard preachers go over and over and over again about the word agape and the meaning of agape.

It's self-sacrificing love. It's biblical love. It's spiritual love. It's Christ-like love. All right, so agape is the love here. And so then we have this word hypocrisy.

Really, actually, it is the word without hypocrisy. You know, it takes more English words to translate Greek words. There's just one Greek word and it's translated without hypocrisy.

And the root word is this word hypocrisy or hypocrisists. We get our word hypocrisy from it. And what does the word mean?

[13:08] It means to act on a stage. And not that, you know, stage acting is something evil or inherently sinful. But this is the meaning of the word.

It means to put on an act, to put on a face, to put on a front, to be something you really are not. To act out something. And so, you put those two together and there could hardly be anything more self-contradictory, more incongruent than agape and hypocrisists.

Self-sacrificing love and hypocrisy. They cannot go together in the same sentence. And the point really is this. They cannot go together in the same life.

The life of a believer. Agape is real love and it's not possible that it could be faked. If you could fake it, then it's not agape.

Alright, so there's the first admonition or exhortation or precept to apply to the life. The second one is abhor what is evil. Abhor what is evil.

[14:19] Now, we know what evil is, don't we? There are a lot of things that define evil. I've heard it said that evil, and I think this is correct, evil, if you might put it in the right perspective, evil is the absolute antithesis of holy.

The exact opposite, the antithesis of holy. Evil, of course, is anything that contradicts this book.

It's anything that is an affront to the holiness of God. It's anything that violates His word, violates His will. It's anything that displeases and dishonors and discredits God.

And that's why we can't really make a list of these things, but we know what they are. Evil or sin.

The antithesis of holy.

And so how are we to respond to evil? Well, in this translation, the New King James, and I think it's probably the same in the King James, if I recall.

[15:26] It is, we are to abhor it. I don't know about you, but I think it's probably been many, many years since I've used the word abhor.

Abhor, and probably even then it was in the context of preaching or, you know, relating Scripture. Abhor is not a word we use very often, so what does that word mean? Some translations bring it out.

And it's the word hate. How are we to respond to those things that are evil? The antithesis of holy. God wants us and demands that we be holy.

And so anything that does not fit with that, that's incongruent with that, we're to hate it. Hate it in our lives. Abhor.

To hate something. So we are to then love without hypocrisy. Genuine love. And we are to hate anything that is evil.

[16 : 26] And then third, we are to cling to what is good. Cling to what is good. And how do we define good?

Well, if we understand what evil is, then we understand what good is. I think probably we are, and I'm preaching through Philippians on Sunday mornings. It will be a while until we get to this verse. But in Philippians chapter 4, verse 8, I think represents a real defining passage on what is good in the believer's life.

Listen to it. You know this passage. It's very familiar. He says, finally, brethren, whatever things are true, those things that are true, whatever things are noble, honorable, whatever things are just, just in the eyes of God, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.

The things which you learn and receive and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. This is a good definition of good. And what are we to do with good?

[17 : 46] How are we to respond to it? We're to cling to it. Cling to it. It's an interesting word. Kalao is the word, and it means to glue.

That's what the word is, the use of the word in the secular sense. It would be to glue. They had adhesives back in the days of the Greek. They may not have had super glue like we had today or what some of the others.

Well, who cares? But the word means to glue, to glue together, to cement. That's not the word I was trying to remember. I knew that one. Cement or fasten together with a kind of adhesive that cannot be broken, cannot be pulled apart.

That's how we're to respond to the things that are good. This is pretty complete, isn't it, in these exhortations to the self. This is as we look inward.

This is how we're to conduct ourselves. We are to let love, the agape love of the Lord Jesus Christ that has been first shed abroad in our hearts, as Scripture says, and then that love we are to express to one another without hypocrisy, without any pretense, without faking it.

[19 : 07] And then we are to hate all those things that are evil, that would desire to enter into our lives and into the life of the church.

We're to hate those things because they destroy. These things are the antithesis of holy, as God has called us. And we're to cling to, like super glue, or whatever other glue you can think of, we're to cling to things that are good.

So much so that it just cannot be pried apart from us. All right, so these are the three things that Paul exhorts to the self.

What are Paul's exhortations to saints? Kind of the broader context. It's still the individual that Paul is speaking to.

It's not that these things he's going to exhort us concerning are group things that we do together.

Now, as a collective body, these things ought to describe us and so forth.

[20 : 14] But he's still speaking to the individual. But now it is the individual believer in relation to other believers, the saints within the body of Christ.

All right, so what does he exhort us about that? Well, in verses 10 through 13, Paul gives us ten exhortations. Ten of them here.

Or, again, precepts. The first one, be kindly affectionate to one another in brotherly love. Be kindly affectionate.

And these are pretty straightforward. We don't need a lot of explanation. Affection. Again, kindly affection comes from one word in the Greek language.

And it's a compound word. And it has that other word for love. Phileo. Remember, you know that agape, phileo. And then there's another one, eros.

[21 : 11] But in the Bible, you have agape and phileo. Agape is self-sacrificing love. Phileo is brother love or family love. In fact, the word together, you have phileo.

And then you have the word storge in here. That's family. And so you put that together. Those two words together. And he's talking about family love.

Family affection. I'm not talking about something evil that might happen within a family. See, this kind of love is not based upon any personal attraction in a physical sense.

We're not talking about that at all. We're talking about a brother or a family love. And this is further fortified by the words brotherly love.

It's almost redundant. Here in the phrase, we have kindly affectionate, which is family love. And then he says, brotherly love.

[22:14] And guess what word that is in the Greek? One of our cities, major cities in our nation, goes by this name. Philadelphia.

That's exactly what it is. Philadelphia. Philadelphia. And so it's a brotherly love. Here's the exhortation. We're to have this kind of love for one another.

We are to have agape love, but there is this other close kind of love. It's still self-giving, but it's more in the context of family.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. And we love each other with this kind of love. The second exhortation. In honor, giving preference to one another.

We're to prefer others above ourselves. That's what Paul said in Philippians. And we're to do it in honor. The word in honor means to ascribe great worth or value.

[23:11] It's not some kind of token honor where we bow before people and say, you know, I just honor you. It is a genuine accrediting or ascribing worth to all others within the body of Christ.

And this worth then causes us to give them preference over ourselves. That kind of harkens us back, by the way, to verse 3 in chapter 12.

Remember what he said, For I say through the grace given to me to everyone who is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Don't think too highly of yourself. This is a continuation of that thought. We are to give preference to one another.

Not to ourselves, but to one another. To give preference. By the way, the word to give preference is a word that generally is used in the sense of leadership. It's used in the sense of, well, it literally means to go before or to stand before, to lead.

[24:24] But in this sense, it's not to be applied to the self. It's to be applied to everyone else. And so in this sense, it means to put all others in the lead before us, before you.

He's speaking to the individual. This is a tremendous exhortation. What would the family of God be like? I mean, the local body of believers. If we genuinely practiced this precept, that we preferred all others, their interests, their needs, their desires, their hurts, before we considered our own.

To give each other that kind of worth, that kind of honor. It's a tremendous precept. Easy one to understand, but a hard one to live out.

Number three, not lagging in diligence. If I don't go faster, we're not going to make it to verse 21. And I said we would. I said we would. Number three, not lagging in diligence.

See, the idea here is whatever God has called you to do and gifted you to do within the body of Christ, you're to do it with enthusiasm.

[25:44] You don't do it because you have to or because nobody else will or some committee came to you and asked you to do it and you made some kind of commitment in the past and so you kind of reluctantly and begrudgingly do this.

No, he says the gifts that are given to you, you're to do them with diligence, with enthusiasm, not lagging. That means don't be lazy. Any lazy people in here?

I'm not pointing any fingers. As Brother Ralph reminded me last week, you know, you point one finger and three of them are pointing right back at you. You know, that's an old, old one, Brother Ralph, but it's true.

It's still true. You're not old. I didn't say you were old. Okay. All right. That was your son over there. Okay. Four. Number four. Fervent in spirit. You know, all of these these exhortations, these precepts are are really just packed full of tremendous meaning.

[26:56] They're easy to understand. I mean, really, I mean, you can figure this out. Fervent. No, it actually comes from the root word that that we get fire burning.

It means to boil. Not in a negative way, not in a way that would be sinful or or anything like that or damaging. It means to be hot in the spirit.

Now, the exhortation just before this talked about diligence and that that really speaks to activity action.

But here, this fervent in spirit speaks of our attitude, our attitude toward the work. And we might even prefer the word zeal here to be zealous in the spirit.

What kind of believers would we be? And collectively, what kind of church would we be? And if we were all zealous for the work of the gospel, zealous in the spirit, kind of just boiling over to get out there and do it.

[28:11] Well, we're not all like that. In fact, very few of us are like that. And but this is the exhortation. Number five, serving the Lord.

The root word here, serving, the word is *doulos*. And we have we have seen that word a number of times. You've heard it before. It means that we're slaves.

And we're to you know, this is an exhortation. So we're to act like the slaves that we are serving the Lord and not slaves in a negative sense, of course.

But we're slaves of Christ. That is our our lives are absolutely at his command. Number six, rejoicing in hope.

And the hope there is our salvation. So we rejoice in the hope that we have always. And don't ever lose sight of your great salvation we have by the grace of God.

[29:10] Number seven, patient in tribulation. Patient, really not a very good translation. Perseverance. The word means to hold fast to one's faith in Christ.

So the idea being to do that in the midst of tribulation. And the word tribulation is very broad. It includes all forms of tribulation from personal suffering, health suffering, afflictions, to persecution, to the whole wide spectrum of things that cause us problems and cause us to hurt.

And we're to persevere in our faith. Number eight, steadfast in prayer. To be steadfast, to be devoted, to be strong, hold strong and wavering in our commitment to pray for one another.

We talked about that this morning. Number nine, distributing to the needs of the saints. Distributing to the needs of the saints. And the word distributing is the word that means share.

We talked about *koinonia* this morning. The word fellowship. And this is a form of *koinonia*. It's *koinoneo* in this form. And it means to share. To share.

[30:34] You know, to share one's resources with others as they have need. And we do that with one another. That's part of what *koinonia* is all about.

This kind of fellowship. We have all things in common. Not that we're one big communal type of living. We've not sold all of our possessions and moved into the church house here.

God forbid. This is a pretty scary place at night, by the way. If you're ever here at night. It's dark and you're here all by yourself. But we're not talking about communal living in that sense. But we have all things in common.

And so because we are one big family, one big body, when there's a need, a hurt, whatever the need may be. Whether it's financial or whatever.

Then there's someone in the body of Christ that will step up and give. Then we're to all be sensitive to these things. This is the precept. Distributing to the needs of the saints.

[31:33] Number ten. Given to hospitality. And this is an interesting phrase. Given to hospitality. The word given is from a Greek word that means to pursue after something.

We're to pursue after it. It's not just something that we allow to happen. We're to pursue after it. And what do we pursue? Hospitality. And here again we have the word *phileo*.

A kind of hidden inside of a word or part of the word. And it means the love, in this case, the love of a stranger. The love for a stranger. So we're to pursue after the love for the stranger.

And in the context of the church, I mean, not to have any strangers. But sometimes, you know, we don't know people as well as we do others. And we have new ones that come into the body.

And we are to always be pursuing after the stranger. To practice loving strangers. Even people that we don't know very well. And so this is the idea.

[32:36] Given to hospitality. All right. So there are the exhortations to the saints. And then, finally, there are 12 exhortations in connection to the society.

So what does Paul, or what are Paul's exhortations to society? How we relate to the world? There are 12 of them.

The first one, bless those who persecute you. Boy, he had to start with the hardest one. Bless those who persecute you.

Do I need to say anything about that? Isn't that pretty clear? We're to bless them. We don't return persecution. In fact, that really leads us to the very next one.

And though it's similar, it is a separate exhortation. Bless and do not curse. Bless, not curse. And so when you put really those two together in this sense, we should always, always, this should be the norm for us as believers, we should return blessing for curse.

[33 : 49] Someone curses you, return a blessing instead. Have you ever done that? I mean in a deliberate way. You thought this person has cursed me, and I'm going to return a blessing.

If you've ever done that, then you know what that feels like. Then you know what a blessing that is for you. To bless someone who curses you.

Now, that is not the conventional wisdom, the norm for our society, or for fallen man. Because the norm for us and the acceptable way is to return a curse for a curse, and a blessing for a blessing. But the exhortation is always return a blessing for a curse. The third one is rejoice with those who rejoice.

Proverbs 17, 5 says, He who is glad in calamity, glad at calamity, will not go unpunished. Now, again, we're talking about, or the exhortation is in the context of the world, the society.

[34 : 58] And there are those who are outside the family of God who rejoice.

And we're not too think negatively about their rejoicing. I mean, what right do you have to rejoice? You sinner. You reprobate. What right do you have to rejoice over something good? No, we're to rejoice with them.

When they rejoice. And by the same token, and these are kind of pairs, the fourth one is weep with those who weep. You put this together, we're not to have this kind of mentality that because there are unbelievers out here, and some of them are even against us, and verbally against us, and openly fighting against us, don't like us, or whatever their reaction may be.

We're not to then view them in this way that when bad things happen to them, goody, goody, goody. They deserved it. We're to rejoice with them when they're rejoicing.

[36 : 11] We're to weep with them when they are weeping. In fact, really, I think this is perhaps the greatest tool for personal counseling. You know, we have opportunities to personally counsel unbelievers.

I don't mean you've set up a shingle and you're now a professional counselor and you take in all unbelievers. I'm talking about just the various connections you have with people in life, whether they're family members or friends or people you work with.

And sometimes you get, you know, find yourself in a one-on-one kind of situation where they confide in you their hurts, their pains. And I tell you, one of the best ways to connect with them is to weep with them.

To weep with them. That's not putting a seal of approval on their unbelief. You don't have to worry about that. Because you might weep with an unbeliever who's weeping and relate to them and connect with them.

And that does not mean that you are approving of their unbelief. That's not it. But you are relating to them as a believer. Who genuinely loves them.

[37 : 23] And so you weep with those who weep. Number five, be of the same mind toward one another. Now this one might be a little confusing. You might be thinking, are we to have the same mind as the world?

Well, that's not what he's saying, really. The idea here is to, really, literally, to live harmoniously with all people. Live in harmony with people.

Regardless of their faith or lack thereof. We're to be in harmony with them. To live in harmony with them, harmoniously with them, regardless of their race.

Or ethnicity. Partiality. I think we're all of the same race. We're all the sons and daughters of Adam. But we're not to show partiality.

In fact, the word here, this same mind, literally could be translated partiality. Don't show partiality toward one another. The idea is to live harmoniously.

[38 : 29] And we're just to do that with our society. Are we to win them to Christ? Yes. As God gives us opportunity, uses us in a gracious way.

But the fact that they reject our Jesus does not mean that we want to live in disunity with people. Number six, do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.

Don't set your mind on high things. That is, you're not to be devoted to lofty things, haughty things, you know, prideful things. The idea here is humility.

And we're to... So, it's not that our whole desire is to rub shoulders and hobnob with the high and the mucky-muck. You know, the influential people, the admirable people, the wealthy people, the pretty people.

Rather, we're to associate with the humble. And why should we need to do that? Because they need us to. They are in more need of that, that we would associate with the humble, the lowly.

[39:44] Number seven, do not be wise in your own opinion. And that's pretty straightforward. Your own self-evaluation, your own estimation. Don't think yourself wiser than you really are.

You're not the one who can define how wise you are. It's God who defines that. And it's His truth, the knowledge of His truth, that defines true wisdom.

Number eight, repay no one evil for evil. That sounds similar to the one we've already had. But this is more deliberate and more active.

Not just cursing. The way you feel toward someone who might curse you or words you might use. But it's repaying, actually doing something to those who have done evil to you.

Now, later on, Paul is going to tell us that repaying evil for evil is not our job. It's the job of who? Our God-ordained civil authorities.

[40:57] It's their job to repay evil for evil. God uses them. In fact, it's God working through them to repay evil for evil, to bring people to justice. That's not our job.

Number nine, have regard for good things, or literally those things that are right in the sight of men. Have regard for the good things.

We ought to stand for the good things. In every context, we've got, you know, this is an election year. I don't know how many people have asked me, you know, who are you voting for, Brother Don?

And even had, you know, the folks next to our booth out at Sunfest. The Democrats were over there. And one of them struck up a conversation with Sherry.

She related this to me later. He wanted to make a case that he wasn't for abortion, that Democrats aren't for abortion and so forth. Sherry said, we're not here to talk about politics.

[41:59] We're here to represent my church. But see, listen, whether you're a Democrat or Republican, what we ought to stand for is the good things.

It's not first and foremost the social things or civil things or economic things that you think your party will be the best people for.

That may be a consideration. But first and foremost, we're to stand as believers for those things that are right. And those things that are right are always right. And I don't want to be on the wrong side of any moral issue.

Because then I find myself standing against God. Now, you can take that and interpret that as a recommendation on how you ought to vote. But that's not what I mean.

And it's not just in the context of politics, in the context of everything. We as believers are always to stand for what is right, what is good.

[43:08] Number 10, he says, if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. And I like the, not a disclaimer, but the qualification, if it's possible.

Sometimes it's not, is it? As much as it depends upon you. That is, for your part. Paul says, for your part, that part you have anything to do with.

Always seek peace. To live peaceably with all people. Number 11, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath.

That is, don't seek vengeance for yourself. You've been wronged. You've been hurt. You've been attacked by the world or by someone outside of the body.

And you're not to seek vengeance for yourself. Instead, you're to give place to wrath. Who's wrath? God's wrath. Give place to that.

[44:13] And for it's written, and then he quotes Deuteronomy 32, 35. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord. And then finally, and he's quoting here Proverbs 25 to begin with.

If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing, you will heap coals of fire on your head. On his head, rather. Isn't that an interesting kind of imagery?

Where does that come from? Heap fires of coal. Coals of fire on his head. That's rather interesting. It really comes from an ancient, ancient oriental custom.

where, you know, a person would walk around with a pan on his head and hot coals in the pan. It was kind of for a kind of self-punishment or persecution or self-punishment of that kind.



And he said, you'll heap fires of coal upon his head. If you will feed those who are hungry, your enemy, feed him. And when he's thirsty, give him a drink.

[45 : 21] And God will use that to accomplish his purpose. And so then he adds this. This is the exhortation, really. Do not be overcome by evil. But overcome evil with good.

We're not to be overcome by evil that is done to us. Don't be overcome by it. Evil comes. Evil is done to us. And the exhortation is don't be overcome by that.

Overwhelmed by that. Overwrought by that. Destroyed by that. Don't be overcome. And also, you know, in connection with this, we're also not to be overcome by evil that we may want to do to those who have done evil to us.

Don't be overcome by that. Don't be overcome by the temptation to return evil for evil. Don't be overcome by these things. It is evil that must be overcome. Not you and not those who have done evil against you.

It's the evil itself that must be overcome. And how is evil always overcome? By that which is good. By goodness.

[46 : 34] It's not our goodness. It's God's goodness. That is allowed to be expressed through us. Through our lives.

Thank you.