

“HOW TO LIVE PEACEABLY”

Romans 13:1-7

Message 1891

The Creator saw when He created Adam that Adam should not live alone so He created Eve to be his wife, to live with him. That necessity of living with others has carried on through the generations. We have our needs too. Our families often fill those needs and the people of our communities or villages help fill those needs.

However, because we are all individuals sometimes problems arise. They may create tension. They may even lead to feelings of hatred among the people who live in a given community or even a given family.

Now the question comes, “How can we deal with such conditions? How can we live peaceably?” The Apostle Paul writing to the early Christians in Rome gives practical counsel on HOW TO LIVE PEACEABLY in Romans 12:17-21.

17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20. 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.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Let me show you the DIRECTIVES Paul gives us, so we can live peaceably in our homes and communities.

BE AGREEABLE is the directive for peaceful relations. This has both a positive and negative side but here we look first at the negative side. The Apostle says in verse 17, “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” He simply says don’t fight back. Evil only generates evil. Evil produces evil and it will only get worse and worse, so don’t fight back. Seek to be agreeable in the face of evil.

Then he states a positive principle: “Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” In other words, do the honorable thing, replace evil with honor. Choose to do the things which are right and pleasant and profitable and honorable before all men.

His directive continues with the counsel to exhaust all the possibilities to live peaceably, as stated in verse 18: “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Do everything you can to live peaceably with all men. Exhaust, I say, all the possibilities. Stop at nothing on your part to live peaceably with all men.

But then, if it be impossible, commit your case to the Lord. The Apostle warns us not to avenge ourselves: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.” Give room for God’s judgment. Give room for God to do the avenging, because He said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” So commit the case to the Lord. There is a settlement day coming. There can be no question about that because God is the supreme judge and God’s judgment will be right. We know that because the Bible teaches us very clearly that God’s judgment is truth and He will judge righteously.

Sometimes when men take things into their own hands they do not do what is right. We may have feelings of revenge when someone has wronged us. We may feel like getting even if it is possible. But the Apostle warns us about that. If we are going to live peaceably then we must be agreeable. Paul directs us to hold back those feelings for they will lead to worse conditions. Ask the Holy Spirit to rebuke and restrain at that time.

So let me stress this directive which Paul gives us. Be agreeable, try your best to live peaceably with all men and commit your case to the Lord. He will be able to do what you cannot do.

BE AGGRESSIVE is the directive for triumph in conflict. This is the positive side. You expect it to be different from the negative side, but you must direct your aggression in the right way.

You must take the proper action when facing an enemy as stated in verse 20: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him." Now you might think if your enemy hungers, let him starve to death. But that is not the Apostle's directive. The Apostle tells you to do good to your enemy. Take the proper action. Be aggressive in the right way. So if he is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. That is quite different from what you normally think, isn't it?

To be positively gracious to your enemy will change your attitude and his. It may awaken some real concerns in his heart. Paul says you will "heap coals of fire on his head." That means you will help him to think positively about what he is doing. Your positive response to your enemy may change him.

Now I agree that to feed your enemy and give him a drink is hard to do. It goes against our fleshly nature. We may think if he is hungry or thirsty, he is getting the right kind of judgment. But the Apostle challenges us here to live peaceably by doing good to the one who may be our enemy.

I find that some people harbor hatred in their hearts for years. They seem unable to forget. They keep going over this in their minds, and cannot lay it aside. The Apostle instructs us to be aggressive in doing good to the enemy, instead of doing evil. Instead of thinking hard thoughts and evil thoughts, think good thoughts and do good deeds. Harboring hatred is self destruction.

Then verse 21 gives us the real solution to living peaceably. Here is a wonderful directive: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Now you may think as I have been discussing this with you that the Apostle says take it lying down. No, that is not what he is saying, You don't take evil lying down. You may get knocked down. But you get up, you stand straight and you become aggressive with good. Do something positive, something good. Don't just lie there and let the evil one run all over you. But get up and do something good. Do not be overcome of evil, face it. Don't let evil strike you down, rather take action. Take the kind of action necessary to overcome the evil with good. That is Paul's directive. That is being positively aggressive.

Now, friend, to live peaceably we should never be the reason for the conflict. We cannot expect to live in peace if we are the reason why the conflict is raging. Our purpose should always be to maintain peace, to keep peace. Therefore, we should be agreeable and live peaceably with all people. And we should be aggressive to overcome evil with good.