



Class 12. Overcome Evil with Good

- REVIEW OF LAST WEEK

- Last week we were done talking about Forgiveness and talked about reconciling material differences
- If you and a loved one have an honest disagreement about something physical, you should discuss it

- Remember to P-A-U-S-E

- P - Prepare for the discussion in advance

- Pray
- Get all the facts together
- Clearly identify what the problem is
- See if Scriptures has any guidance
- Think about some possible options to solve it
- Anticipate their reactions to your suggestions
- Select an appropriate time and place
- Plan your opening remarks carefully

- A - Affirm the Relationship

- Don't focus on the Problem, focus on the Person

- Let them know that you care for them

- Be polite and courteous
- Spend time on personal issues and not just problem
- Honestly seek to understand their side of it
- Look out for their interests
- Be gracious
- Allow for them to save face - No backing into corners

- U - Understand their Interest
- An Interest - is what motivates people
- An interest is a concern, desire, need, or something that someone values
- Interests provide the basis for people's Positions
- Understand where they are "coming from"
- S - Search for Creative Solutions
- Brainstorm!
- Don't focus on slicing up the pie - Focus on making the whole pie bigger
- E - Evaluate Options Objectively
- Be sure to evaluate the options before you based on objective criteria instead of personal opinions
- Objective means visible, measurable things that we can both agree on, not someone's opinion of something
- Romans 12:21
- For our last lesson we want to talk about what happens if it doesn't go as easily as we'd like it to
- Sometimes you just can't make peace with someone
- Sometimes people become entrenched and stop any efforts to be reconciled
- Romans gives us clear advice on what to do when someone is acting this evil way against us
- 1) Don't be overcome by their negativity
- 2) Overcome their sinfulness with righteousness
- If we truly are followers of Christ, then we should always work towards helping someone who is hurting
- Consider Paul's advice in Romans 12
- Romans 12:14-21

- The best defense is a good offense
- The Bible doesn't teach a passive response to evil
- God wants us to actively try to win over our opponents and help them to see the truth
- Romans 12 shows us five components that we can use to overcome evil with good
- 1) Control your Tongue
 - Romans 12:14
 - Don't gossip about them, especially if they are saying critical things about you
 - Have your speech full of grace by focusing on what is true and helpful
 - Speak well of them whenever possible
- 2) Seek Godly Advisors
 - Romans 12:15-16 - It's difficult to be alone
 - Look to your Godly friends for encouragement
 - A "Godly Friend" is one who is willing to correct and admonish you when they see that you are wrong
 - You might get discouraged and tempted to stray from God
 - Surround yourself with spiritually mature people who will encourage you to stay on a biblical course
- 3) Keep Doing What is Right
 - Romans 12:17 - Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody
 - He isn't talking about worrying about the opinions of others
 - He is talking about act properly so that any reasonable person who is watching you will acknowledge that what you did is right
 - 1st Peter 2:12
 - Don't get bogged down in their negativity and start acting negatively yourself
 - This is good advice for someone in a deteriorating relationship - Don't start treating them like they treat you

4) Recognize Your Limits

- Romans 12:18 - IF IT IS POSSIBLE...
- When dealing with difficult people, it's good to know your limits
- Do all you can to be reconciled, but remember that you can't force others to do what is right
- If you have done everything "as far as it depends on you", then you have fulfilled your responsibility to God
- If circumstances change, then begin your efforts again, but in the meantime you don't have to continue to spend your time and resources on someone who doesn't want to reconcile
- God simply asks us to be faithful, not successful
- We plant, and God gives the increase

5) Use the Ultimate Weapon

- Romans 12:20-21
- If they are hungry, feed them, if they are thirsty, give them something to drink
- The Ultimate Weapon is Deliberate Focused Love
- Instead of reacting spitefully to someone who mistreats you, Jesus wants you to figure out what their deepest needs are and do all you can do to meet those needs
- AND, actively loving someone will protect you from being defeated by anger, bitterness or revenge
- Application
- Do to others what you would have them do to you
- Applying these principles can be difficult, but it is always worth the effort