

RELATIONAL SURVIVAL GUIDE



August 27, 2017

Pastor Steve Luxa

Our Relationship to Enemies

Romans 12:14, 17-21

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ... ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:14, 17-21, ESV)

Introduction

1. What Not To Do

Why: God's place (v. 19)

Miroslav Volf: "[I]f God were *not angry* at injustice and deception and *did not* make a final end to violence God would not be worthy of our worship. ... [I]n a world of violence we are faced with an inescapable alternative: either God's violence or human violence. ... My thesis that the practice of nonviolence requires a belief in divine vengeance will be unpopular with many Christians, especially theologians in the West. ... [But] it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth for the thesis that human nonviolence corresponds to God's refusal to judge. In a scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die." (*Exclusion and Embrace*, 304-305 (emphasis his))

2. What To Do

Why: Win Them Over (v. 20)

3. Why Bother With This

Dionysius: “Heedless of danger, [Christians] took charge of the sick, attendant to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains.” (*The Rise of Christianity*, p. 82)

(For more details about how the church overran the Roman Empire by 350AD, consider reading *The Rise of Christianity* by Rodney Stark)

Digging Deeper into Our Relationship to Enemies

This week’s passages:

Monday: Romans 12:14, 17-21

Tuesday: Matthew 5:38-48

Wednesday: Luke 6:27-36

Thursday: Luke 22

Friday: Luke 23

Weekend: Review the most meaningful passages or insights of the week.

This week our study leads us into further discovery of the Way of Jesus, specifically his way with spiritual conversation. Each day you are invited to read the day’s passage and then respond to the following questions. You might find it beneficial to use a journal or notebook to record insights.

1. **Read** the passage prayerfully, listening for the voice of God and asking him to speak to you.
2. **Record** or write down the word, phrase, or verse that God impresses upon you, staying especially alert to the ways of Christ.
3. **Reflect** and write down what it is about this word, phrase or verse that is meaningful to you.
4. **Respond** by writing a prayer or recording what it is that you think the Lord wants you to do in response to his word (“*Be doers of the word and not hearers only*” James 1:22).