

Overcoming Evil With Good

Has anyone ever hurt your feelings? Maybe you found out somebody lied to you or you didn't get the raise at work that you deserved, or maybe you were rejected or physically abused. Well, one of the most important things we need to learn is how to trust God and walk by faith when people don't treat us the way they should. Our natural response is to get angry when we're mistreated, and feeling angry is not wrong. But God's Word reminds us that we shouldn't return evil for evil or anger for anger.

Have you ever noticed that being angry never makes anything better? I know because I used to have a quick temper. In fact, I was angry more than I wasn't. Sometimes, I voiced my aggression, and sometimes it was just seething on the inside of me. The problem is, if we have unresolved anger, we either explode or we implode; we either blow up at somebody or we fall apart on the inside. And a lot of times we take it out on a person who has nothing to do with what we're angry about. It's just a miserable way to live.

But getting upset is not the way God wants us to fight our battles. Instead, when somebody hurts us, we can choose to trust God with our pain or injustice and overcome anger with good. Romans 12:17-21 (AMP) says, "Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is honest and proper and noble [aiming to be above reproach] in the sight of everyone. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God's] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome (master) evil with good."

What God is saying in those verses is there's a right and wrong way to respond to injustice. We can get angry and get back at the person who hurt us or we can fight the way God fights, trusting Him to be our Vindicator while we bless our enemies and do good (Psalm 37:1-3). It's certainly not easy to love our enemies and bless the people who have hurt us (Luke 6:27). In fact, this is probably one of the most difficult scriptures in the Word of God to follow. I was sexually abused by my father for close to 15 years so I understand how painful and impossible it might seem to believe you could actually love your enemies. I'm not trying to make light of that. But there is true freedom in doing the right thing. And we can choose to do what's right no matter how we feel. We have to stop being afraid of hard things and press in and trust God because the truth is He will give us the strength and grace to do anything we need to do.

It's so much harder to live with anger than it is to live with God's peace, love and joy. And we have to take responsibility for our behavior. One of the best things we can do is learn how to pray for the people we're mad at. The first thing to do when somebody mistreats you is pray, "God, this hurts and I'm angry about it, but I know my anger won't solve the problem or change the person. So I trust You. I'm going to stay sweet and keep being nice. I'm going to keep doing good because that's what You put me here for. And as I trust You and go about blessing others, I'm going to watch You vindicate me and do what needs to be done in this situation." That is the way to fight and win your battles!

Make a decision today that you're going to refuse to live angry. Ask God to help you take control of your feelings. And if you do act out in anger, confess it and God will forgive you. There will be a lot of battles in life, but God has an amazing plan for you! As you put your focus on Him as your Vindicator, it becomes easier and easier to conquer angry feelings and walk in peace. And you will be a blessing as you

overcome evil with good!

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