

Proverbs 20:22 Lesson Outline

Today's lesson is on [Proverbs 20:22](#):

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong", wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you. (NIV)

The [KJV](#) says, *22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.*

Sometimes when people are mistreating us we might be tempted to deal with them, pop our mouth off at them, set them straight, or give them "a piece of our mind", or maybe even think, "I'll show them!"

When we do any of these are trying to handle it.

But there is a verse we need to consider first.

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (NIV)

This does not mean we sit back and grin at what God's going to do to them because they were mean to us.

This comes from a bigger passage that says:

[Romans 12:17-21](#) - 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NIV)

So in other words, the way we respond to others being mean or evil toward us is with good.

That can be hard!

Our flesh wants to jump up there and handle it.

It wants to make sure things are done right and that we aren't shortchanged or cheated.

No matter how hard it is or what they have done or are doing, our response is still supposed to be good.

What is not okay is getting them because they got us or lowering ourselves to their level.

We must choose love, which is the more excellent way.

Every single time, no matter what.

Now that we are Christians we are supposed to model Christ.

Not once does Jesus say, “okay, you’ve been ugly so here, have some ugly back.”

In fact, He always did (and still does) the opposite.

Christ loved us because it was the right thing to do and because God is loving.

Love is ALWAYS the right thing to do.

[1 Peter 4:8](#) tells us we are to:

8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. (NIV)

A lot of things can be dealt with solely by using love.

Treating someone with love, especially when they don’t deserve it, is one of the kindest things you can do.

And really, you don’t know why they are like that

Maybe they are just really mean.

Or, maybe they are just really hurting.

You don’t know how your loving them in spite of how they are acting can change their heart.

They might not change.

They might get uglier.

Doesn’t matter.

We aren’t doing it to change them.

Truth is we couldn’t if we wanted to

Only Christ can change them.

We are doing it to model Christ’s love to them.

We are just supposed to love them.

It’s important to understand that this does not mean we put ourselves in harm’s way.

Sometimes we have to keep our distance.

That’s okay.

If you are being harmed mentally, physically, spiritually, or emotionally, it is important that you immediately take a step back and reevaluate the situation.

You are never expected to allow them to abuse or misuse you.

Sometimes the only way we can love someone is by walking away, even temporarily.

This gives them space for the Lord to work on them.

Sometimes tough love means saying no.

That's okay, too.

Someone close to me had a drug problem.

Whenever he asked for money my answer was always no, regardless of his reason, explanation, or excuse for needing it.

I would offer to cook a meal for him or meet him at the gas station to put gas in his truck, but I would not give him cash.

I was still loving him, just not the way he wanted.

That doesn't mean it wasn't love.

It just means I did it the way I prayerfully felt was right.

Remember, not doing it their way does not mean we are doing it wrong.

[Verse 18](#) -

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

We are not going to get along with everyone, that's just how it is in this sin-sick world.

This does not mean we shouldn't try.

Our attitude and response to people can go a long way toward whether we live at peace with them.

What this looks like will be different for every situation and for every person.

Once again, there are boundaries on this, so pray about it and ask for guidance regarding what you should do and how you should handle it.

It also means sometimes you have to step back, hush, and stop stirring the pot.

If you keep on harping at someone you are only going to make it worse!

[Verse 19](#): *19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

This verse is in reference to the Old Testament verse - Deuteronomy [32:35](#)

In this verse God says both vengeance and recompense are His.

According to the Google Dictionary:

Vengeance - punishment inflicted or retribution exacted for an injury or wrong.

Recompense- make amends to (someone) for loss or harm suffered; compensate.

Now we live in the age of grace, so God's wrath is satisfied by the blood of Christ for those who are saved.

Those who aren't saved will have to deal with it at their death/the end of time.

Because of this we might not see God's wrath here or on them like we would have in the Old Testament, but rest assured, God will handle it and deal with them and the situation.

The point of having that phrase in this verse was to remind us of who is in charge of wrath and who is allowed to show it/unleash it on others.

The answer is God.

Only God.

In Malachi [3:6](#) God tells us He never changes.

So, there's no way He just woke up one day and decided to start letting us spew wrath on each other.

It doesn't work that way.

Like we talked about above, God said in Deuteronomy that vengeance is His.

Like it or not, vengeance is His, not ours, and always will be.

Now look at the [last 2 verses](#).

They tell us what we should be doing.

20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NIV)

If someone is mean to you, be good to them anyway.

If you see they have a need, help them with it if you reasonably can.

Be aware, though, we are not doing it so they will get the coals on their head.

We are doing it because it is the right thing to do and to show them the love of Christ.

If we do it because we know being nice or good to them will heap the coals, we are being vindictive and repaying evil with evil.

We are also trying to manipulate God, which is a BIG no-no!

I don't think that is what was meant here.

If you look up the word in the original Greek, heap burning coals means just that.

But, when you look up head an interesting explanation is there.

According to [Blue Letter Bible \(blb.org\)](#) the definition for the Greek word translated the head is:

the head, both of men and often of animals. Since the loss of the head destroys life, this word is used in the phrases relating to capital and extreme punishment.

So, instead of necessarily meaning their scalp and hair are going to melt because of the charcoal briquets He's going to pour on them physically, maybe it means He is going to deal with them and punish them harshly.

The point is, He is going to handle it.

If we will stay out of His way and let Him, and
If we will give Him the situation and trust Him with it.

We don't have to get revenge on them and we aren't supposed to.

We are supposed to keep loving them the way Christ keeps loving us when we are ugly.

I think it's pretty safe to say we all do things from time to time that are offensive to God, yet He keeps loving us and caring about us.

If that's the model Christ has set for us, we need to follow it.

Don't forget one of the best ways to love someone is to pray for them.

I want to leave you with this scripture from Matthew.

[Matthew 5:43-48](#)

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

This week's homework:

Pray and ask the Lord to show you if there is someone in your life this applies to.

If so, ask Him how you should respond to that person.

Ask whether there are specific steps you can take to love them.

Pray for wisdom concerning the entire situation.

This week's memory verses:

Read [1 Corinthians 12:31 - 1 Corinthians 13:13](#)

[Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:13](#) - *13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

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