

**“Genuine Love for Our Enemies”**

**Romans 12:14, 17-21**

**July 24, 2022**

**I. What Genuine Love for Our Enemies *Forbids* Us from Doing**

- A. Cursing our enemies with our lips (12:14)
- B. Repaying evil with evil (12:17)
- C. Taking our own vengeance upon them (12:19; Deut. 32:35)
  - 1. Vengeance belongs to the Lord.
  - 2. He alone has the authority to render it, the power to do so completely, and the love that is the proper motivation.

**II. What Genuine Love for Our Enemies *Commands* Us to Do**

- A. Bless our enemies with our lips (12:14), including before God (Matt. 5:44)
- B. Do all we can to remove obstacles to peace (12:17-18):
  - 1. By avoiding obnoxious and/or rude behavior toward them.
  - 2. By seeking forgiveness for any truly wrong thing, we’ve done to them.
- C. Do good to them whenever we have the opportunity. (12:20, Pr. 25:21-22))

*Exodus 23:4-5* - <sup>4</sup> “If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. <sup>5</sup> “If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying helpless under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him.

*Luke 6:27* - “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you”



- 1. Doing good to them benefits us by “heaping hot coals upon their head.”
- 2. This refers to them either becoming increasingly uncomfortable with being nasty to us or to their own repentance.
- 3. Also, treating one’s enemies with goodness proves our place in God’s household:

*Matthew 5:45* - <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons [or, show yourselves to be sons] of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

### **III. Concluding Thoughts**

- A. All of the above would also apply to Christians who are treating us hatefully.
  - 1. And even more so!
  - 2. Christ's steps to reconciliation in Matt. 18 should also be in play.
- B. Loving our enemies in the long term is only possible as we remember that this is how God has loved and still loves us.

*Romans 5:10* - For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.