

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 42 (October 15-21, 2017)

We will spend one more week exploring God's will for those who are being opposed and even persecuted by others.

**Sunday**, October 15 (read Romans 12:9-13)

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (Romans 12:9)*

Since "God is love" (1 John 4:16), His command to us is given as a positive response to love. In the printed verse, we learn that we must be sincere in our efforts to love the good and to hate the evil, being careful not to hate the evil **person**. In response to brotherly love, we can live our lives to honor others, not ourselves (v. 10). It's great to be zealous, but that zeal must be expressed in a Biblical manner (v. 11). Since "the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10), you are commanded to be hopeful and prayerful, even in affliction (v. 12). God's family is commanded to share with one another as needs exist, even when you need to open your home to them in hospitality (v. 13). This works perfectly, because in God's family, "If a man **will** not work, let him not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10, emphasis mine).

**Monday**, October 16 (read Romans 12:14-16)

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14)*

"Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:6-9) That passage from Isaiah tells us in no uncertain terms that God's thoughts and ways differ greatly from our thoughts and ways. In tomorrow's devotion, we will explore Romans 12:14-16 in view of this truth.

**Tuesday**, October 17 (reread Romans 12:14-16)

*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (Romans 12:16)*

If everyone would follow today's text, all the riots and protests would end immediately, because all of them violate this passage. Jesus taught us to love and to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44). The world teaches us to protest and to curse them. God's way is to "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (v. 14). When **we** win or when our **enemies** win, the other side loses, but when Jesus wins, **everyone** wins! We are certainly not following His prayer for unity when we march for our individual rights, whether they are for black rights, white rights, women's rights, gay rights, etc. He wants us to bloom where we have been planted. If **He** decides to promote us to a higher position, it will be for His glory alone. This is a good example that worldly ways and thoughts differ greatly from God's ways and thoughts.

**Wednesday**, October 18 (read Romans 12:17-21)

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. (Romans 12:17)*

As Christians, we are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14); therefore, we must set an example to others who do not live under the authority of the Word of God. That's what the printed verse proclaims. The world tells us to get even and to strike back, but Jesus teaches us to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39). Did anyone tell you that the Christian life would be easy? Of course, you have control over only one half of the equation, but you must do what you can to bring about the unity that Jesus prayed for on the last night of His life on earth (v. 18). We will continue with this passage in tomorrow's devotion.

**Thursday**, October 19 (reread Romans 12:17-21)

*Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)*

God does a much better job of punishing our enemies that we ever could. Sadly, when we take it upon ourselves to get even, we are usurping the plan of God for them (v. 19). That means that we will have failed as His salt and light. His wrath may be the only thing that will bring them to repentance, a goal that should be foremost in everything we do. Jesus says, "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light" (Luke 16:8). Quite frankly, when we use worldly methods to try to accomplish our agenda, we will lose every time; therefore, follow the instructions given in this passage and leave the results to God.

**Friday**, October 20 (read Luke 14:7-11)

*"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited." (Luke 14:8)*

Have you already learned from Monday's devotions that God's ways are not like our ways? If not, this parable may help! Jesus teaches us to take the **lowest** seat offered to us at the wedding banquet (v. 8). This, of course, pictures the wedding supper for the Lamb of God with His bride, the Church. I often picture myself walking into the banquet and taking an important seat, telling them that I am an evangelist. Then someone says, "Here comes another evangelist, a fellow named Billy Graham. I wonder where he will sit." Talk about humiliation! I hope I won't need Jesus to tell me to give my seat to **anyone** (v. 9), because He, alone, determines where we will sit. Do you have your own illustration?

**Saturday**, October 21 (reread Luke 14:7-11)

*"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11)*

Left to ourselves, we would seldom pick the lowest seat in any situation. Even if we can accomplish that command, we certainly do not teach our kids to do it. They have to be first, and we make sure that no one fails to give them their just rewards. That may be why many of the marches and protests are coming from young paid protesters, those who feel entitled to the money that others have made through hard work. In this upside down world (Isaiah 5:20), only God knows when we have done everything we can to model the Word of God. When this day comes, Jesus will shout, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." (Revelation 4:1b). Then we will be thrilled that we chose to follow the Biblically correct worldview instead of the politically correct worldview.