

22.

Repay no one evil for evil

Romans 12:17a

For most of us, whenever we are confronted by evil, our most natural response is to strike back. This simple injunction, '*Repay no one evil for evil*', is one of the hallmarks of Christianity. Christ followers serve a Saviour who exemplified this injunction. When confronted with the greatest of all evils, Christ did not respond in kind.

1. Note First Peter 2:23. How does Peter say that Christ responded to evil?

2. Does Christ's example mean that we should never resist evil? Consider Matthew 5:39 along with Ephesians 5:11 and discuss.

3. What reason does Proverbs 20:22 give for not repaying evil for evil?

The Bible's use of the word "evil" encompasses the idea of *wrong doing which profoundly injures*. The Bible introduces *evil* almost immediately. God strategically placed two sacramental trees in the Garden of Eden. The first one was *The Tree of Life*. The second was *The Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil* (Gen. 2:9).

4. Based on Genesis 3:5, what did Satan predict would happen if Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil?

5. When Eve looked at the forbidden fruit, what two reasons led her to eat of it according to Genesis 3:6? (What does this tell us about the nature of temptation to sin?)
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When the two original humans destined all subsequent people to be born sinners, there was still a capacity to resist evil.

6. How does Genesis 4:5-7 illustrate this possibility?
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But mankind did not resist the temptation to do evil. After Cain murdered his brother, evil in the hearts of mankind only grew unabated.

7. How does Genesis 6:5 illustrate this, and what would God's eventual remedy be?
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The New Testament warns believers that people will treat them badly and speak 'evil' of them (Matt. 5:11). But this doesn't mean that Christians should be passive when it comes to evil.

8. How did Christ teach His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:13?
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The power of the Christian life is found in being filled with the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) helps to empower the believer to resist evil and the temptation to respond to evil *with* evil. If you are struggling with anger and the temptation to respond to evil *with evil*, then you need a fresh filling with the Holy Spirit and His fruit.

Amen.