

Transformed!

How God Renews the Lives of His People

Get Personal

Part 16: *More Radical Love*

A Note from Pastor Keith...

[Jesus said,]⁴³“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.”

Matthew 5:43-47 (New Living Translation)

Last week we talked about the characteristics of radical love. This week we’re talking about the characteristics of a love more radical. Last week was all about loving people in general, including the people we already love. This week—more specific and far more difficult—is all about loving the people who don’t particularly love us. In fact they may even hate us. This kind of love *demand*s spiritual transformation! What are the marks of this even more radical love?

Marks of a More Radical Love

1. “But they’re making my life miserable!”

Bless them anyway.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:14 (NIV)

Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them.

Romans 12:14 (NLT)

2. “But they don’t care about me!”

Care about them anyway.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Romans 12:15 (NIV)

Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:15 (NLT)

3. “But they’re not part of my group!”

Include them anyway.

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 (NIV)

Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!

Romans 12:16 (NLT)

Get Personal!

As you listened to this lesson, who came to mind? Make a list (a short one, I hope).

What can you do to bless those people? Be specific.

How can you rejoice with them and mourn with them?

How can you (gulp) spend more time with them?

4. “But they’ve *really* got it coming to them!”

Do right anyway.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

Romans 12:17 (NIV)

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

Romans 12:17 (NLT)

5. “But you don’t understand—we’re at war!”

Be at peace anyway.

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

Romans 12:18 (NIV)

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (NLT)

6. “Please, PLEASE, PLEASE let me smack ‘em!”

Vengeance is God’s job. Yours is love.

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. 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.”

Romans 12:19-20 (NIV)

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord. Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.”

Romans 12:19-20 (NLT)

7. “But what they’re doing is evil!”

Overcome evil with good.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:21 (NIV)

Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Romans 12:21 (NLT)

Get Personal!

How can you respond to them in a way that everyone will recognize as good?

What action can you take that might help restore peace?

Rather than take revenge, what will you do to “heap burning coals” of blessing on their heads?

How is the evil you’re experiencing bringing out the evil in you?

How will you overcome evil with good?

One of My Favorite Passages

⁸Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. ⁹Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. ¹¹He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

1 Peter 3:8-12 (NIV, quoting Psalm 34:12-16)