



For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and

a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

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Growing Through Mistreatment: POSSESSING YOUR SOULS

Allen Hood

I. INTRODUCTION

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. (1 Thess. 5:23-24)

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -- Christ -- (Eph. 4:11-15)

A. A Vision for Fullness – Body, Soul, and Spirit. God will set apart a people fully for Himself and bring forth a people in the fullness of the gifts, fruit, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The forerunner ministry functions in several ways. One, it prepares the people of God for the coming of the Lord. It does this by giving a vision for fullness and giving keys for the heart to cooperate with the grace of God. Second, it proclaims the coming activities of God that are unperceived but are just around the corner. It is a preparatory ministry to help the people of God be prepared for and cooperate with the coming activity of God.

B. Most persons believe that the true measure of one's passion or one's entrance into fullness is either exuberance in religious activity, freedom in our expression of worship, mental apprehension of biblical concepts, or one's impact in ministry. The most mature among us are viewed by measure of their anointing as they minister or by the largeness of their influence in the various realms of life. Few consider the quality of one's interior life as the measure of one's passion and one's maturity in this life. Few consider that God truly looks upon the heart. Few stop to ask, "How tender is my heart to God and how responsive is it to His name and ways?"

C. The Relationship Between Meekness and Anger

1. Meekness is the primary positive virtue of the kingdom and the one to be most sought out. Meekness is associated with gentleness and humility. Meekness is power under control. It is the restraint of power for the accomplishment of a higher cause. This is not to be confused with weakness. Weakness is the absence of strength and power. Meekness is the possession of power, yet restraining it for redemptive purposes. This is also not to be confused with personality traits. A laid back personality is not to be equated with meekness. Meekness is the cultivation of a spirit of Servanthood in which Jesus is the ultimate example.

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. (Mt. 5:5)

2. Anger is the first negative vice Jesus presents. It is the great hindrance to meekness.

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. (Mt. 5:21-22)

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4:31-32)

D. As forerunners we must cultivate a tender and responsive heart to God. We must be vigilant in the possession of our souls. The Bible warns of a time coming when the love of many will grow cold

and unbelievable pressure on the earth will bring forth the greatest levels of suffering and mistreatment (Mt. 24:9-13; Mk. 13:12-13; Dan. 7:25, 12:1-2; Rev. 13:5-8). We must prepare for this season and the smaller seasons of tribulation that precede it by casting off every sin that ensnares us and by fixing our eyes on Jesus who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross. We must resist the vice of anger and pursue the virtue of meekness.

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. (1 Thess. 4:1-7)

You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls. (Lk. 21:16-19)

II. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF MISTREATMENT IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

A. The Bible does not offer us an idealistic triumphalism. Rather, God invites us to walk as Jesus walked, to embrace the journey of meekness and the pleasure of Christ being formed in the inward parts. This not only allows mistreatment into our lives; it requires it. God is committed to conforming us to the image of His Son that Jesus might be the firstborn among many brethren. The power of the resurrection life is given that we might endure suffering and trial in this age. The good news is that the "sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

B. Mistreatment and opposition are both the context and fruit of a fallen world. Everyone suffers. Everyone is hurt, betrayed, abused, taken advantage of, oppressed. Yet, only for the redeemed can suffering mistreatment count. For the redeemed even suffering can be used of God for the production of fruitfulness and wholeheartedness.

1. Saint Augustine states that the same miseries send some to heaven and others to hell. The test of suffering separates the wheat from the chaff in the Church of God: those who in times of tribulation humble themselves to the will of God are wheat for paradise; those who grow haughty and enraged, and so forsake God, are chaff for hell.

2. Saint Alphonsus Ligouri in *The Practice of the Love of Jesus* – "The condition of the saints on the earth is to suffer as they love; the condition of the saints in heaven (in the next age) is to enjoy as they love" (p. 49).

C. Breaking the fantasy that I was the "one" wronged. Everyone is mistreated. Everyone right now is either being mistreated or is about to be mistreated or is mistreating someone else. We expect suffering from unbelievers outside the church. In regard to the church a lie moves in and sets up a false expectation. It is this: as we mature we should suffer less mistreatment in the church. We expect it from unbelievers, so therefore we have grace to forgive unbelievers. Yet, when mistreatment occurs within the community, we list our entitlements.

D. We have had only one entitlement from the very beginning: We offended and rebelled against our most kind and gracious Maker. In fact, when given the opportunity, we killed the Lord of glory, the innocent One whom came from the Father full of grace and truth, and are entitled to one thing: everlasting condemnation. Yet, "God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph 2:4-9)" Peter asked Jesus concerning the issue of being wronged by your brother.

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (Matt. 18:21-22)

E. Why Mistreatment? It exposes the great enemy of our soul – pride manifesting in anger. The crucible places pressures on the human heart that expose the fault lines underneath the surface. Mistreatment and opposition touches places of pride otherwise unnoticed in our controlled environments. This is why marriage can be if cooperated with a great sanctifier of the human heart. When I was single I could control my environment in such a way as to keep my stuff undisturbed in hidden places. In marriage you can run but you cannot hide. Opposition and mistreatment are part of the unspoken vows. “In sickness and in health, in opposition and mistreatment til death do us part or til will kill each other.” I thought I was holy when single, but I found out quickly there is a difference between being holy and being undisturbed. (Richard Foster’s quote from his book, Prayer or Celebration of Discipline).

F. Receive Mistreatment and Suffering as from the Hand of a Loving Father Bringing forth a Greater Work of Sanctification. Redemptive Suffering Counts! You see mistreatment is not only the test of meekness. The test contains within itself the avenues for reform and transformation. The pressures expose and if responded to rightly can produce meekness in the heart. Understanding how to grow in meekness in the midst of mistreatment produces the opportunity for dependence, faith, and trust. If you knew the divine exchange rate and what awaits those who embrace meekness in the midst of trial in the next age, you would not dare to waste a good opportunity to receive correction from the Lord’s hand or to throw away the eternal currency of forgiving and doing good to those who have wronged you.

G. We usually respond to mistreatment on the basis of the percentage of truth. This person is 100% wrong, 40% right and 60% wrong. So my response is in direct proportion to how much truth I assess the person was operating in when he or she offended me. However, there is something better than being right in this life. It is being free!

III. RESISTING ANGER AND EMBRACING MEEKNESS IN THE MIDST OF MISTREATMENT

A. Recognize our Resident Anger in the Heart and Face our Fallenness – Mistreatment is highly personal. It is not that mistreatment is unfair in some general kind of way. It is that mistreatment happened to me. We have the God given right not to be mistreated. How dare she do that to me! I cannot believe he actually said this to me. The concern is not what made her do this or him say that. The concern is that they did and said it to me. I am the one challenged. I am the one resisted. I am the one in which my inconsistencies and weaknesses were pointed out. Who are they to give me instruction? What right do they have to analyze me and question me? We get angry when someone messes with our stuff. Our Turf. Our Ideas. Our Reputations. Thus, the defense mechanism of the fractured soul – anger – rushes to guard us from the realization that our fallenness is true. We would rather be proud and angry, clinging to our deluded solidarity than to admit to our inconsistent patterns, fractured pieces, and our humble need for grace to receive forgiveness and to forgive.

1. God recognizes this defense mechanism in Cain and begins to lead him through a series of questions to help him find his way out of shame, bitterness, envy, and self-hatred. God identifies the defense mechanism of pride. “Why are you angry?” Something new has entered the picture after the fall, correction. Anger as the defense mechanism of pride to keep us from having to face our fallenness and resists our need for correction. “Why has your countenance fallen?” Self-pity rushes in to strengthen one’s justified anger and resentment. Beware of the two-fold poison of the Serpent: anger and self-pity.

Gen 4:4-7 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." NKJV

2. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount He exposes the same seed of murder and anger which was in Cain the Judge is in us. In fact it is the first set of sins in which Jesus addresses. The defense mechanism of pride – anger – is the escort into the murderous heart.

Matt 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. NKJV

Jesus states that even if you resist physical murder, yet your heart wishes you could do it and not get caught or you just wish they would go away, that your heart has embraced a spirit of murder. The latter desire is the predominate one in the Church – its not that you want to kill someone physically – you’d rather they’d just disappear and go away. That’s murder folks!

3. The Bible clearly states that wrath and anger produce no righteous fruit.

James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. NKJV

Gal 5:19-24 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also tell you the works of the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. NKJV

Proverbs 14:29 He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly. NKJV

Proverbs 19:19 a man of great wrath will suffer punishment; for if you rescue him, you will have to do it again. NKJV

Proverbs 29:8 Scoffers set a city aflame, But wise men turn away wrath. NKJV

4. Anger aimed outward is outbursts of rage and control. Anger aimed inward is depression and self-hatred. We must face these areas of fallenness, repent of them as sin, and ask for the healing work of the Spirit to make effective the cleansing and redeeming work of Calvary.

B. Embrace Humility

1. Understand the weakness of the human condition. It is amazing that anyone gets along with anyone for any given period of time.

2. Understand your fallen state and propensity to get it wrong and allow yourself to receive forgiveness.

And when it happens that we commit some fault, we must also be gentle with ourselves. Getting angry at ourselves after doing something wrong is not humility but a subtle form of pride, as if we were not the weak and wretched creatures that we are. . . To be angry at ourselves after the commission of a fault is a greater fault than the one just committed, and it will lead to many others. It will make us abandon our devotions, prayers, and Communion; or if we do them, it will be done poorly.

- - St Alphonsus Ligouri, *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ*.

3. Understand the fallen state of the one/ones opposing you and leave room for the forgiveness of God. Get on their team. They are caught in the same predicament that you are. They will sin against someone and be sinned against just like you. This leads us to enter into the greatest community building tool imaginable – prayer.

4. Beware of being wise in your own opinion. The great enemy of humility is a profound insight into the situation. Paul calls it a wise opinion.

C. Use the Pain to Escort You into Communion with God – Mistreatment causes our hearts to encounter God. In the midst of trial none of our human props give us relief. Relief can only be found in the encountering God and the finding of His grace.

1. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; (1 Peter 2:21-23)

2. We must recognize that the opinions or actions of others do not keep us from fulfilling God's will in our lives. Only we can keep us from fulfilling God's will in our lives.

3. We must also realize that the pain we feel in the midst of mistreatment is real and does not count us out. The emotion is the fruit of love, especially when hurt by someone close to us. Our emotions do not count us out; our actions in response to our emotions will either qualify or disqualify us.

D. Grow in Love

1. Mistreatment creates sensitivity in the heart of the one mistreated. You tend to forget principles taught from the platform but lessons learned in pain are written on the heart in permanent ink. You will find yourself more sensitive to others in the ways that you respond. Love will produce patience in your heart towards the weaknesses of others.

2. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was

given to us. (Rom. 5:1-5)

E. Endure Hardship – Let endurance and patience do its good work. Let time do its good work. Become a fragrance, a mature saint that trusts in the kindness of God to work all things together for good to them that love the Lord (Rom. 8:28)

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)

F. Overcome Evil with Good and Leave Room for God's Wrath.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:19-21)

IV. PAUL AND THE GENUINE APOSTOLIC HEART – II COR. 10-13

A. False Apostles who boast in appearance but not in heart.

B. The Accusations Leveled Against Paul in 2 Corinthians

1. He does not keep his word – 2 Cor. 1:15-2:2

2. Lowly and timid in person but bold when absent

The Spiritual War Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ -- who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. (2 Cor. 10:1)

3. His presence is weak and his speech is contemptible.

"For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." (2 Cor. 10:10)

4. Untrained in speech – 2 Cor. 11:6

5. He's poor and unwilling to take money for the Gospel

6. He is sick and weakly. True apostles are above sickness.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor. 12:10)

C. Paul displays that genuine authority is carried with meekness and gentleness.

Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ -- who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 2 Cor. 10:1-2

Matthew 11:27-30

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Mark 10:35-45

(1) 35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

39 They said to Him, "We are able."

So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

D. The ministry tools/weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual. The one who manifests the nature of Christ wins. The battle is over righteousness in the inward parts. The indwelling Christ manifesting in a godly, holy life.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (2 Cor. 10:1-5)

John 14:30-31 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here. NKJV

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. NKJV

Hebrews 7:26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; NKJV

1 Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. NKJV

1 Peter 2:21-24 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed. NKJV

E. II Cor. 11:22-33 – The wealth of Christ’s love in Paul’s life is displayed when he deeply loves his own people who continuously reject him.

1. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2. Quote from New American Commentary – “According to the Mishna, thirty-six sins, including blasphemy, warranted being cut off from the people without warning. But flogging averted both a harsher punishment at the hands of God and being cut off from the people (Lev. 18:29; Num. 15:3). The key text reads: ‘When he is scourged then he is thy brother’ (m. Mak. 3:15). . . He allowed the synagogue to administer punishment on him ‘in order to maintain his Jewish connections.’ Harvey notes that Jews were given special privileges to settle disputes in their own courts. If one wanted to stay a member of the Jewish community, one had to submit to its discipline. For Paul to submit to this punishment five times testifies not only to his physical stamina but to his commitment to his people, which he proclaims in Rom. 9:2-4.”

3. Rom 9:1-5 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. NKJV

F. Though Corinth loves Paul less, he will love them all the more and gladly be poured out for them. Love for the Church Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. (2 Cor. 12:14-15)

V. BECOMING A PEOPLE OF MEEKNESS AND GLORY

A. Meditate long and often upon the meekness of Christ and the reward system of the Father.

1. The most humbling thing one can do is to look upon how Jesus responded to suffering and mistreatment. His whole life was ordered around the attribute of meekness. It was His greatest pursuit. From the moment He was born the Father was contemplating His own humility in the person of His Son. Love would be openly displayed as Jesus went lower and lower. Anyone who truly looks upon the man Christ Jesus and His meekness will be left staring at the great mystery. How can One so strong be so tender as He stoops so low?

2. Looking upon Jesus meekness is the great sanctifier to areas of pride and anger in the human heart. It produces holy tears of longing to be like Him that cleanse the soul from the trauma of violence and invites the grace of God unto humility.

B. Practice the Freedom of Quick Repentance to Others.

C. Embrace the joy of forgiveness and give room for God's wrath.

D. Practice covering the weaknesses and infirmities of others. Hope all things and believe all things. See people in this light: How will they look ten years from now if they fully participated with the grace of God in every area of their life?

1. Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. (Prov. 10:12)

2. He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends. (Prov. 17:9)

3. The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression. (Prov. 19:11)

4. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8)

E. Practice the discipline of letting your spouse win the argument, especially when you are convinced that you are right.

F. Practice silence in the face of opposition. Pray and bless those who persecute you.

G. Let kind and gracious words frequently be on your lips.

VI. ROMANS 12 AND JAMES 3

Living Sacrifices to God I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:9-21)

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18)

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