

Romans 12:9-21^{iv}

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

^{iv}About Romans 12:9-21

In the preceding passage (12:3-8), Paul delineated the diversity of roles and tasks within the Christian community. The standards he sets forth in today's reading should prevail regardless of each member's "function" (12:4).

Love for one another must be without hypocrisy, characterized by humility, generosity and sympathy. Christians should earn a reputation for meekness, moral uprightness, peacefulness and patience. They should recoil with loathing from evil and embrace all that is good. Their passion for prayer and service should not diminish over time, but continue to result in blessing and a willingness to give themselves in humility to whatever tasks God presents.

Revenge belongs to God alone. In verse 20, Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22 to illustrate the

overcoming power of kindness. Such acts of goodness may or may not lead to the enemy's repentance, but they have an intrinsic power that is stronger than evil and will, finally, prevail.