

## Romans 12:17-21

### Overcoming Evil

*Entangled with enemies ...*

#### I. Players in a Conflict

- A. Evildoers
- B. Vigilantes
- C. Oddballs
- D. And the Judge

#### II. Saints in the Ring

- A. Beyond Forgiveness
- B. Above Harm
- C. His Witness

#### III. Overcome by Grace

- A. Pursuing Peace
- B. Showing Kindness
- C. Trusting God
  - 1. Man's Response
  - 2. God's Honor
  - 3. Divine Justice

*... a final ruling.*

### **Children, Listen ...**

1. If someone hurts us should we make sure we hurt them back?
2. What does Jesus say to do if someone slaps us on the cheek?
3. Is it always easy to live at peace with everyone? What does Paul say about that?
4. When Jesus was mocked, beaten and nailed to the cross did he fight back? What could he have done?
5. We are called to show kindness to our enemies. That seems impossible! How is it possible to do so?

## He Hit Me First

The adage “hurt people hurt people” has substantial merit. Most of us are prone to either lash out or subtly curse those who come against us for whatever reason. Retaliation of some sort seems to be the call of our nature. But the mentality summed up in the repulsive phrase “I don’t get mad, I just get even” should disturb us and should certainly not be part of any Christian’s vocabulary. Grace, not vengeance is to be our M.O. Christ not only taught that we are to forgive and even show kindness to enemies He exemplified it. We might want to say something along the lines of “he hit me first” (as most of us probably did as children to explain why we smacked a sibling or peer) to justify our retributive actions. But Jesus says “But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” It seems like an impossible demand as we fail so often to do this with those near and dear let alone our enemies. But as usual God’s grace abounds for stuff like this when we seek it – as always things that are impossible with us are possible with God. May He grant us the grace to be gracious even to those who are bent on causing us trouble.