



## **Overcome Evil With Good**

By Bishop Robert A. Crutchfield  
Chaplain-General  
The Order of St. Isidore of Seville

Overcome evil with good. A nice idea isn't it? But what does it mean exactly? How do we apply this neat idea to our Christian walk?

The phrase comes from the 12th chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans. It is found in verse 21, "Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." It can be said that the book of Romans is written in three parts. In the first Paul presents the gospel. This lasts through Chapter 8. From there through Chapter 11 he outlines God's plan for the Jews and the Gentiles. In the last third of the epistle he lays out practical lessons for the members of the church in Rome. It is one of these lessons we wish to explore now.

It is interesting that in Chapter 12 Paul was speaking of evil in the context of those who were being persecuted for their faith. Paul himself was persecuted and eventually sent to death by the Romans on account of his faith in Christ.

In a broader sense this verse does not just apply to those who would persecute us for our faith. It applies to any person or group that does not treat us well for whatever reason. Many times over the years I have counseled very angry Christians who had been wronged by someone in some way. Their comments are always something along the lines of "Well I'll show them! If they're going to do that to me they'll be sorry I'll..." This reaction is perfectly human. But it is not God's way. The whole theme of Chapter 12 is that we should not return the evil done to us with evil. This would be vengeful. Vengeance is the Province of God alone. What God expects of us is to return increasing amounts of goodness and charity toward those who wrong us until it reaches a point they can no longer mistreat us. In fact in the NEW LIVING TRANSLATION this same verse reads "Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good." God expects this of us not because it is easy, but because he knows it takes great effort on our part.

In his famous commentaries Mathew Henry has this to say "The line of our duty is clearly marked out, and if our enemies are not melted by persevering kindness, we are not to seek vengeance; they will be consumed by the fiery wrath of that God to whom vengeance belongeth." I am particularly by Henry's use of the term "persevering

kindness.“ We are not to react with kindness that can survive only kindness in return, but kindness that can repel the worst evil. What a spiritual weapon to have!

When I've worked with people in this sort of situation what I've always told them is “its not about them, its about you and the kind of person you want to be.”

The sooner you make “Overcome evil with good” a daily part of your Christian walk, the sooner you will be closer to God. Remember always vengeance belongs to God. Our weapon is the overflowing goodness that comes from our relationship with Christ. Build your sense of kindness at every opportunity, and wage war with it whenever evil strives to make you its own.

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