

The Christian's Rules of Engagement

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Romans 12:17-21 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

- I. The one thing that makes the war between good and evil so difficult is that those that are evil are not bound by any rules while the righteous are.
 - A. Anything goes for the wicked; they can lie, cheat, steal, kill, fight dirty, and they do not hesitate to do all of these things in order to prevail.
 - B. The righteous are bound by truth, justice, mercy, righteousness, and the fear of God to do what is right in spite of what the wicked do.
 - C. This is the essential difference in the righteous and the wicked – the righteous are governed and the wicked are not.
 1. The moment the righteous cease to be governed and launch off into the conflict, or the debate, or the argument with their passions cut loose from any restraints they become the same as the wicked.
 - D. This is also the reason that the reign of wickedness is always so short-lived.
 1. It is precisely because they refuse to be governed that the wicked turn on one another and destroy themselves – they will not be governed by other wicked people any more than they will be governed by righteous people.
 2. After that happens the righteous that remain are left in control again – until they follow the same path as the wicked before them.
 - E. Sometimes it has been said that evil prevails because “good men do nothing.”
 1. The reason for that is that good men will not become bad men in order to stop bad men.
 2. Good men will not lie, cheat, steal, and kill in order to have their way.
 3. It is only when evil crosses a certain threshold that good men will take up arms against them.
 4. And the sad thing is that by the time that happens all is almost lost.

- II. Rules of engagement are defined by the world as follows:

“A directive issued by a military authority controlling the use and degree of force, especially specifying circumstances and limitations for engaging in combat.”

- A. If you get a concealed carry license you have to go through some training where they stress to you some rules to go by if you ever have to use that gun.
 1. Rules that will keep you in the right so you do not end up in jail instead of the person who was trying to kill you or someone else.
 2. It is not the wild west anymore and one second of diversion from what is right and you are the criminal now.
- B. Since the Bible describes Christians as being soldiers and speaks of warfare in the spiritual realm we should also have some rules of engagement as a guide and governor for what we do and say when engaging with the enemy.

1. In the heat of conflict or passion is not the time to figure out what we should or should not do or say.
 2. As we just referred to the rules for carrying and using a gun to defend yourself, the same things apply in our spiritual warfare.
 3. One deviation from the rules of engagement that God has decreed for us and we become one of them.
- C. The first thing we must understand is that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

1. So we do not war after the flesh, and we do not use weapons that are a product of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

2. Now it is very clear to us that the wicked use these weapons, but we are not to engage them with these things.
3. We cannot even be perceived as engaging them with these things or we lose our testimony and our power against them.

- D. The Scriptures are very clear about how we are to do battle with evil.

1 Peter 3:9-14 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1 Peter 3:16-17 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

- III. The temptation is strong to fight fire with fire, but as Christians we cannot win that way.
- A. Our passions will get the best of us unless we are truly filled with the Spirit of God.
 - B. It is a fiery trial of our faith to love our enemies and do good to them which spiteful use us, when we want to strike out and give them a taste of their own medicine.
 - C. We must remember that God deals with wickedness the same way He is telling us to.

Psalm 52:1 A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Matthew 5:43-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.** For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

- D. Whatever the provocation, whatever the offense, whatever the threat, we must always remember that our identity as a Christian is at stake in the eyes of those we are engaging.
- E. If the time comes when we have to take some action against another who intends to do us or someone else harm we better make sure we consider what it is going to look like and sound like to a world that hates Christians.
 - 1. This also requires some rules of engagement that we should consider and have nailed down ahead of time.
- F. If the time comes that we are called upon to deny the Lord or face the consequences, we need to be ready to give the right answer.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

- G. The bottom line is to be filled with the Spirit always and not walking after the flesh.
 - 1. Be careful to maintain a close walk with God at all times and you will not get caught off-guard when some devil hurls those fiery darts at you and stirs up your mind and emotions.
 - 2. Always stop before you answer in anger or frustration or any other passion, and consider what has stirred you up and do not fall into his snare.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

- H. Do not fight like an unregenerate sinner does – fight like a child of God.
 - 1. Do not use the devil's weapons to fight the devil.
 - 2. The weapons of our warfare are mighty – his really are not.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

- 3. When we consider our lost loved ones and the depth of the darkness around us isn't this enough for us to trust God with?
- 4. What more could we want God to promise us?