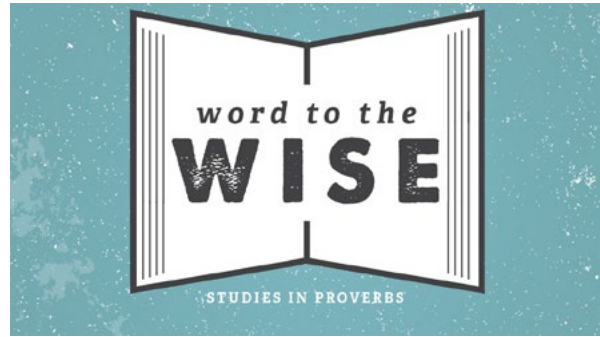


beyond^{the}Weekend

For the sermon on August 30-31, 2014
"How to Get Even"



Welcome to *Beyond the Weekend!* Invite God into your day with daily scripture and actions. The experiences below are designed to connect with the weekend message. Take 20-30 minutes each day and enjoy your pursuit of God! *Beyond the Weekend* is also available via daily e-mails. To sign up, go to adabile.org/btw.

Day 1 Proverbs 24.28-29 | Revenge

Our desire for revenge comes almost as quickly as the offense: theft of property, public humiliation, damaged reputation, the target of gossip or lying. As soon as we're aware of the offense, we sense an overwhelming desire to "get even" or as Bob King, Knapp Street Campus pastor, described it, "get the scales back to even." Our heart resonates with the author of Proverbs 24.28, "I'll do to them as they have done to me; I'll pay them back for what they did."

It doesn't take an extended period of thinking and contemplation to come to this conclusion: **it happens immediately**. This is where our heart instantly goes when someone offends us.

But the writer of Proverbs issues a strong warning to us when we find ourselves in this situation: "Don't do it." The first step, in responding in a God-honoring way when we've been hurt, is to respond in a way totally contrary to our first inclination. In the heat of an emotional situation our first response must be, "Stop. Don't." As you invite God into your day, meditate on Proverbs 24.28-29 and ask him for the wisdom and restraint to "Stop" when you sense you've been hurt (especially if you've **recently** been hurt). When the urge for revenge resurfaces, pause and recall these verses to your mind.

Day 2 Proverbs 20.22 | Waiting

Responding in a God-honoring way when we've been hurt requires we understand "our role" vs. "God's role." Proverbs 20.22 details these two roles: ours is to wait while God's is to repay. A problem develops when we assume God's role and seek to punish those we think deserve it. Because we're sinful creatures, it's impossible for us to take revenge with pure motives.

We see this illustrated in the life of David, Israel's second king. Rather than take revenge on the first king, Saul, he obediently followed God's command (Leviticus 19.18) even though Saul was guilty and David innocent. "May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, *but my hand will not touch you*" (1 Samuel 24.12).

Not seeking revenge doesn't mean we let an offense slide. It means we wait as we give our desire for justice over to God and his timing. Today, as you again remember an offense against you not yet rectified, recommit it to God and trust he will do what is right in his timing (Genesis 18.25).

Day 3 Proverbs 24.17-18 | Enemies

Our response to someone who's wronged us involves not only our actions, *but also our thoughts*. When someone who's wronged us experiences hardship and pain, our response can't be one of smug satisfaction, acting as if they deserved it. If we do, the writer of Proverbs says God may then side with our "enemy" and remove his wrath from them.

Smug satisfaction at the hardship of those who've wounded us suggests a superior attitude, an attitude opposite of what should characterize a follower of Jesus: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, *humility*, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3.12). Today, memorize Colossians 3.12 and use it to "put on" humility when you see your "enemy" experience hardship.

Day 4 Proverbs 25.21-22 | Help

It's not enough to sit back and trust God to "get even" when we've been wronged. The radical nature of following Jesus requires we go significantly further: we're to actually *help* them. "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink" (Proverbs 25.21). Compassion, not revenge, should characterize us.

Our goal through compassion is repentance: treating our enemy kindly may cause him to repent. In doing so, we model exactly what God did for us through Jesus, "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, *not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance*" (Romans 2.4)? Discuss with your small group a list of things you can do to show compassion in the face of wrongdoing. If there's someone who's currently your "enemy," select one from the list, do it this week, and then report back to your group.

Day 5 Matthew 5.43-48 | Love

When [Jesus] said, "I tell you, love your enemies," he must have startled his audience, for he was saying something that probably never before had been said so succinctly, positively, and forcefully" William Hendrikson, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p.313.

In whatever relationships we have, especially with those who've caused us harm, God demands we prayerfully love. It is from a Spirit-empowered **decision** we can love our enemies and pray for their well-being. Our prayer list must include those who've hurt us. Today, make sure your prayer list includes your enemies, and specifically—by name—pray for God's best in their life.

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