



March 1, 2026

## The Practice of the Gospel

Romans 12:14-21

Since the beginning of Romans 12, we have been reminded of a powerful truth: right doctrine should always lead to right living. The Gospel is not merely something we believe — it is something that reshapes how we live.

The Christian life is a response to the mercy of God. When the Gospel truly grips your heart, it will inevitably shape your relationships. Paul now turns our attention to how believers are to relate not only to one another, but also to a watching and often hostile world.

As has been wisely said, *“Separation from the world is not the same thing as isolation from the world.”* We are called to holiness — but we are also called to be salt and light. Holiness distinguishes us from the world; the Great Commission sends us into it.

In Romans 12:14–21, Paul shows us what it looks like when the Gospel governs both our attitudes and our actions.

### **Key thought:**

**The Gospel’s influence in your life should shape both your attitude and your actions toward others.**

***The influence of the Gospel compels you to...***

### **1. BLESS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU (v. 14)**

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

*1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9; Matthew 5:38-39, 44-45; Luke 6:29,35*



## **2. SHARE THE BURDENS AND BLESSINGS OF OTHERS (v. 15)**

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

There are many experiences we share in common with all people — joy, grief, hope, disappointment, marriage, loss. These shared human experiences become bridges through which the love of Christ can travel.

## **3. TREAT PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY (v. 16)**

“Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

The Gospel corrects two distortions:

- A wrong view of others
- A wrong view of self

When we understand grace, arrogance becomes absurd.

## **4. LIVE WITH GRACE AND MERCY (v. 17a)**

“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.”

Grace interrupts retaliation. The world operates on the principle of repayment. The Gospel operates on the principle of mercy. If every wrong had to be repaid, none of us would stand before God. Because we have received mercy, we extend mercy.



## 5. LIVE WITH INTEGRITY (v. 17b)

“Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”

The Gospel shapes not only private belief but public behavior.

We are to live honorably and transparently. Our lives should be marked by integrity — not manipulation, not hypocrisy. The watching world may disagree with our convictions, but they should not be able to honestly accuse us of dishonesty or corruption.

## 6. LIVE PEACEABLY (v. 18)

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

Notice the realism in this verse.

It will not always be possible. Peace requires two willing parties. But Paul makes it personal: “*so far as it depends on you.*”

We are responsible for our side of the conflict.

We pursue reconciliation.

We refuse unnecessary hostility.

We seek peace — not because it is easy, but because it reflects our Prince of Peace.

## 7. LIVE DIFFERENTLY (vv. 19–21)

“Never take your own revenge... ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

Believers should not merely avoid doing evil to their enemies but should positively do good.

*Proverbs 25:21–22 (NASB95)* If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For you will heap burning coals on his head, And the Lord will reward you.



Verses 20-22: “The cross represents the very highest manifestation of the hatred in the heart of man toward God. At the same time, it represents the very highest manifestation of the love in the heart of God toward man. That very spear which pierced the Savior’s side drew forth the blood that saves.” <sup>1</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Romans 12:14–21 is not a list of moral suggestions. It is a description of what the Gospel produces in a surrendered life.

You cannot live this way through willpower alone. This kind of life flows from a heart transformed by mercy.

The question is not simply:

- Are you trying harder?

But:

- Has the Gospel truly transformed you?

When the Gospel shapes your heart:

- You bless instead of curse.
- You empathize instead of compete.
- You humble yourself instead of exalt yourself.
- You extend mercy instead of revenge.
- You pursue peace instead of conflict.
- You overcome evil — with good.

This is the practice of the Gospel.

And when we live this way, the world does not merely hear about Christ — they see Him.