

Comments About Romans 12:18

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a discussion about the words of the apostle Paul found in Romans 12. It is my perspective that Paul's writings in chapters 1-11 could be classified more as comments about doctrine and spiritual concepts, whereas the words in chapter 12 can be viewed more as Christian-living topics.

Last week, we discussed Romans 12:17. This article will discuss Romans 12:18.

Positive words

Notice what Paul wrote in Romans 12:18.

Romans 12:18—"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Mixed message?

Bible students are aware that there are occasional subjects where there appears to be a contradiction within the pages of the Bible.

One such contrast concerns peace.

- Luke 2:13-14—When an angel approached some shepherds about the birth of the Son of God, the heavenly host mentioned that the arrival of peace and goodwill had come.
- Matthew 10:34-37—Christ said He did not come to bring peace on earth.
- Matthew 21:44—Christ talked about the Stone that crushes.

The Son of God is often considered the greatest peacemaker to walk the face of the earth.

Question: Was the Son of God an instrument of peace or not?

My answer: Not for every minute within the plan of God.

Neither possible nor desired

The first four words in Romans 12:18 (“If it is possible”) remind us that perfect peace is not always possible.

We can look through the entire Bible and find examples where peace was not always possible—or desired. Let’s notice two related events in the book of John.

John 5:8-10, 16—“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed’ . . . For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”

Jesus Christ was determined to reveal a behavior on the Sabbath day that His Father wanted the begotten children to imitate—knowing the response of the religious leaders. Remember that there are other examples in the Bible about the Son healing on the Sabbath day.

John 5:17-18—“But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”

Jesus Christ was determined to reveal His place as the Son of God—knowing the response of the religious leaders. Remember that He specifically mentioned the relationship between the Father and Son in the following verses of this chapter. John 5:19-23 and John 5:25-27.

What depends upon you

The next six words in Romans 12:18 (“As much as depends upon you”) do encourage disciples to pursue peace and to reflect peace—as much as possible.

Here are merely a few verses that discuss the concept of seeking to be a conduit of peace.

- Matthew 5:9
- Romans 14:19
- 1 Corinthians 8:11-13
- 1 Corinthians 10:32-33