

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

4 – Always Say Never

"If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good....Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it."
- Romans 12:17, 19, GOOD NEWS

"Man's anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose."
- James 1:20, GOOD NEWS

John Allen Chalk once said, "Cannibals aren't the only ones that get fed up with people." And we've all had our fill of people at one time or another, haven't we? Romans 12 provides some direction for building better relationships. First, play to win. Second, watch your words. Third, seek to understand. And fourth, avoid any temptation to get even—which is asking a lot in a culture that says get even, values getting even, even thrives on getting even!

Welcome

What was your worst boss like?

Word

Read Romans 12:17-19

1. What three positive commands are given in this passage? What three negative commands are given? What reasons are given for not taking revenge?
2. What's the problem (or price) with taking revenge or harboring resentment?

Read Ephesians 4:25-32

3. When you feel angry, do you respond more like a "skunk" or a "turtle?" Explain. What advice does verse 25 offer a "skunk?" A "turtle?" Why is this an important beginning point?
4. Anger is far easier to address (regardless of whether you're the one who is angry, or the one the anger is directed toward) if you will focus on the *source* of the anger—a hurt, or fear, or frustration. Do you agree?
5. What do all of the inappropriate expressions of anger listed in verses 26, 29-31 have in common? Which of these do you struggle with most? What would help you put this "old" part of your life away?

Works

How you handle hurt will, to a large degree, determine your happiness and the healthiness of your relationships. Resentment is the great destroyer of relationships. Instead of focusing all your negative emotion and thinking toward *payback*, invest all that emotion and thinking in positive ways and notice the *payoff*! The time and energy you spend trying to get even would better be spent trying to get ahead. Can you think of a situation that you need to quit rehearsing? What steps do you need to take to reveal the hurt and/or release your offender?

Worship

Read **1 Peter 2:21-25** and consider what it involved for Jesus to set the example for us that He did. After a period of worship, split into men and women's groups and pray for one another. "God, flush all resentment out of my life. Fill me with your love."