

**MESSAGE SUMMARY**

Life is full of complicated people at work, in our families, and even in the church. God has always worked through complicated people including David, Moses, Peter, and even us. If God only used perfect people, no one would ever be used. Romans 12:14–21 teaches us that complicated people don't block our calling; they build our character. Instead of reacting out of pride, bitterness, or grudges, Paul calls believers to reflect Christ by choosing: blessing over bitterness, peace over pride, and goodness over grudge.

**MAIN POINTS****1. Blessing over Bitterness (Romans 12:14–15)**

- "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them."
- The gospel frees us from chains of bitterness and calls us to bless, not retaliate.

**2. Peace over Pride (Romans 12:16–18)**

- "Live in harmony with one another... as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
- Humility trusts God to defend our reputation. Peace grows when pride dies.

**3. Goodness over Grudge (Romans 12:19–21)**

- Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
- Vengeance belongs to God. Retaliation lets evil win twice; goodness reflects Christ's victory.

**Big Idea:** Complicated people don't block your calling; they build your character.

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS****1. Which "complicated person" in your life currently tests your faith the most, and how might God be using that relationship to grow your character?**

*Possible Answer:* A coworker who gossips about me has made me want to defend myself, but God is teaching me patience and trust in His justice. (James 1:2–4 – "The testing of your faith produces steadfastness.")

**2. How can you practically choose blessing over bitterness this week in a difficult relationship?**

*Possible Answer:* Instead of replaying hurtful words, I can pray for the person daily and look for one opportunity to encourage them. (Matthew 5:44 – "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.")

**3. What does choosing peace over pride look like in your relationships? What might you need to surrender to God?**

*Possible Answer:* In conflict with a family member, I may need to let go of needing the last word and trust God with my reputation. (Philippians 2:3 – "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.")

**4. Why is it freeing to leave vengeance in God's hands instead of holding a grudge?**

*Possible Answer:* Because it reminds me, I don't have to carry the weight of making things right; God is just, and He will settle all wrongs. (Deuteronomy 32:35 – "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.")

**5. What is one specific way you can "overcome evil with good" this week?**

*Possible Answer:* Bringing a meal to a neighbor who has been unfriendly, as an act of undeserved kindness. (Galatians 6:9–10 – "Let us not grow weary of doing good... let us do good to everyone.")

**GOSPEL CONNECTION**

Romans 12:14–21 mirrors the life of Jesus. He was cursed, yet He blessed. He was wronged, yet He forgave. He was crucified, yet He overcame evil with good through His resurrection. The cross shows us that the way of Christ is not retaliation but redemption. For believers, our ability to bless, pursue peace, and choose goodness flows out of the gospel; the Holy Spirit living in us (Romans 8:11). For seekers and skeptics, this passage invites us to consider Jesus Himself; the One who absorbed evil without retaliating and offers us forgiveness and new life. Therefore, because Christ has overcome evil with good, we too can reflect His character in how we respond to complicated people. "Lord God, transform our hearts, make us more like Jesus, Amen."

## DAILY DEVOTIONS

### Monday: Complicated People, Complicated Grace

*Key Verse: Romans 12:14 – “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”*

**Reflection:** The Bible reminds us that God has always worked through complicated people, Noah, David, Peter, and even us. The challenge is not to let complicated people derail us but to allow God to use them to build our character. Blessing instead of cursing requires a supernatural heart change, one only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Application Question:** Who is one complicated person in your life God may be using to shape your character, and how can you begin to view them as an opportunity for growth instead of a barrier?

**Possible Answer:** My co-worker who criticizes me often frustrates me, but I can ask God to help me respond with patience instead of defensiveness, seeing it as a chance to grow in humility.

**Prayer Response:** “Lord, thank You for working in and through complicated people, including me. Give me grace to see difficult people as opportunities for growth. Help me to respond with blessing, not bitterness. Please change me. In Jesus’ name”

### Tuesday: Blessing Over Bitterness

*Key Verse: Romans 12:15 – “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”*

**Reflection:** Bitterness chains us to the past, but blessing frees us for the future. When we choose to bless others, even those who hurt us, we reflect Christ, who blessed His enemies from the cross. Instead of letting resentment dictate our responses, the Holy Spirit invites us to participate in the joys and sorrows of others. This is the path to true freedom and fellowship.

**Application Question:** What’s one way you can intentionally choose blessing instead of bitterness in a current strained relationship?

**Possible Answer:** Instead of replaying hurtful words from a friend, I can pray for them daily and send a short note of encouragement this week.

**Prayer Response:** “Father, free me from bitterness. Help me to rejoice with others’ victories and enter into their pain. May my words and actions be a blessing that reflects Christ. In Jesus’ name”

### Wednesday: Peace Over Pride

*Key Verse: Romans 12:18 – “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”*

**Reflection:** Living at peace with others does not mean avoiding conflict but entering relationships with humility, gentleness, and a willingness to forgive. Pride makes us defensive, but peace rests in God’s justice and sovereignty. As disciples of Christ, we are called to pursue peace actively even if others don’t respond in kind because peace is the presence of Christ in us.

**Application Question:** Where do you need to let go of pride and take a step toward peace this week?

**Possible Answer:** I need to stop trying to defend my reputation with a co-worker and instead choose to stay calm, entrusting the situation to God.

**Prayer Response:** “Lord Jesus, You made peace through the cross. Help me surrender my pride, pursue peace, and trust You to guard my reputation. Let Your peace grow in me. In Jesus’ name”

### Thursday: Goodness Over Grudge

*Key Verse: Romans 12:21 – “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

**Reflection:** God calls us to overcome evil not with retaliation, but with goodness. Choosing goodness does not mean ignoring injustice but trusting God with vengeance and responding with integrity. Even small acts of kindness like offering a meal, a kind word, or a listening ear can disarm hostility and point people toward Christ.

**Application Question:** What is one way you can overcome evil with good this week?

**Possible Answer:** I can show kindness to a neighbor who has been unkind by helping them with a small task instead of avoidance.

**Prayer Response:** “Father, help me not to be overcome by evil but to respond with goodness rooted in Your Spirit. May my actions reflect the victory of Christ over sin and death. In Jesus’ name”

### Friday: Reflecting Christ in a Complicated World

*Key Verse: Romans 12:21 – “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

**Reflection:** Jesus was cursed, yet He blessed. He was wronged, yet He forgave. He was crucified, yet He overcame evil with good through the cross and resurrection. Our ability to choose blessing over bitterness, peace over pride, and goodness over grudge is not found in our own strength but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Complicated people give us opportunities to reflect the gospel.

**Application Question:** How can you reflect Christ to someone this week by choosing blessing or peace in your response?

**Possible Answer:** I can reflect Christ by praying for a difficult coworker and looking for one opportunity to respond kindly rather than defensively.

**Prayer Response:** “Jesus, thank You for blessing when cursed, forgiving when wronged, and overcoming evil with good. Empower me by Your Spirit to reflect Your character in my relationships this week. In Jesus’ name”