

26.

To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; For by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.

Romans 12:20

One of the hallmarks of a true Christian is how they treat their enemies. While our enemies use weapons of hostility and injury, the ‘weapons’ with which a Christian responds include: kindness, mercy, and generosity. If we are to follow Christ, we are to follow the God who loved us when we *hated* Him. We are to follow after the God who showed us nothing but kindness and generosity when all we showed Him was obstinance and ingratitude.

1. What happened to us when we were born again according to Second Corinthians 5:17 (note Ephesians 4:24)

2. As difficult as it is, what incentive does Proverbs 25:21-22 give the believer to respond to their enemy’s hostility with kindness?

3. How does Isaiah 58:6-8 reveal God’s heart for how He wants His people to treat others?

The Gospel does not *just* encourage the believer to resist striking back, but to actually show kindness and generosity in the face of an enemy’s ungraciousness. Have you ever witnessed this?

During World War Two, conscientious objector, Desmond Doss enlisted as a medic. His heroism in going into the front-lines of several battles *unarmed* to rescue wounded comrades, earned him the highest military medal for bravery. But Desmond also went across to where he saw wounded *enemies* and brought many of them back into the American field hospitals as well! Desmond Doss showed the enemies of America during World War II, what Romans 12:20 looked like. His life has been depicted in the very graphic movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*.



4. How might the community in which our church is located view our church differently if we emulated First Corinthians 4:12?
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5. The Apostle Peter presents what aspect of Christ's life and ministry to his readers to challenge them in his statement in First Peter 2:23? How could we each challenge each other today with this same challenge? (Note 1Pet. 3:9)
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Perhaps a good place to start in our quest to transform how we treat those who mistreat us, is with our brothers and sisters in Christ who sometimes offend or upset us. Rather than return the unkindness we might instead pour hot coals on their head by being kind, gracious, and generous toward them. May God help us to do so!

Amen.