**12**And so\*

\*so why should you do what I am about to say? Because EVERYTHING comes for Him, exists by His power, and is intended for His glory…Even us and our bodies…So the apostle Paul says…

dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you.\*\*

\*\*Everything God has done for us should lead us to offer what is already His back to Him.

Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.\*\*\*

\*\*\*We demonstrate that we believe God is worthy when we set our agendas aside and accept that God’s purposes are the best. Is God worth giving of yourself?

**2**Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*When we first accept God’s grace and His mercy it tends to be about us. We think God is supposed to be about clearing out all of our problems and making us healthy, wealthy, wise, and unstoppable. But that is a “Me” centered gospel. As Timothy Keller would say that is “Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism.” If our focus is on what we get out of the deal, it is actually more like the behaviors and customs of this world. But thankfully God does take steps to transform us and to help us learn to know and do His will in ways that are more like His.

Let’s review that for a second…First His type of wisdom…

**13**If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. **14**But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. **15**For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. **16**For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

**17**But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. **18**And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

Godly way

Honorable life

Good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.

God’s Wisdom--Pure, peace loving, gentle at all times, willing to yield to others, full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds, shows no favoritism and is sincere.

Remember Jesus said:

* “Blessed are **the** **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
* 4“Blessed are **those who mourn**, for they shall be comforted.
* 5“Blessed are**the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.
* 6“Blessed are **those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied.
* 7“Blessed are **the merciful**, for they shall receive mercy.
* 8“Blessed are **the pure in heart,** for they shall see God.
* 9“Blessed are **the peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=ESV#fen-ESV-23244a)] of God.
* 10“Blessed are **those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The opposite of Jesus’ way is the Worldly way

Josh Harris once wrote the **worldly** version of the Beattitudes:

1. Blessed are **the self-confident** because they rule the world.
2. Blessed are **positive-thinkers** because they don’t need anybody’s comfort.
3. Blessed are**the cocky and assertive** because they get what they want.
4. Blessed are **those who hunger for fame** because they get reality TV shows.
5. Blessed are **the vengeful** because they get respect.
6. Blessed are**the impure**, pleasure-seekers because they see a good time.
7. Blessed are **those who beat their opponents** because the victors write the history books.
8. Blessed are **the popular** because everybody loves them.

Which set of objectives do you think work the best?

Unfortunately, we spend our lives trying to live with a foot in each kingdom. It is actually unavoidable because even after God has made us a new creation, we are still in a (learning) process of being transformed. I’m not here to condemn you because of you are trying to live with a foot in each kingdom. I’m just here to remind you that **WE** are not going to find unity, love, and the abundant life by living according to the ways of the world. Our objective is to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. I’m not too good for that, you’re probably not too good for that, the apostle Paul was not too good for that. Jesus, who was the best of the best, the image of the invisible God, didn’t consider Himself too good to sacrifice His privilege so that we could be brought near to God.

With this in mind Paul went on to write:

**3**Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. **4**Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, **5**so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*I am going to propose that Romans 9-11 was Paul setting up this concept in Romans 12:3-5. The world, and in fact overly zealous religious hierarchies are all maintained by some having really high opinions of themselves. This isn’t God’s system, this is the world’s system.

God’s Kingdom is founded, united, and flourishes based on the belonging we have one to another. Black, white, Jew, Gentile, white collar, blue collar, male, female, type A, type B, whether your enneagram test says you are a 4 or a 7 or a 1. As Christians we belong to each other. And…

**6**In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. **7**If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. **8**If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

**9**Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them.

It makes sense that if…

EVERYTHING comes for Him, exists by His power, and is intended for His glory…

And…if it lead us to offer what is already His back to Him.

Then it should keep us from thinking to highly of ourselves.

Which should in turn cause us to really love others by offering the gifts God has given us sincerely lay down “our” lives for others.

Paul goes on to write:

Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10**Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **11**Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. **12**Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. **13**When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

**14**Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. **15**Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. **16**Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!

**17**Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. **18**Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

**19**Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

“I will take revenge;
    I will pay them back,”
    says the Lord.

**20**Instead,

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them.
    If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap
    burning coals of shame on their heads.”

**21**Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Here we go again, Paul in verses 14-21, confirms that the Christians marching orders are different than the ways of the world. Evil cannot be conquered revenge. Evil is conquered by doing good.

In our current state of affairs in the United States, people are consistently trying to conquer evil with something vengeful. It is not God’s way. It Is not Jesus’ way. In fact, it doesn’t work…

No feud or war or conflict has ever been truly ended with a vengeful act.

In an article on Psychology Today website a Ph.D. Leon Seltzer listed 5 key differences between revenge and justice.

*1. Revenge is predominantly emotional; justice primarily rational.*

*2. Revenge is, by nature, personal; justice is impersonal, impartial, and both a social and legal phenomenon.*

*3. Revenge is an act of vindictiveness; justice, of vindication.*

*4. Revenge is about cycles; justice is about closure.*

*5. Revenge is about retaliation; justice is about restoring balance.*

The world’s way is revenge, God’s way is just.

As people unfriend each other on facebook or cancel each other because of different beliefs on what America should be or argue about who is oppressed or privileged or maybe more importantly what we should do about who is oppressed or privileged.

As Christians I would like to encourage you to proceed, as much as possible, according to God’s directives.

And I will close once again with the words of Jesus who said:

Jesus said:

* “Blessed are **the** **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
* 4“Blessed are **those who mourn**, for they shall be comforted.
* 5“Blessed are**the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.
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* 10“Blessed are **those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This might lead you to get canceled. It might lead you to be called a loser. Someone might even call you gutless or a nobody. You might even get persecuted for offering yourself as a sacrifice.

But that is what it means to be a Christian. It means little-Christs.

And I probably don’t have to remind you that we are very little like Christ. But a little Christ can overcome a whole lot of world.