

"I Won't Back Down"

Romans 12:9-21

I. Introduction

- A. Every parent wants what's best for their kids and knows that for their kids to grow up and be the best they can be, there must be a set of nonnegotiables for them to live by
 - 1. When your kids live by those rules, they find freedom and truly begin to enjoy life
 - 2. These nonnegotiables are not meant to make life miserable; they're meant to make our children's lives better, so they will be able to build better relationships with God and with other people
- B. The first eleven chapters of Romans are about what God has done for us
 - 1. Romans 12 shows us how we should respond to God
 - 2. It's a set of exhortations, and in verses 9-21, we find God's nonnegotiables
 - 3. These shouldn't just be the nonnegotiables for the body of Christ, but also the nonnegotiables in our homes and for our families
- C. If we lead our families based on these principles, our families, our churches, and our city will be better for it
 - 1. Our children will grow up with a stronger relationship with Jesus and will have more success in their endeavors and careers
 - 2. Our children will have better friendships and relationships, and they will have a more positive outlook on life

II. Dedicated to the Lord

- A. The first step to cultivating a strong relationship with the Lord and with other people is to be dedicated to the Lord
 - 1. Joshua 24:15
 - 2. As we keep God on the throne of our lives, we will learn to love others properly
 - 3. Matthew 22:37
- B. The natural outgrowth of loving God with our heart, soul, and mind is learning to love others the way God has called us to love them
 - 1. To be dedicated to your family, you must first be dedicated to the Lord
 - 2. Our love for others is the outflow of our love for God
 - a. This doesn't come naturally—it comes supernaturally
 - b. Our love for others is the supernatural result of our love for God
 - 3. Love needs to be at the center of our homes
 - a. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
 - b. Our families need to know that we love them, but they also need to know we love God first and foremost
- C. What does love "without hypocrisy" (v. 9) mean?
 - 1. The word Paul used for *hypocrisy* refers to a classical Greek actor; Greek theater relied entirely on masks worn by the actors

2. "True love has to leave the stage and walk the paths of real life" —Donald Barnhouse
- D. To "abhor what is evil" (v. 9) is a natural result of our love for God
 1. For love to be pure, it must look like God's love, and God loves good and hates evil
 2. Hatred is a Christian virtue
 - a. Hatred is an attribute of God; God hates sin
 - b. Isaiah 1:14
- E. An aspect of hypocrisy is ritual without relationship
 1. Going to church and worshiping for the sake of appearances is hypocritical
 2. If there isn't a relationship behind it and it doesn't change your life and how you treat others, it's hypocrisy
- F. The greatest weakness of the church today is our tolerance for evil
 1. Because we are dedicated to the Lord, we are dedicated to our families, and we hate that which is evil because we don't want it to tarnish those we love the most
 2. We need to abhor that which is evil, cling to that which is good, and make sure we're building our families up in righteousness
 3. *Abhor* can be translated as *be constantly hating*
 - a. Evil cannot be tolerated at any level; we must hate it with a passion, but the problem is we've become so passive that we're no longer able to spot it
 - b. Some people have become so accepting of sin within the church and their own homes that they can no longer spot it
- G. It is possible to be a brilliant rip-off Christian, but you're still just a rip-off
 1. Proverbs 8:13
 2. Jude 1:20-23
- H. When we go into the world to reach someone for Christ, we need a healthy fear of the things which have been defiled by the worldly system; some people should be carefully rescued
 1. We need to be careful about the influences in our kids' lives
 2. We hate sin because we know how destructive it can be
 - a. Lot is an example of someone who was compromised by the ungodly people around him; he didn't choose to fall into sin—he just got comfortable around it (see Genesis 18-19)
 - b. Aaron went with the crowd instead of following God's will (see Exodus 32:1-4)
- I. God doesn't only hate that which is outwardly evil—He hates our religious games as well
 1. Isaiah 1:12-17
 2. God is more interested in the practical than in our parades; He hates our worship if it doesn't affect us practically in the real world
 - a. The Bible is not an endless list of don'ts
 - b. Whenever God tells us what not to do, He tells us what to do instead
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:22
- J. If we are dedicated to the Lord, we will be dedicated to others
 1. As humans, we are always looking to meet our own needs

2. It is critical that we, as Christians, come to church seeking not just to have our own needs met but to minister to others as well

III. Determined to Live Passionately

- A. Romans 12:11 doesn't only apply to serving the Lord, but to everything we do
 1. The King James Version translates it as "not slothful in business"
 2. "Be not lazy as to what you ought to do" —Martin Luther
- B. Spiritual laziness is the cause of spiritual defeat
 1. If you find yourself stuck in sin, it's probably because, earlier on, you were spiritually lazy and you didn't do what you needed to in order to grow
 2. Unlike the outside, you can fix the inside; Jesus wants to turn you into a temple of the Most High God
 3. We need to start focusing our work and effort on what matters most—spiritual growth
 4. Don't use your Christianity as a cloak for your laziness
 - a. We serve a hardworking God who prizes workmanship and excellence; as believers, we should be the best at what we do
 - b. Exodus 36:2
 - c. Colossians 3:23
 - d. Even if you're not in ministry on a stage, what you do every day is your ministry, and your work represents God and your relationship with Him
- C. We should be "fervent in spirit" (v. 11)
 1. As Christians, we should be aglow with the Holy Spirit; this is where we get the energy to keep from being slothful
 2. Acts 18:25
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the answer for when you're at the end of your rope and you can't do any more on your own strength
 - b. The Holy Spirit is our secret weapon; He will give you the power, creativity, and strength that no one else can
 3. What if each of us went out into the world aglow with the Spirit, determined to do our best every day?
- D. Verse 12 tells us what happens if we are dedicated to the Lord and determined to live passionately
 1. We will have something the world doesn't have: hope, regardless of what happens
 2. If we look to the world for hope, we will be disappointed
 - a. "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness" —Edward Mote
 - b. Our hope is based in the knowledge that this isn't the final chapter; there is coming a day when God will set things right
 - c. Titus 2:13
 - d. 1 John 3:3

IV. Disciplined to Love Relentlessly

- A. Men are naturally protectors, but at times, that can be taken too far, and vengeance is taken into human hands

1. We need to be, and teach our kids to be, disciplined to love others
 2. The word Paul used for *bless* is in the present tense, so this is something we should be doing constantly to those who wish us harm
 3. What Jesus uttered in the sunny Sermon on the Mount He practiced at Golgotha (see Luke 6:27)
 - a. This kind of love requires self-discipline
 - b. We must be self-disciplined to love relentlessly, regardless of whether that love is reciprocated
- B. "If it is possible...live peaceably with all men" (v. 18)
1. There are some people you may try to make peace with and you won't be able to, but you shouldn't use this verse as an excuse to not try
 2. We have to put forth our best effort; do your best and commit the rest
 3. Some of the greatest divisions in our lives can be a result of our faith in Jesus Christ
 - a. Matthew 10:34
 - b. There are some people you won't be able to live in peace with because of your faith in Christ, and in those situations, it's okay to brush the dust off your sandals and go the other direction (see Matthew 10:14)
- C. Verse 21 provides us with the weapons we can use in those situations
1. God tells us what not to do, but also what to do
 2. You can be overcome by evil, or you must overcome evil
 - a. This requires active deeds of kindness against our enemies; if someone hurts you, don't just forgive them—avenge it by doing them a favor
 - b. Romans 13:4
- V. Conclusion
- A. God wants to help us put these principles into practice
1. In our lives and in our families
 2. These should be the nonnegotiables we won't back down from
- B. We need to teach our kids to be dedicated to the Lord, determined to live passionately, and disciplined to love relentlessly
1. A real and genuine love for God and others
 2. To abhor what is evil and cling to what is good
 3. To be passionate and aglow with the Spirit
 4. To repay evil with acts of kindness

Figures referenced: Donald Barnhouse, Martin Luther, Edward Mote, John Wesley

Cross references: Genesis 18-19; Exodus 32:1-4; 36:2; Joshua 24:15; Proverbs 8:13; Isaiah 1:12-17; Matthew 10:14, 34; 22:37; Luke 6:27; John 24:15; Acts 18:25; Romans 13:4; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Colossians 3:23; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:3; Jude 1:20-23

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