



Empathy Lens
Romans 12:18
Message from Pastor Martin Hawley
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The Bottom Line: You can have peace **about** the relationship without peace **in** the relationship.

Introduction:

We are constantly bombarded with situations that want to introduce bad blood into our relationships – even our healthy relationships. **Bad blood** can infect any relationship.

All of us have it; none of us wants it, and no relationship is immune from bad blood. In addition, every relationship has moments when it must be guided back to a good place.

The quality of our **lives** is only as good as the quality of our **relationships**.

This series is not just for people who have broken relationships. This is for every one of us, even those with great relationships because *bad blood* is always right around the corner.

Lack of peace about any relationship will ultimately rob you of peace in your own life, but it is possible to have peace **about** the relationship without peace **in** the relationship.

Romans 12:18, “... live at **peace** with everyone.”

When you look at Paul’s life and see that he has enemies on every side, you know this is why he said ...

Romans 12:18, “**If** it is **possible** ... live at **peace** with everyone.”
IF ... may be possible, but it might not be.

Pursue peace even without a promise of peace.

Romans 12:18, “If it is possible, **as far as it depends on you**, live at peace with everyone.”

Let’s talk about some of the words in this little section:

As far as it depends on **you** ...

What can **you** do to pursue peace? We often spend so much energy on the other person, but before you worry about them, you do you.

As far as it **depends** on **you** ...

What depends on you? Take ownership of your portion of the conflict regardless of the size of your portion. What can you own? If you want peace, you have to deal with the part you play.

As **far** as it depends on **you** ...

Can you go any further? I know the natural reaction is to say that you have gone as far as you are able, but is that the truth?

Peace is possible **for you** when **you’ve** done all **you** can do. Even if there is never peace in the relationship, when you have done everything you can do, you can have peace about the relationship.

Romans 12:18, “If it is possible, **as far as it depends on you**, live at peace with everyone.”

Application:

Empathy is the first part of your part. This is the **step** every one of us can take.

Sympathy is acknowledging what the other person feels.

Empathy is **feeling** what the other person feels.

In difficult relationships, **empathy** can be the key to opening a dialogue that **leads to** a healthy relationship. Put yourself in their shoes. See things/feel things from the other person’s perspective.

Steps of Empathy (Dr. Brene Brown)

1. Take on the other person’s perspective.
2. Suspend your judgment.

3. Recognize the other person's emotion.
4. Communicate that emotion.

Have you done **everything** possible that you can do to **feel** it from their side?

Is it possible their behavior has a **logical** explanation?

Is it possible their behavior has a **logical** explanation to **them**?

We don't ask these questions because we will have to let them off the hook. We ask these questions for understanding. We want to spend energy staying mad or maintaining our anger at someone. When you walk around and see/feel things from the other person's vantage point, you see things you wouldn't have seen otherwise. Your anger can move to compassion. Your hurt can begin to heal.

Conclusion:

Jesus is the ultimate empathic move on God's part. Jesus moved first. This is the gospel.

He asks us to love because he first loved us.

He asks us to forgive because he first forgave us.

He asks us to show mercy because he first showed us mercy.

There is no way for us to do this for others unless we have run into a Savior who has done this for us.

Your life will be better if you do this, not just because you will feel better, but because you will be reflecting the image of God in you. The Prince of Peace wants to bring you peace.

NEXT STEPS:

- Memorize: Romans 12:18.**
- Ask yourself tough questions in this lesson.**
- Take the first step of empathy this week in your relationships**
- Join us next Sunday for Bad Blood Part 2: Holding On.**
You'll never passively find what you don't actively pursue. Pursue peace.