



Holding On
Romans 12:18-21
Message from Pastor Martin Hawley
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Idea: You can have peace **about** the relationship without peace **in** the relationship.

The Bottom Line: Peace **begins** when your demand for payment **ends**.

Introduction:

None of us want bad blood, but all of us have some.

Last week, we talked about how the path to **peace** is paved with **empathy**.

In a difficult relationship, **empathy** can be the key to opening a dialogue that **leads to** a healthy relationship.

Today, I want to talk to those of you who have bad blood with someone who owes you something. This person took something, and they have yet to return it.

This has created a relational debt, and it is extremely costly. It cost you peace. The new relationship looks something like the following:



What does this look

like for **you**?

Who else is

suffering the

consequences for the bad blood in **your** relationships?

Bad blood is **costly** and **complicated**.

It cost you **peace** and complicates your **other** relationships, and before you know it, there's more bad blood between you and your "who else."

It's a vicious cycle. How do you break the cycle?

The path to **peace** is paved with **empathy**.

Forgiveness is the vehicle to move you down the path.

Forgiveness doesn't condone. Forgiveness doesn't forget. Forgiveness does not necessarily wait for an apology.

Truth

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

Happiness equals peace.

Peace – as far as it depends on me.

"Do not take **revenge my dear friends**, (Romans 12:19)"

Revenge escalates.

Revenge causes me to suspend my morality.

Revenge is the silent celebration of the other person's misfortune.

"Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but **leave room** for God's **wrath**, (Romans 12:19)."

The idea of wrath is disturbing. It is difficult to fully understand God's wrath.

The wrath of God is his response to sin. Basically, it is the natural consequence of sin.

Sin is never without **consequence**. Sin **always** pays.

We're supposed to "leave room" for God's wrath.

This might be a letter, a phone call, or text message, but reach out.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a promise (4-promises):

1. I will not dwell on this incident.
2. I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.
3. I will not talk to others about this incident.

I will **not allow** this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

Conclusion:

You will not accidentally find peace.

You'll never passively **find** what you don't actively **pursue**.
Pursue peace.

Forgive the debt. Take the **first** step.

NEXT STEPS:

- Memorize: Romans 12:18.**
- Who do you need to forgive?**
- Take the first step.**
- Join us next Sunday for Bad Blood Part 3: A Confrontation or a Conversation.**

God **sorts it out** when we **leave it to him**.

“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is **mine** to avenge; **I will repay**,’ says the Lord (Romans 12:19).”

When you hold someone hostage, you make no room for God to do what he does.

Do you trust that God will do what he says he will do?

When I failed to forgive, I failed to believe that God is actually going to repay.

Unforgiveness is a failure to **believe** what God says.

“On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, **feed** him; if he is thirsty, **give** him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head (Romans 12:20).”

If you were confident God would repay, you would feel sorrow for the person.

Faith and confidence in God allows you to feel compassion instead of anger.

What do **you** do about your bad blood?

- **Accept** the **apology** you never received.
- **Give the person the blessing they never received.**

“Do not be overcome by **evil**, but overcome evil with **good** (Romans 12:21).”

Bottom line, peace for you **begins** when your demand for payment **ends**.

Application:

Who do you need to **forgive**?

You can let go of it, or you can let it hold you. Let God hold what’s holding you.

Stop trying to make them pay for what they owe.

Forgive the debt. Take the **first** step.