

DEVOTIONAL

Hardly a day goes by where we don't hear about something bad happening in our world. From the personal to the international, bad news surrounds us. When you hear bad news, what is your reaction? Is it fear? Sadness? Anger?

Sometimes, we see bad things done by people who are supposed to protect us. Seeing someone who we were taught to trust doing a bad thing - that can really bring out your anger, can't it?

But what happens to us when that anger sits inside us? It can burn like a fire that slowly destroys us from the inside out. It can lead us to want to harm those God has asked us to respect.

In Romans 12:17-18, God commands us, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Some days, that's a real struggle. Some days, we would much rather lash out and hurt people the way we are hurt. What would it look like to live at peace even with those who we feel are participating in unjust actions or are harming people? Would it start by remembering that they are people too, that just because they wear a uniform, doesn't mean they have shed their sinful nature?

Just like it is hard for us not to repay evil for evil and to live at peace with everyone, it is also hard for police officers. Since the fall into sin, we all just keep falling and falling. But, even if we feel divided, we have a common source of hope: Jesus. Jesus' death and resurrection paid for the sins of all of us. We can look forward to the day when, instead of struggling to live at peace, His perfect peace will fill us forever.

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Prayer:

Father in Heaven,

We do not know what news this week will bring or what challenges we will face in our spirits and in our lives. Despite our anxiety about what lies ahead, bring us a spirit of peace and lead us to pray that you bring that same peace to those around us.

We recognize that all have sinned and fall short of your glory, and we ask that you help us show compassion for everyone – even those who have harmed us. In this season of Lent, bring our focus to the cross – and help us to lead others there, too.

Amen.

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