

“Love and Revenge”
Genesis 34:1–31
November 5, 2023

Love

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

“Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” (1 Corinthians 13:6)

“God is love.” (1 John 4:8)

Revenge

“Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel!” (Genesis 49:5–7)

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19–20)

“Fool that I am...that I did not tear out my heart the day I resolved to revenge myself.” (*The Count of Monte Cristo*)

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’” (Romans 12:19)

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Notes

Discuss

- How would you respond to a family member or friend who holds the common cultural belief that “love is love”?
- Since love is not love, what are loves (any desire, want, or affection) that you have that don’t line up with God’s truth, and what are loves that you have that do line up with God’s truth? What can you do to resist bad loves and promote good ones?
- The revenge described in Genesis 34 is brutal and extreme, but what are some ways that Christians can be tempted to take revenge in everyday life, and how does this story caution against those temptations?
- Tragically, many people in the church have been the victims, in some way, of sexual violence, so how can this story inform the response of the church to those people and the need to proactively protect against those crimes?

Read

Matthew 5:38–48; Romans 12:14–21

Pray

- That the Holy Spirit will help you to submit your loves to what God says is true.
- That the Holy Spirit will give you a love for your enemies and enable you to pray for them.
- That the Holy Spirit will minister to victims of sexual violence in our congregation and enable our church to protect the vulnerable.

Bulletin

- Women’s Bible Study: Wednesdays at 10:00am
- Youth Ministry (6th–12th Graders): First and Third Wednesdays at 6:30pm
- Building Workday: November 18 at 8:00am
- Thanksgiving Potluck Meal: November 19 at 12:00pm
- Men’s Breakfast: December 2 at 8:00am
- Members’ Meeting: December 10 at 5:00pm