

## **Do Not Be Overcome**

*Marie Péloquin*

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.—Romans 12:21*

It's interesting that the apostle Paul wrote that to the Christians in Rome, because there are some obvious similarities between the social climate of first-century Rome and that of much of the world of today.

Evil was rampant in Rome, and its pull was strong. The Roman Empire hadn't become the undisputed ruler of the Western world through compassion, kindness, or humility. Wealth was in the hands of a few, and they used it to control the rest. The rich and powerful lived extravagantly while the masses struggled to survive. Perversions and debauchery were practiced by some and ignored by others.

Christianity was just one religion and Christ just one more deity. Considering the pantheon of gods that the Romans worshipped, it must have been difficult to convince anyone that Jesus was "the way, the truth, and the life."<sup>5</sup>

Starting to sound familiar?

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the evil in the world. Every day we hear about another horrible crime being committed. Meanwhile, the popular media searches for new and more horrific ways to portray violence, perversion, and all manner of evil. Whether it's a case of art imitating life or vice versa, life has lost its sanctity in the minds of many.

What can we do about a world so overcome with evil? This was the same dilemma that the Christians in Rome faced, and Paul's counsel to them rings true today. "Overcome evil with good."

If a dish is dirty, being angry about the situation does nothing to fix it. Neither does trying to ignore it. The only solution is to expose that dirty dish to the power of a little soap and water.

If a room is dark, you can curse the darkness or whine over how unpleasant it is—or you can flip the light switch or open the curtains and let some light in.

It's the same with society's evils. We can get discouraged, angry, or depressed—"overcome by evil"—or we can be a force for good, even if only through personal example. Not every dirty dish will be cleaned, and not every darkened heart will be enlightened, but we can each do our part day by day, person by person, decision by decision.

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1. John 14:6