

# MELODY

## I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

1. When you find yourself becoming overwhelmed by both the pervasiveness and nature of evil in the world, which of the following extremes are you most prone to: anger, fear, despair, or callousness?
2. Do you blush or take offense at things you see and hear on TV or in popular music, that would have utterly appalled Christians just a few decades ago? To what extent is this generation of believers like the proverbial “frogs in the pot?” How do we reset the standard?
3. Even though Jesus is known as “the Prince of Peace,” he said in Matthew 10:34, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword.” He spoke of the polarizing nature of the gospel message. How have you experienced this in your own life?
4. Review the 12 Ways We’re to Respond to Evil:
  1. Have biblical expectations regarding evil.
  2. Understand that evil serves a divine purpose.
  3. Be bothered by evil.
  4. Be grieved by evil.
  5. Be angered by evil.
  6. Be fearless of evil.
  7. Laugh at evil.
  8. Expose evil.
  9. Avoid dwelling on evil.
  10. Overcome evil with good.
  11. Be forgiving of great evil.
  12. Pray against evil.Which of these are common responses to you, and which ones would you like to grow in? Some of these appear contradictory. Why is that not the case? How can one have a balanced mixture of these vastly different biblical responses?
5. In the movie, *The Lord of the Rings*, King Theoden faces a vast, evil army and laments, “What can men do against such reckless hate?” How would you have answered him? (after discussing, read Romans 8:35-39).
6. Longfellow, the author of the carol, experienced numerous tragedies and losses in his life. One of the prescribed Christian responses to these is found Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” How is your small group at doing this? Consider taking some time to do this now.