

Divine Payback: (part five of a five part series)

I will begin this final segment with the basketball analogy of segment two. Only this time, the basketball player who plays the game the right way is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the end of the game, the score is tied, and the dirty player sees an opportunity to take unfair advantage and elbows our Lord in the back. Based on our study of Romans 12:14-21, **what would Jesus do?** Because of what is written 1 Peter 2:21-25, we can know for certain that He wouldn't respond in kind. That all-important passage reads as follows –

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; and while being reviled He did not revile in return, while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Jesus had a redemptive purpose to fulfill while here on earth and couldn't allow Himself to become distracted and hindered by the personal insults and threats which He experienced over the course of His life. Instead, He entrusted Himself to His heavenly Father for protection, as well as payback. And so should we! When we follow our Savior's example, then and only then, will we be capable of the supernatural life God expects from every one of His children.

Then, and only then, will we become recipients of God's grace, as the apostle Paul was in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, which will enable us to bless and not curse, when we are persecuted. That empowerment will extend to our actions, so that we never pay back evil for evil to anyone. God's grace will even take us to the highest level possible in our interactions with others; so that we are not overcome by evil, but we can actually overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

One final use of our basketball analogy. Since Jesus would not respond in kind by elbowing the dirty player who had elbowed Him, what would He do? He would sink a three pointer at the buzzer to win the game! The application? God doesn't want you to take your own revenge and thereby foul out of the game. The Lord wants every one of us to stay in the game, so that we can be used by Him in a meaningful way, in furthering the cause of Christ in our world.