

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

So how do we make the promise of Romans 12:19 our own? How can we practically apply it in our lives? The key is forgiveness. It is the means by which we release the hurt, as well as the resulting anger, which has been imposed upon us. At times, this forgiveness can occur directly; as indicated in Luke 17:3-4 –

“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

However, that isn’t always possible since the guilty party’s repentance doesn’t depend upon you. Nevertheless, your willingness to forgive does depend on you, and is a prerequisite for claiming the promise of Romans 12:19, as implied in the immediate context of v18. Therefore, the Lord Himself provides us with a solution to the dilemma of an unrepentant offender, in Mark 11:25-26 –

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.”

This “indirect” forgiveness carries with it a two-fold benefit. First, it frees your spirit from the hurt and its resulting anger. Second, your forgiving spirit is essential in maintaining a right and positive relationship between yourself and God. If it isn’t possible for your hurt to be healed horizontally through the reconciliation of Luke 17:3-4, then it will be healed vertically, by means of God’s grace at work in your life. Yet, that won’t happen if your relationship with God is being hindered by your refusal to forgive.

Once your responsibility to forgive is fulfilled, you are ready to claim by faith, the promise of Romans 12:19; acknowledging that vengeance isn’t yours, but God’s, while also requesting that the Lord repay the offender in accordance with His perfect equivalent justice. The manner in which God decides to fulfill your claim upon that promise is no longer your concern. This in turn will free you to resume your positive and peaceful Christian life in earnest; which is precisely what you were doing before the devil used that offender to distract you from the straight and narrow path of following your Savior every day.