

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

A passage that can be easily overlooked as to its practical significance is found in Romans 12:14-21. The theme of the passage is stated at the very outset in v14 and then summarized beautifully in v21; where we read the following –

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Sandwiched in the middle of the verses above, we find Paul prohibiting and then encouraging payback. The prohibition is all-inclusive and non-negotiable. As followers of our Savior, we are to **never** pay back evil for evil to **anyone** (v17). The reason is obvious and is stated in v18. God wants His people to live positive and peaceful lives; which isn't always possible since we may encounter individuals who don't share that perspective. Remaining positive and peaceful in such a relationship can be a challenge. This is why Paul reminds us of a promise which God has provided for our use in fulfilling that purpose, revealed in v19 –

“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord.”

God knows how difficult it can be to avoid a vindictive and vengeful spirit from developing within our hearts when we are hurt by others. Perhaps you are familiar with this contemporary proverb: “I don't get mad, I get even.” Perhaps this has been the underlying motivation of your entire life! However, if you are also a born again believer in Jesus Christ, it means that you are in need of a major attitude adjustment. Therefore, the promise of Romans 12:19 allows for the release of that anger and hurt, imposed on us by others, into the hands of God. Such a transfer of negative emotion serves a two-fold purpose. First, it enables us to continue in the positive and peaceful lifestyle which the Lord desires for each of us. Second, it provides us with a sense of assurance and confidence that our God will execute the necessary payback on our behalf.

The practical benefits of claiming this promise are significant and will be the focus of our attention in segment two.