

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

If you follow sports, we are all familiar with this scenario. Two basketball players are guarding each other. One plays the game the right way, while the other is dirty, cheating whenever he can. When the opportunity presents itself, in other words, when the referee isn't looking, the dirty player throws an elbow at his opponent. That player loses his cool and pushes back. Guess who gets called for the foul?

With that in mind, we arrive at **Benefit #1** in claiming the promise of Romans 12:19. Taking our own revenge in the context of everyday life could land us in jail. Perhaps your injustice is so severe that the specter of imprisonment elicits this response: "Worth it!" But it's not. Jail time is not a positive testimony for Christ. Nor is it a positive mark on your legal record, not to mention your relationship with others. How can you expect to live the positive and peaceful life which God has planned for you when you are obsessing about getting even? You can't, so don't!

There is a better way which requires the claiming of the promise of Romans 12:19. In doing so, you allow God to pay back the perpetrator of your injustice. He will do so according to the principle of lex talionis, which often is forgotten by us in the heat of the moment. It means that Divine payback will always operate on the principle of equivalent justice, detailed in Leviticus 24:17-20. Does this rule out the possibility of reporting your injustice to the authorities? Of course not! This is precisely why governing authority has been ordained of God: to promote good and prevent evil (Romans 13:1-4). But what if the police can't find the criminal, or the police are the criminal, or the criminal hires a great defense attorney? Then what?

Benefit #2 in claiming the promise of Romans 12:19, also keeps us free from the regret associated with taking our own revenge. Think of it this way. When God repays the enemy of your life, it will more often than not, occur by means of the everyday circumstances of His providence, completely disconnected from an emotional over reaction on your part, in word or deed. How many times have we regretted saying or doing something when our emotions were running far too high? The promise of Romans 12:19 can prevent many of those moments from occurring.

Benefit #3 contained in the promise of Romans 12:19 will keep you far away from the referees of this life, whose job it is to call fouls when they are committed. In other words, Romans 12:19 is designed to minimize self-inflicted trouble, which can occur far too easily, when we are motivated by anger, in seeking our own revenge.

Can we agree that the above three benefits are significant? Every sincere Christian desires to maintain a positive testimony for Christ, avoid the regret of past mistakes and steer clear of unnecessary trouble, as much as possible. It is possible, by trusting God and claiming by faith, the promise of Romans 12:19.