

TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE IT RIGHT

May 2, 2022

ROMANS 12:17-20 NKJV – (17) Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. (18) If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. (19) Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (20) Therefore, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Paul has just written that Christians must not repay evil for evil (**Romans 12:17**). Now he expands that idea to make it even more clear. Those who follow Christ are commanded to never avenge themselves, to never "get even." Whether the hurt comes from fellow believers or from unbelievers, revenge is simply not a legitimate option for us.

For a change, Paul gives us a reason for this command, and it's a bit surprising. After all the other instructions to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others, we might expect something similar. Instead, Paul writes that we should refuse to take revenge because God is much better at it than we are. In a sense, Paul implies that taking our own revenge may dilute God's opportunity to avenge us in His great anger against those who harm us.

Paul quotes from **Deuteronomy 32:35** to show that God has always declared His intention to take vengeance on those who wrong others. A desire for justice for ourselves and those we care about is not wrong. Paul simply wants us to trust God's timing and power to deliver justice as He sees fit

Paul now comes to what is a difficult command for many people, including Christians. It is absolutely the example Jesus set for us, however. Paul declares that we must resist our natural human instinct for revenge and refuse to ever pay back evil when evil is done to us. This would be true whether the person who hurts us is a believer or not.

Instead, Paul tells us to be thoughtful when evil is done to us. He seems to suggest we see that moment as an opportunity to demonstrate that, in Christ, we are honorable people. We cannot, after all, display the love and forgiveness of Christ until we have the opportunity to forgive. When we do, we make a powerful statement that we are choosing to live in service to God instead of to ourselves.

If we were responsible for taking revenge, God would have to take it out on us! Think about the sins committed before Him. I am not saying people should get away from doing us wrong, I'm saying let God be the measurement for how justice should be handled for the offense. Remember, how He handled us.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 THESSALONIANS 5:15

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

How can we look down on others when God evaluates are dealing daily? (**MATT. 7:3-5**)

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"