
Words of Truth

Don't Render Evil For Evil

By: Brian A. Yeager

We live in a world of evil (I John 5:19). It is easy to become angry at the things that happen around us or even to us. We should, to some degree, expect that at some point in life we would become a victim of some evil doing. This is especially true because we are Christians (Matthew 5:10-12, John 15:18-20, II Timothy 3:11-12, and I Peter 4:12-16). How we respond to being wronged by others does matter.

God tells us this: *“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath”* (Ephesians 4:26). When you read the Scripture I just quoted, you realize that anger can be controlled. Anger, in itself, is not a sin. In fact, there is a righteous indignation that we can have (Jeremiah 15:17 and Mark 3:1-6).

In our study of not rendering evil for evil we have to understand that self-control is the key to properly handling anger. The Scriptures say this: *“He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly... He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city... The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression”* (Proverbs 14:29, Proverbs 16:32, and Proverbs 19:11).

If you or I are wronged, we get angry, and we lose control there are several bad things that follow that. For one, you or I have sinned by not practicing self-control [temperance] (Galatians 5:22-23 and II Peter 1:3-10). Secondly, we will likely cause someone else to sin by going off on them (Proverbs 15:1). In addition to those two bad things, we will also find that our credibility will be gone. If you or I cannot practice self-control then we have no right to try and teach others (Matthew 7:1-5 and Romans 2:1-29).

Nothing good comes from allowing something we've been wronged in take us to that dark place of wrath. In fact, God says this: *“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For **the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God**”* (James 1:19-20). This is all pretty clear. We should fully understand that our getting angry beyond the point of control over being wronged will bring about nothing good. This brings us to our topic and then to the applications we should follow when we are wronged. First, we have to see the instructions not to render evil for evil.

It's A Command Of God Not To Render Evil For Evil

Notice: *“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men... Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye*

should inherit a blessing" (I Thessalonians 5:15 and I Peter 3:8-9). What do you do with God's commands if you love Him? Don't you keep His commandments (John 14:15 and I John 5:2-3)? The commands are clear. We are not supposed to respond to evil done to us by giving such back to the person or persons who did it.

Even the world has a saying that teaches this principle. That saying is, "two wrongs do not make a right." Aren't we better than the world (I John 3:1-3 and I John 4:4)? Shouldn't we behave better than the world (Titus 2:11-14)? I realize that sometimes these truths are easier said than done. When someone wrongs us that carnal side starts to battle with our spiritual minds. What we have to realize is that it is not our place to gain vengeance on those whom do evil to us. We have to surrender that place to God.

They Will "Get Theirs"

God does not ignore actions wherein His children are treated badly. Those who do such will not get away with it. Notice: *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:17-21).

Now here is something to think about. In fact, whenever I am angry with someone that has wronged me I think about this and that thinking turns my anger to sadness. Is it a good thing for someone to have to face the wrath of God because they did us wrong? Think of these two Scriptures: *"God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet... For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Nahum 1:2-3 and Hebrews 10:30-31).

When God takes eternal vengeance on someone (II Thessalonians 1:7-9) and they "get theirs" for wronging us, that will mean that individual will burn for all eternity (Matthew 25:41 and Mark 9:43-48). Is that comforting to you? It is not to me. That is why it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God when it comes to encountering His vengeance. So, when you are angry at someone who has wronged you, think about what they will get in return for their evil deeds against you.

Conclusion

Clearly, it is not our place to repay someone for the evil they do to us. At the same time, we should feel sorry for them because of what they will receive for doing us wrong. If we do not feel sorry for them, we should question ourselves as to how we have allowed ourselves to get into such a vengeful frame of mind. If you understand what Hell is, you should not wish that upon your worse enemy. If you properly consider what will happen to your enemies, you should be saddened over their end (Philippians 3:18-19).