

The High Cost Of “Getting Even.”

1 Peter 3:8-17

Introduction:

- A. How often have we heard, “It is just not fair?” How often, “Life is not fair?”
- B. How often have we applied, “I don’t get angry, I just get even.”
 - 1. May be done as in response to practical joke.
 - 2. Must not be done in matters of serious consequence.
- C. We must learn to live with injustice in many forms from many sources.
 - 1. Bodily harm and suffering. (Jesus and Stephen).
 - 2. Slander, reviling (abusive words), unjust criticism (Matt. 5:10-12).
 - 3. From oppressive governments and societies.
 - 4. From down right mean people. (Acts 2:23; 17:5).
 - 5. From honest, but mistaken people. (John 16:2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13).
 - 6. In and out of the church. (2 Cor. 11:26).
- D. We must learn to live without retaliation for injustice. (Rom. 12:17-21).
- E. We must learn to not retaliate for five reasons given in our text:

Discussion:

- I. Retaliation Is Beyond Our Calling. (v. 9).**
 - A. Called to give and receive blessing. (V. 9; Mt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20,21)
 - B. Not Called to take vengeance on injustice.
 - 1. Can only administer limited correction - not vengeance.
 - 2. Cannot retaliate in word or deed. (V. 9).
 - C. God keeps vengeance for himself — relieves us of responsibility. (Rom. 12:19).
 - 1. Civil government is God’s agent for vengeance (Rom. 13:1-5) - Christians can appeal to it.
 - 2. Christ will return as God’s final agent for vengeance. (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- II. Retaliation Destroys Our Happiness. (v. 10)**
 - A. May give some temporary satisfaction.
 - B. But, it will ultimately destroy peace of mind - keeps us agitated.
- III. Retaliation Hinders Our Prayers. (vv. 11, 12).**
 - A. Need ears open for forgiveness. (1 John 1:8).
 - B. Need ears open for protection. (Matt. 6:9-13).
- IV. Retaliation Is Unnecessary To Our Welfare.**
 - A. Because no lasting harm can come to us. (V. 13; Rom. 8:35-39).
 - B. Because we have a better defense (vv. 14-16).
- V. Retaliation Nullifies To Our Innocence. (v. 17).**
 - A. Retaliation invites retaliation - Christian should break cycle.
 - B. No longer any virtue in suffering - no longer “for righteousness sake.” (1 Pet. 2:18-20).
 - C. No longer following Christ - “just for unjust” (v. 18).

Conclusion:

- A. Remember: Life is not “fair.”
- B. Remember: God neither expects nor allows Christians to mete out justice for mistreatment.
- C. Remember: God has reserved vengeance for himself.