

Do Not Rejoice When your Enemy Falls!

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We have all had people in our lives who have “wronged us.” It *may* be, that a particular individual has *repeatedly* wronged us. In some cases, the individual hasn’t wronged us personally, but has greatly wronged someone we know.

Regardless of the details, it is not uncommon for a person who has been “greatly wronged” to think to himself: “One day... that person is going to get his!”

Consider *another* scenario. Consider the case where, it’s someone in the news... whether a politician or whomever... and that individual seems to always be doing something despicable. Yet... somehow, the individual never seems to “pay a price” for his actions. Again, we think to ourselves: One day... that person is going to get his!

Well... as time goes by, one day we finally hear that some *calamity* has befallen that individual. Maybe an illness... maybe a financial disaster... whatever!

And we think to ourselves... aha! ... He finally *got* “what was coming to him!” And, perhaps for only a brief moment, we feel a degree of satisfaction... even a momentary happiness over this situation.

Therefore, in this article, we ask the question: Is it **wrong** for us to have such thoughts?

Most people are familiar with Christ’s command that we are to *love* our **enemies**.

But I say to you, **love** your enemies, **bless those** who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray for** those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven... (Matthew 5:44-45)

Indeed, Christ’s words above are a *vital* principle for us to *live by*!

Yet, today, let’s look more *specifically*, about whether God’s Word has anything to say about this issue of “rejoicing over someone’s calamity.”

Believe it or not, the Bible *directly* addresses that issue! In the book of Proverbs, we read the following: “Do **not** rejoice when your enemy falls, And **do not let your heart be glad** when he stumbles; Lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease Him...” (Prov. 24: 17-18).

Yes, it is quite plain. It **displeases God** if we *rejoice* when our enemy meets with some calamity.

In fact... not only does it “displease” God, we will now see that God’s Word actually says that He will **punish** us when we *think* that way!

Notice Proverbs 17, verse 5: “He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; **He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.**”

Yes, if we are “*glad* at someone’s calamity”... regardless of *what* the person has done... God, promises us **punishment!**

Now, at this point, let’s make an important clarification. It is **not** wrong for us to desire that some law-breaker ***be brought to justice***. There’s nothing wrong with desiring that. However, *that* desire is quite **different** than rejoicing over some calamity that has befallen an individual!

Scripture states that King David was a man after *God’s own heart* (Acts 13:22). With that in mind, let’s now see how **David** reacted when his ***enemies*** met with some misfortune.

David said the following (Psalm 35: 11-14 *NIV*):

Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about. They repay me evil for good and leave me like one bereaved. Yet when **they were ill**, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother.

So, David actually fasted for his enemies! And when David’s prayers for their healing went unanswered, he **mourned**... as though mourning for a **friend or brother**. David bowed his head in **grief** as though weeping for his **mother**” (Psalm 35: 11-14 *NIV*).

No... David did **not** “rejoice” when his enemies met with illness or calamity. Rather, he did the very *opposite*!! He fasted, grieved, and wept for them!

Certainly, David’s reaction is **contrary** to “human nature.” Yet, again, David was a “man after God’s own heart.”

We, as Christians, are *likewise* to be striving to be men and women “after God’s own heart.” Throughout each and every day, you and I are to be striving to follow the guidance... **not** of our own “human nature”... but the guidance of scripture *and* the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit within us.

So... the next time that we hear of a calamity befalling our enemy (or befalling someone known to be an “evil person”)... let’s make sure that you and I do the very ***opposite*** of being *glad* about it!