

# 25.

*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

Romans 12:19

I once heard a Muslim convert to Christianity describe the biggest challenge he had in living now as a Christian. He said, “Vengeance!” He went on to say the most dramatic challenge he faced now as a *Christian* was not to take vengeance on those who hurt or offended him. Quite possibly, this teaching of Christ about how to treat those who hurt us, is the most distinct feature of Christian living.

1. In Matthew 5:39, as part of what we call *The Beatitudes*, Jesus gave one of the most challenging commands for anyone who would follow Him. How would you put it in your own words, and why is it so challenging?
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2. What Old Testament instruction does Proverbs 20:22 give the worshiper?
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3. In what way did Christ give us an example of entrusting God according to First Peter 2:23?
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The fact that the New Testament gives this instruction to believers reveals just how tempting it was for believers to want to ‘take things into their own hands’ when they were wronged. I don’t think this was a problem just for first century believers either.

4. How might many heated disputes be defused before they even start if more people were to apply Romans 14:19?
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Trusting in, and waiting for, God can be frustrating when we are being tormented, attacked, or persecuted. History tells us that there are times when God judges swiftly (see Acts 12:23), and then there are times when God *patiently* delays His judgment (see Jer. 35:15).

5. The reason God judges swiftly, or delays his judgment is- (select the most likely answer)
- a) God is often busy and doesn't see every act of injustice
  - b) God's timing of His judgment is designed to be most redemptive (for the greatest good)
  - c) Sometimes, when God is having a particularly bad day, He tends to judge people very swiftly
  - d) As God gets older, His memory continues to fade, and He sometimes forgets to judge when He should, until He is reminded about the injustice by someone praying about it.

The next time we are wronged, hurt, betrayed, slandered, or maligned by someone, remember Romans 12:19 ~ *never avenge yourself, but trust God to deal justly with those who do unjustly*. May God help us to do so.

*Amen.*