



Week of October 7, 2018
Family Devotion # 35

Beloved,

In our study of Romans, we have come to chapter 12. It has been said that the first eleven chapters are "vertical" meaning from God to man. The rest of the book can well be described as "horizontal." This simply means living out your spiritual service of worship, the believer's interaction with other believers and those who do not have a personal relationship with Christ Jesus. In verses 14-21 one reads of qualities that can only be found in a believer who is yielded whole-heartedly to God. This type of reaction goes against our natural instinct of self-preservation. This type of reaction can only be achieved within believers supernaturally as the Holy Spirit who dwells within them enables.

In verses 17-18 one reads that it is never right to pay back evil for evil, and what is more to respect what is right. In verse 18 the believer is instructed to be at peace with others as much as it is possible. The believer is not to be the aggressor. Believer, do not take revenge, leave that to God verse 19 instructs. Vengeance belongs to God alone. For the remainder of the verses the Christian is instructed in godly conduct and reminded not to be overcome with evil but to overcome evil with good.

So, what about the "imprecatory" Psalms? These are Psalms, most of them written by King David, that are written against those who are against the Lord. Below you will find an article from <http://www.gotquestions.org> that will help shed light on how the Christian who desires to obey God can pray along with King David properly.

Question: "What is imprecatory prayer?"

Answer: First of all, let's define imprecatory prayer. To imprecate means "to invoke evil upon or curse" one's enemies. King David, the psalmist most associated with imprecatory verses such as [Psalm 55:15](#), [69:28](#), and [109:8](#), often used phrases like, "may their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them" ([Psalm 35:6](#)) and "O God, break the teeth in their mouths; tear out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!" ([Psalm 58:6](#)).

[Psalms 7](#), [35](#), [55](#), [58](#), [59](#), [69](#), [109](#), and [139](#) were written by David to ask God to bring judgment upon his enemies. (The other two imprecatory psalms, 79 and 137, were written by Asaph and an unknown psalmist.) These prayers were written not so much to exact revenge upon one's enemies, but rather to emphasize God's abhorrence of evil, His sovereignty over all mankind, and His divine protection of His chosen people. Many of these prayers were prophetic and could be seen taking place later in the New Testament in actual historical events.

When David prayed for God to shatter the teeth of his enemies, likening them to young lions pursuing him to his death, he was making the point that God is holy, righteous, and just, and He will ultimately judge the wicked for the evil they do. Jesus quoted some of the imprecatory psalms during His earthly ministry. In [John 15:25](#), Jesus quotes [Psalm 35:19](#) and [69:4](#). Paul also quoted an imprecatory prayer in [Romans 11:9–10](#), which is a quote of [Psalm 69:22–23](#). Since Jesus and Paul quoted verses from these imprecatory psalms, it proves those psalms were inspired by God and counters any allegation that they were sinful or selfish prayers of revenge.

Using imprecatory prayers from the Psalms today should only be done against our spiritual enemies ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). Praying imprecations on human foes is unjustifiable, as it would require taking these prayers out of context. In the New Testament, Jesus exhorts us to pray for our enemies ([Matthew 5:44–48](#); [Luke 6:27–38](#)), but praying for their death or for bad things to happen to them isn't what He meant. Instead, we are to pray for their salvation first and foremost, and then for God's will to be done. There's no greater blessing than a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and that's what Jesus means by praying for and blessing those who curse us.

Praying in that manner allows God to work in our own lives to soften our hearts toward our enemies so that we'll have compassion on them for their eternal destiny, and to remove bitterness and anger from our hearts. Praying for God's will to be done means we agree with God and are submitting ourselves to His divine sovereignty, despite not always understanding perfectly what He's doing in a particular situation. And it means we have given up the idea that we know best and instead are now relying on and trusting in God to work His will. If a personal wrong has truly been done to us, we seek God in prayer about it, and then leave room for God's judgment and trust Him to do what is best. That is the way to be at peace with God and all men ([Romans 12:17-21](#)).

Recommended Resource: [The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution by R. Albert Mohler Jr.](#)

Blessings,

Pastor Gary