

Proverbs 24:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

Analysis

This proverb warns against personal vengeance. 'Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me' (אַל-תֹּאמֶר בַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לִי כִּי עָשָׂה לְךָ) forbids tit-for-tat retaliation. 'I will render to the man according to his work' (אַשְׁיב לְאַישׁ כְּפָאַלְוָן) quotes the retaliatory mindset. The Mosaic law's 'eye for eye' (Exodus 21:24) was judicial principle limiting punishment, not personal license for revenge. Jesus explicitly rejected personal retaliation: 'resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' (Matthew 5:39). Paul commanded: 'Recompense to no man evil for evil... Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Romans 12:17, 19). Christians must entrust justice to God, refusing personal vengeance.

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures practiced blood revenge—family members avenged wrongs against relatives, creating endless feuds. The law of Moses both acknowledged this reality (cities of refuge, Numbers 35) and sought to limit it through judicial process. Personal vengeance threatened social stability—the Hatfields and McCoys feud illustrates how retaliation escalates. Jesus's teaching radically challenged cultural norms. In a society where turning the other cheek appeared cowardly, Jesus called believers to trust God for vindication rather than seizing personal revenge. Early Christians faced mockery, persecution, and martyrdom without retaliating. Their refusal to seek revenge puzzled and

eventually influenced pagan observers. Church history shows both examples (forgiveness of persecutors) and counter-examples (Christians seeking revenge) of this principle. The gospel transforms the revenge instinct into trust in God's justice and pursuit of reconciliation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What grudges or desires for revenge are you harboring, and how can you release them to God?
2. How does trusting God as righteous Judge free you from the burden of personal vengeance?
3. In what situations are you tempted toward retaliation rather than forgiveness and entrusting justice to God?

Interlinear Text

לֹא אַעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר תָּأַמֵּן רַא־אֶל
H408 Say H834 not I will do H0 H3651 not I will do H0
H559 H6213 H6213

כַּפְעָלָה לֹא יְשַׁאֲשֵׁב :
H6467

to me I will render to the man according to his work

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 20:22 (Parallel theme): Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (Parallel theme): See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Judges 15:11 (Parallel theme): Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

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