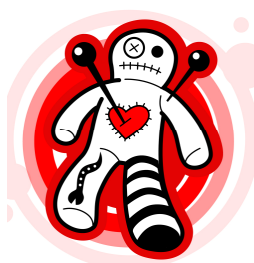




## What About Revenge?

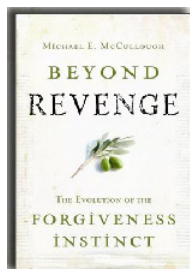
**Proverbs 24:28-29:** (NASB) <sup>28</sup>*Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, And do not deceive with your lips. <sup>29</sup>Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."*



We all have at one time or another wanted revenge - the act of not only getting back at someone or something, but being sure that they were delivered that little extra dose of humiliation so they would know to not ever mess with us again. Yeah, revenge - so often looked at as sweet and so often sought after as a dramatic answer to our woes. But is it? Is revenge sweet or desirable or even good? Well, the Bible says "vengeance is mine saith the Lord!" If God wants vengeance, then why shouldn't we? Stay with us as we put revenge on the table to find out where or even if it should fit into our lives.

### Our Only Question for Consideration:

Is "getting revenge" the same as "getting justice" and should we ever seek revenge?



**THEME TEXT:** **Proverbs 24:28-29:** (NASB) <sup>28</sup>*Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips. <sup>29</sup>Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."*



**Revenge Statistics, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law**

- Per year in the U.S.: Over 3,300 homicides, 61% of all school shootings, a quarter of all arsons and bombings - all directly attributable to revenge!

## WHAT CAN CAUSE THE DESIRE FOR REVENGE...???





## WHAT CAN CAUSE THE NEED FOR JUSTICE TO BE SERVED?

THE COMMITTING OF ANY  
WRONG AS DEFINED BY LAW



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?

## M REVENGE

Revenge is about "ME" - Justice is about that which is right!

## Circumstances

Revenge is determined by my emotions mixed with circumstances

- Justice is determined by events in conjunction with the Law!



Revenge is personally orchestrated and served  
- Justice is orchestrated and served through legal channels!

...But what if justice really isn't being served??




## A perspective for Christians:

Romans 12:14-21: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup>Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup>Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.


So, God gets our revenge for us? Does this mean we should be kind to everyone so that God can get them in the end?

To help us answer these questions, we are going to unfold three true stories regarding revenge, looking at them step by step. The first two are about two men faced with an overwhelming desire to carry out revenge, and the third is about God carrying out His vengeance.

### Chapter One: "The Loss."

 **The Loss/Story 1 - Kill-Dozer Story, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law**

- An active, kind, and engaged type of person loses an expensive legal property battle with his neighbor, which contributes to the demise of his business.

 **The Loss/Story 2 - The Man Who Forgave, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law**

- A "regular guy" suffers the tragic loss of his daughter in the Oklahoma City bombing.

We can readily see how the seeds for the desire for revenge would be sown in both of these stories.

**The Loss/Story 3 - God's loss He experienced when mankind sinned.** "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

### Let's review the "loss" that God incurred:

Genesis 3:6-12: (NASB) <sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. <sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup>He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." <sup>11</sup>And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

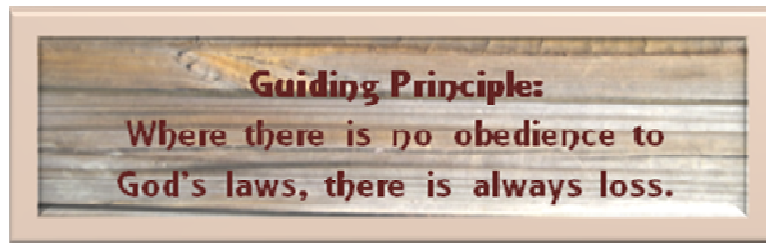
From God's perspective, this portion of the story we call "**The Loss**" has been repeated over and over again throughout mankind's history. What has God always wanted that would have prevented the loss?

Obedience!!!



1 Samuel 15:21-23: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal. <sup>22</sup>Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup>For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.

Saul created a bunch of excuses for keeping the best. To obey is better than sacrifice. God always wants our obedience.



### Chapter Two: "The Initial Response."

 **The Initial Response/Story 1 - Kill-Dozer Story, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law**

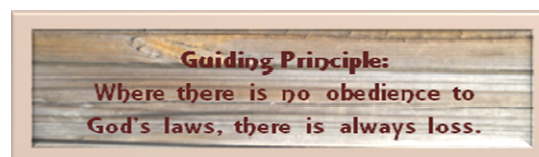
- Response: As a result, this happy-go-lucky and social man became withdrawn and secretive. People saw him less frequently.

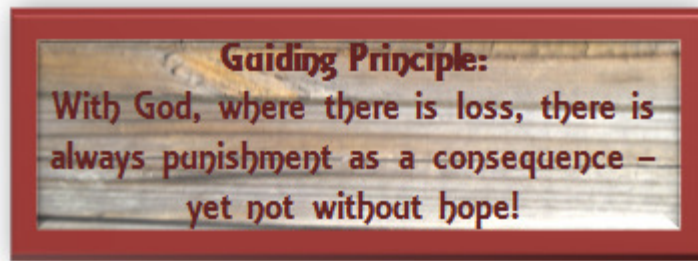
 **The Initial Response/Story 2 - The Man Who Forgave, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law**

- Response: As a result of his overwhelming grief, he became an alcoholic.

**The Initial Response/Story 3 - God's initial response to His loss. The pronouncements are serious because it was a serious loss. God did not withdraw.**

Genesis 3:13-19: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; <sup>15</sup>And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." <sup>16</sup>To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." <sup>17</sup>Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup>"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."





*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel. This is a prophecy of Jesus!*



If we sow the seeds of revenge, what will we reap?

**Galatians 6:7:** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*



Joseph could have taken revenge on his brethren instead.

**Genesis 50:19,20:** *And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

### Back to King Saul for a moment:

**1 Samuel 15:21-23:** (NASB) <sup>21</sup>*But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal. <sup>22</sup>Samuel said, Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup>For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.*

The loss that God experienced with King Saul had the penalty of Saul losing his standing as King. God dealt with these issues by using a just approach. God was angry, but his anger wasn't uncontrolled, vitriolic rage. It is anger that His law of obedience was discarded.

### The anger was directed towards the nation of Israel:

**Amos 3:1-2:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt: <sup>2</sup>You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*

### A good father disciplines.

**Hebrews 12:5-8:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; <sup>6</sup>For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. <sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*





### Chapter Three: "The Plan."

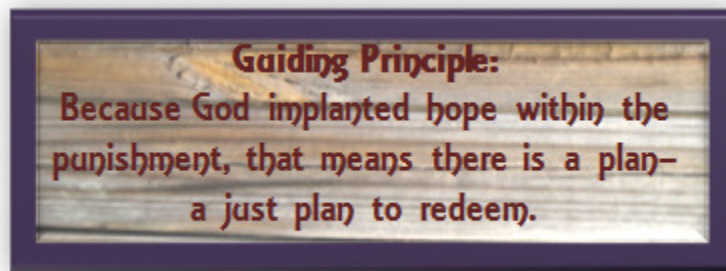
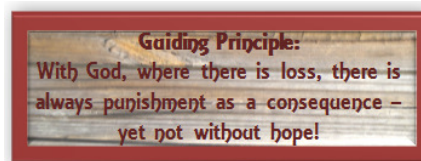
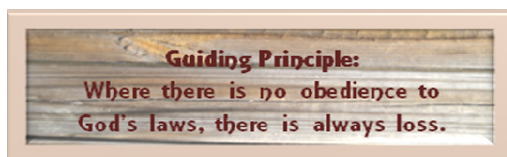
))) **The Plan/Story 1 - Kill-Dozer Story, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of *Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct*, given at Emory School of Law**

- What he had been doing with his free time was building what became known as the "Kill-Dozer" out of a 52 ton tractor - complete with guns, cameras and a "plow" built for destruction.

))) **The Plan/Story 2 - The Man Who Forgave, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of *Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct*, given at Emory School of Law**

- This man chose to refocus himself away from his grief and his suicidal desire for revenge and arranged to meet the father of Timothy McVeigh.

**The Plan/Story 3 - God's response to His loss includes hope.**



If we are going to be alive in Christ, we can't waste our life, emotions, and efforts trying to go backwards. Revenge is living in the past.

**Matthew 8:2:** Follow me and let the dead bury their dead.

#### God's vengeance:

**Nahum 1:2-3:** (NASB) <sup>2</sup>A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies. <sup>3</sup>The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet.

This gives us a sense of wrathful God, but slow to anger. He will avenge His enemies - all those who do not obey. It is based in justice.

#### God's Vengeance is not without a merciful plan:

**Genesis 22:15-18:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup>"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

#### God's chosen example of the deliverer of all:

**Deuteronomy 18:15:** (NASB) The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.



## God's plan is based on justice:

Jeremiah 31:28-30: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>As I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup>In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' <sup>30</sup>But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.

## Chapter Four: "Executing the Plan."

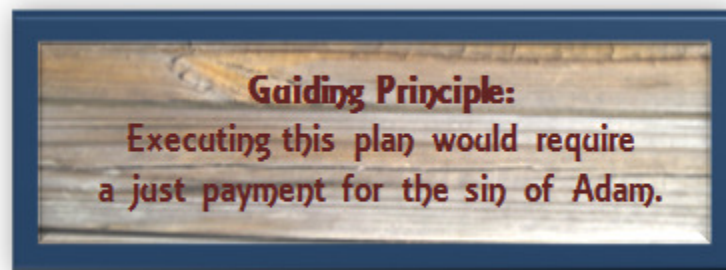
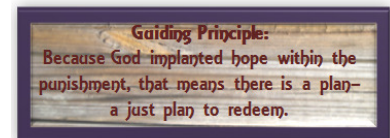
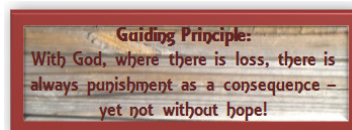
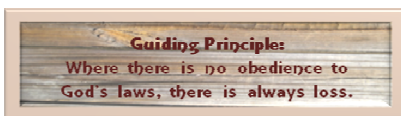
))) Executing the Plan/Story 1 - Kill-Dozer Story, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law

- The mission was to destroy millions of dollars of property - nine buildings - including the homes associated with those people who stood against his position.

))) Executing the Plan/Story 2 - The Man Who Forgave, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law

- The meeting with Mr. McVeigh, which required a long drive in a rented car, yielded an emotional meeting.

The Plan/Story 3 - God's plan required a just payment for the sin. Revenge isn't based on justice, it is based on emotions. God works based on justice. His vengeance is not revenge.



## How God arranged for the just payment for sin:

1 Timothy 2:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

Mercy is shown here.

## This payment was being made in the context of God's vengeance:

John 12:46-48: (NASB) <sup>46</sup>"I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. <sup>47</sup>"If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. <sup>48</sup>"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

God is not revengeful.



## The payment was a JUST payment - a life for a life!

Romans 5:15-19: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. <sup>16</sup>The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. <sup>17</sup>For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. <sup>19</sup>For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous.

Justice must be satisfied, which is why Jesus had to die. God's vengeance is based on justice and tempered with mercy so that all men can be saved.



Confucius says:

在你踏上旅途的復仇，先挖兩個墳墓。

Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.

## Chapter Five: "The Result."



The Result/Story 1 - Kill-Dozer Story, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law

- Success? Millions of dollars of damage and the taking of his own life. Where is the value of the revenge?



The Result/Story 2 - The Man Who Forgave, Lecture Excerpt by Professor Michael McCullough, author of Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct, given at Emory School of Law

- Success? A deep bond was formed; a lasting friendship began and healing ensued.
- "A simple trivial interaction of two fathers who were grieving was sufficient to completely change Bud Welch's heart."

The Result/Story 3 - God's vengeance is not a reaction full of rage like we as imperfect humans react. His vengeance is based on justice with mercy.

John 5:28-29: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which **all who are in the tombs will hear his voice,** <sup>29</sup>**and will come forth;** those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

Mercy AND vengeance! Note it is called the "Day of Judgment" - not the "Day of Revenge!"





**Isaiah 61:1-4: (KJV)** *<sup>1</sup>The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; <sup>2</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; <sup>3</sup>To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. <sup>4</sup>And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.*

This was prophetically talking about Jesus. (We know that because later Jesus quotes these Scriptures and explains that he was the fulfillment.) He releases the prisoners and binds up the broken hearted. Scripturally, God's vengeance is not eternal fire. It is justice being meted out to those who have done wrong. It produces "beauty for ashes." The end result is the rebuilding of the world.

God's vengeance is part of His formula for breaking through man's stone cold hearts and replacing them with a heart of flesh. The end result of this plan is to, through God's mercy AND his vengeance, establish a society on this Earth in which God's will and law will rule and all will live in harmony.

We want to rise above the human propensity to sow the seeds of the desire for revenge and to do something that is hurtful. Revenge takes things into our own hands, feeding our own emotions and causing hurts. Our revenge is established in emotion, implemented with hatred, carried out with vitriol and brings an end result of destruction and hurt. God's vengeance is established in Justice, implemented with Wisdom, carried out with Power and brings an end result of His Love for all mankind by the establishment of His Kingdom on this earth!

*...So what about revenge?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,  
Think about it...!*