

**Wild Pigs; Honor Code Principle #12: Stop Avenging Yourself, Defer to Jesus Christ for Prosecution: "Wrath":  
The Administration of Divine Justice, Rom 12:19**

**"How to Catch Wild Pigs: A Fable"**

There was a Chemistry professor in a large college that had some exchange students in the class. One day an exchange student who had been shot while fighting Communists who were trying to overthrow his country's government and install a new Communist government, asked the professor a strange question: "Do you know how to catch wild pigs?"

The professor thought it was a joke and asked for the punch line. The young man said this is no joke.

"You catch wild pigs by finding a suitable place in the woods and putting corn on the ground. The pigs find it and begin to come every day to eat the free corn. When they are used to coming every day, you put a fence down one side of the place where they are used to coming. When they get used to the fence, they begin to eat the corn again and you put up another side of the fence. They get used to that and start to eat again. You continue until you have all four sides of the fence up with a gate in the last side. The pigs, who are used to the free corn, start to come through the gate to eat, you slam the gate on them and catch the whole herd.

"Suddenly the wild pigs have lost their freedom. They run around and around inside the fence, but they are caught. Soon they go back to eating the free corn. They are so used to it that they have forgotten how to forage in the woods for themselves, so they accept their captivity."

The young man then told the professor that is exactly what he sees happening to America. The government keeps pushing us toward Communism/socialism and keeps spreading the free corn out in the form of programs such as supplemental income, tax credits for unearned income, tobacco subsidies, dairy subsidies, payments not to plant crops, welfare, medicine, drugs, etc., while we continually lose our freedoms just a little at a time.

One should always remember: There is no such thing as a free Lunch! Also, a politician will never provide a service for you cheaper than you can do it yourself.

Honor Code Principle #12: Always defer to the justice of God when you are tempted to take vengeance or to retaliate.

**Romans 12:19** - Stop avenging yourselves, members of the royal family. Instead, defer to prosecution from the justice of God, for it stands written, "Punishment belongs to me, I will repay," says the Lord.

- 1) All judgment has been delegated to Jesus Christ according to:

**John 5:22** - "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son."

- 2) Therefore, all breaches of harmony that are committed between individuals must be prosecuted by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Heaven.
- 3) Romans 12:19 begins with the negative particle μή, *mē* and sets up an imperative of prohibition. What is prohibited comes next, the present active participle of the verb:

**ἐκδικέω, *ekdikeō*:** *ek-* “out from” and *dikē* “justice” in the sense of going through a hearing and executing punishment on the guilty. Thus “punishment out from” what, is revealed next by the pronoun **ἑαυτοῖς, *heautos*:** “yourselves”: members of the royal family.

present: Descriptive: indicates that which is now going on. This is also called a “pictorial present,” since its distinctive force is to present to the mind a picture of the events as in process of occurrence.

What is presented to the mind that is now occurring is that harmony is broken in the Roman church: splinter groups have formed, cliques have developed, and offended parties are taking out vengeance on their adversaries. The negative particle commands believers to stop what is currently going on.

active: Roman believers who are taking out revenge on others are to stop producing this action.

participle: Imperative use, thus a command: “Stop the current practice of avenging yourselves.”

- 4) Paul next makes sure that those addressed in the Epistle and those who would later read the verse would clearly understand that he is giving this order to believers. Members of the Roman church are involved in carrying out vigilante justice on their adversaries. He uses the vocative plural of address, **ἀγαπητοῖς, *agapētois*:** “those who are loved.”
- 5) It’s apparent this does not imply that members of the Roman church are loving each other.
- 6) They are being loved alright but it is God Who is doing the loving. Because of their imputed righteousness God loves each of them unconditionally.
- 7) When members of a local church are involved in infighting, schisms, and disharmony and their problem-solving device is to counter these with vengeance, they are nonetheless still believers in Christ and remain members of the royal family.
- 8) To restore order, the Lord, Who is in charge of punishing each of them for their lack of Christian integrity, gives orders through Paul, “Members of the royal family, stop the current practice of avenging yourselves!”
- 9) When believers decide to, in essence, present an indictment, hold a hearing, conduct a trial, reach a verdict, and impose punishment against a fellow believer, they have chosen to take upon themselves the duties assigned exclusively to Jesus Christ.
- 10) Since He is the Chief Justice in charge of prosecuting the case, then a believer’s intrusions in the field of punishment amount to contempt of court. This means that he has made some very dangerous unilateral assumptions:

1. Jesus Christ cannot fairly judge the case so he must do so.
  2. He is better at dispensing punishment than is the Lord.
  3. His system of justice is more efficient than the Supreme Court's.
- 11) Unilateral vigilante justice never solves the problem but rather compounds the problem in that the protagonist is now lowered to the level of his antagonist and joins him as a recipient of divine discipline.
- 12) Thus if the believer must refrain from cosmic methods of retaliation then what is he advised to do? The answer is given next, introduced by the adversative conjunction **ἀλλά, alla**, which sets up a contrast between what the Roman believers are presently doing and what they are to begin doing. The best way to translate this is "instead."
- 13) What they are to start doing is stated with the aorist active participle of the verb **δίδωμι, didōmi**, "to give," plus the direct object, **τόπος, topos**, which together means "to give place," an idiom that means "to retire to make room for another or for something else."
- 14) This idiom is a commandment for the believer who has suffered broken harmony by the action of others to make the volitional decision not to retaliate.

The verb *didōmi* is used by Paul to emphasize volitional discernment:

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| aorist: | Constative; contemplates the action of the verb in its entirety and regardless of its duration gathers it into a single whole. It involves the total transfer of judicial prosecution over to Jesus Christ. |
| active: | The believer produces the action by permitting the Lord to administer appropriate punishment upon the offending party.  |
| imp.:   | Entreaty; not a direct command, but it takes the form of an urgent request and thus places emphasis on individual volition.   |

- 16) Since this is not a direct command then the best translation is "to defer."

**Romans 12:19** - Stop the current practice of avenging yourselves, members of the royal family. Instead, defer ...

- 17) Next we have the dative singular indirect object from the noun **ὀργή, orgē** which is translated "wrath" in all major English translations.
- 18) The prepositional phrase "of God" is not found in the Greek manuscripts but the idea is understood from the quote that follows from Deuteronomy 32:35, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

- 19) We are intrigued by the proposition that a loving God is the source of wrath, for the word *orgē* is also the word for “anger.” God angry? Isn’t this a sin? Therefore the word needs some analysis.
- 20) From the human perspective the catalyst of wrath is anger and its intent is vengeance usually from a desire to retaliate for a perceived injustice.
- 21) But even in human affairs there is the concept of righteous wrath such as is defined by Webster: “retributory punishment for an offense or a crime” (MWCD-11).
- 22) Consequently, the human mind can also conceive of divine chastisement as wrath but from God’s perspective it is emotionless and sinless.
- 23) God is never involved in sin and He is also never involved in emotion. His administration of the human race and human history is governed by His perfect righteousness and administered by His perfect justice.
- 24) It is instructive to examine the concept of the “wrath of God” in the New Testament. For that we consult:

**Friedrich, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 5:420-21; 425; 433; 446:**

- While to refrain from anger is to give place to God (Romans 12:19), anger can be a giving place to the devil (Ephesians 4:26-31). Indeed if it becomes revenge, it can be an infringing of God’s rule of wrath and prerogative of judgment (Romans 12:19). Thus the wrath of God is the response to man’s wrath in the (time) of judgment. (pp. 420-21)

Note: Whenever we assume the prerogative of judgment we interfere with God’s prosecution of the case.

- In the New Testament *ὀργή* is both God’s displeasure at evil, His passionate resistance to every will which is set against Him, and also His judicial attack thereon. (p. 425)

NOTE: Here we see a statement that emphasizes the fact that God’s wrath is simply the administration of His justice which is in response to righteousness’ rejection of sin, human good, and evil.

- In this age [the dispensation of the Church] there takes place at one and the same time the twofold revelation of Romans 1:18 [“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”]. The revelation of wrath turns one’s gaze in a twofold direction. On the one side it shows that the history of mankind stands under *ὀργή* from the fall onwards. On the other hand it shows that herein world history is an anticipation of world judgment. (p. 433)

NOTE: Both mankind and the creation suffer ramifications of the original sin. Mankind is hampered by the trend to sin and the creation is plagued by the loss of pristine perfection.