

What God Will Do If You Rejoice Your Enemy Is Suffering?

On October 7, 2023, cheers were heard around the world because a terrorist group known as Hamas launched a surprise attack on the nation of Israel and killed over 900 hundred men, women, and children, 44 soldiers, and wounded more than 2,500 people. Reports added that Hamas had kidnapped many people. While most of the world mourned the horrible surprise attack, Israel's enemies rejoiced over the slaughters. Some people even cheered over the attack.

Sadly, not only did those who rejoiced and cheered that Hamas had attacked Israel, but those who rejoice and exult that their enemy suffers have missed or ignored an important divine principle. Many people around the world have missed the principle! May I

ask you a question? When you were young, were you ever happy that your sister or brother was punished by your parents? Were you ever glad that some arrogant and boastful person was finally humiliated and embarrassed? Have you ever rejoiced that your



enemy suffered? I know of individuals who have done that. Someone hurt them and when they heard that the individual suffered an automobile accident or became sick with a serious illness, they were very happy. One individual has said that when people do that, it makes them feel better about ourselves. "It's a self-affirming boost."¹ But such behavior may

also reveal that the person who rejoiced hates the individual, or may have desired revenge. Maybe they were thankful that justice was realized.

But the sad news for them is that they eventually will be the one who is mourning because Proverbs 24:17-18 warns us,

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;
Or the LORD will see it and be displeased,
And turn His anger away from him.
Proverbs 24:17-18 (NASB)

The Hebrew word for "rejoice" is *samah*. It has the meaning of "spontaneous emotion or extreme happiness." It is as if a woman clenched her fists and raised them up as an expression of joy. Have you ever rejoiced because someone suffered after doing wrong? God says that if you

do, then He will be displeased with you and turn His anger away from that person. In addition, Proverbs 17:5 adds,

He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.
Proverbs 17:5 (NASB)

Now we learn that God will punish those who rejoice that

¹ Jeanna Bryner. "Schadenfreude Explained: Why We Secretly Smile When Others Fail." Live Science. December 09, 2011

their enemy is punished. So, when your enemy suffers, do not rejoice and gloat! When your enemy suffers, do not praise the Lord!

Consider Job 31:29 which Job asks this question,

**Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy,
Or exulted when evil befell him?
Job 31:29 (NASB)**

The implication is "no!" Job had not sinned by rejoicing over his enemy. This means that those who rejoice when someone suffers are sinning. So, Yahweh will punish them and also end the suffering of their enemy, or of the person who was suffering.

Conclusion. So, what is the correct response of a Christian to our enemies? Let me give you four ways to respond to an enemy. First, we are to love our enemy. Matthew 5:44 says,

**But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those
who persecute you, Matthew 5:44 (NASB)**

Notice that we are to love even those who persecute us. We are also to pray for them. This includes any enemy, including governments.

Now this principle does not mean that any nation should just allow an enemy nation to kill its people or that an individual should stand by and let someone attack or kill them, a family member, a friend, or a neighbor. For the Bible teaches us that a wise man turns away from evil. Proverbs 14:16 says,

**A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a
fool is arrogant and careless. Proverbs 14:16 (NASB)**

Also, Proverbs 22:3 and Matthew 10:23 are important passages to read and consider. That is, the Bible teaches a Christian can use deadly force to defend self and family.

Second, Romans 12:19-21 states that we are not to seek vengeance.

**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. "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." Do not be overcome by evil, but
overcome evil with good. Romans 12:19-21 (NASB)**

The message is that God will punish our enemies. Since He is a just God, He knows exactly what they deserve. So, we are to leave the punishment to our Lord. But we are to treat them kindly. Today, this principle is seriously missing in our world.

The third way in which we should treat our enemy is to forgive them for how they mistreat us. Luke 23:34 reports that even Jesus forgave those who were unjustly crucifying Him.

**But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do
not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34 (NASB)**

Finally, we should never rejoice when God does finally punish them or even remove them from this earth.

So what will God do if you rejoice your enemy is suffering? The answer is God will stop punishing your enemy and punish you. Therefore, everyone should be careful to love our enemies. May everyone please our Lord by concentrating on loving, praying, being kind, and forgiving those who are our enemies. Otherwise, we ourselves will be overcome by evil, instead of overcoming evil with good. Remember that God said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY."