

R.T. Kendall: 8 Truths About Vindication

Vindication is God's prerogative. God said to Moses, "Vengeance is mine, and recompense; for the time when their foot shall slip" (Deut. 32:35a). It cannot be exaggerated how much God hates our trying to do His work when it comes to vengeance or vindication.

Vengeance and vindication are similar but not the same. Vengeance refers mainly to punishment. Old Testament history is a continual description of God punishing sin. God punished sin by bringing vengeance on Israel's enemies. He punished sin by allowing disobedient kings of Israel to fall.

The entire sacrificial system prescribed by the Mosaic Law demonstrates God dealing with sin and showing how sin must be punished by the sacrifice of blood. God's ultimate example of punishing sin was when He punished our sins in the body of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 19:30, 2 Cor. 5:21). Vengeance is essentially God carrying out justice by punishing wickedness.

Vindication is essentially positive. It is not always followed by vengeance. Vindication is God absolving one of blame or false accusation. Vindication without vengeance is equally God's prerogative. He does not like it when you or I try to punish someone, to vindicate ourselves, making ourselves look good or clearing our own names. This is God's business; it is what He does.

I guarantee this: let God take over, and He will be on your case and do a perfect job of it. But in His time. Time is on His side. Time is God's domain.

Vindication is sometimes immediate. When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal, there followed both immediate vindication for Elijah and vengeance upon the wicked prophets. Upon

Elijah's prayer, fire fell from heaven before everybody, and the people who had been fence-straddling fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God!" (1 Kings 18:39b). Elijah then ordered the people to seize the false prophets and had the prophets slaughtered, this being a case of immediate vindication and vengeance (v. 40).

It is the truth that will be vindicated—not you or me. Furthermore, only the person who has been in the right—or truly led by the Holy Spirit—will eventually be vindicated. But it is because the God of the Bible is the God of truth; it is impossible for Him to lie (Heb. 6:18). If you are not being vindicated, consider this: Truth may not on your side after all! Never dismiss the possibility that the withholding of vindication is God's way of refining you! Don't despise the means God may choose to drive you to seek His face.

The delay of vindication is an invitation from God to practice total forgiveness. Behave in such a manner that the person who now seems to be an enemy will one day say to you, "You were brilliant in all that. You were great, so patient and kind." Believe it or not, today's enemy could be tomorrow's friend. In any case, there is only one way forward when vindication is delayed: total forgiveness. And I can give you a motivation to forgive totally greater than any other that could be conceived: you do it for an audience of one. Yes. That's it. That is how you do it! Total forgiveness comes easily when you realize you are doing it for God and the glory of Jesus Christ! Oh yes.

The greater the suffering, the greater the promise of blessing for you down the road. Suffering is "not for nothing." This is precisely why James said for us to "count it all joy" when we fall into trials of any kind (James 1:12, ESV). If you dignify the trial rather than complain, you will see that such a trial was worth more than gold (1 Pet. 1:7).

How do you dignify a trial? Don't complain. Forgive your

enemy. Maintain unfeigned thanksgiving. See the delay of vindication as part of God's strategy for you. Don't try to hasten the end of the trial. Every trial has a built-in time scale. You think it will never end? It will. When it's over, it's over. In heaven, the audience of one—the righteous judge—renders a verdict of pass or fail. For too many years I failed when a trial came. I complained, grumbled, murmured, and forgot that “every joy or trial falleth from above,” as the hymn writer Frances R. Havergal (1836–1879) put it.

God was gracious to me, giving me many, many more chances to pass. Has He not been gracious to you? Therefore see the withholding of vindication as the weapon He could be using to drive you to your knees to spend more time with Him.

Vindication by the Spirit is the best way forward. There are two kinds of vindication: external and internal. External—the kind we all naturally want—is when everybody congratulates you. They say, “You were right; they were wrong.” But that is not the way Jesus was vindicated.

The Pharisees did not say, “Jesus, we think You are wonderful.” Vindication by the Spirit is a secret vindication. It is between you and God. It is when the Most High God witnesses to you in a definite and undoubted manner that you please Him. It doesn't get better than that.

Which gives you more satisfaction: when God pleases you or knowing that you please God?

Vindication will come to you too—when the time is right. If it is delayed, it is because you aren't ready for it. In the meantime esteem and pursue the secret internal vindication by the Spirit. It is worth more than 10,000 compliments from people. It is that witness that testifies, “This is the way, walk in it” (Isa. 30:21, MEV). {eoa}

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