

The Enigma of Enemies

Opener: What are some ways we can be our own worst enemy?

Scripture: David sang Psalm 18 to the Lord when the Lord delivered him from his enemies and from Saul. Here are a few of the verses:

I love you, Lord, my strength. ²The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my enemies. ⁴The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. ⁵The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.

¹⁶He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. ¹⁷He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. ¹⁸They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the Lord was my support. ¹⁹He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. Psalm 18:1-5 and 16-19

“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you.” Luke 6:27-30

Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice, ¹⁸or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from them. Proverbs 24:17-18

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:19-21

Discussion Questions

1. David certainly had enemies. But doesn’t everyone? They come in all shapes and sizes. Who or what are your enemies? How can enemies separate us from God or bring us closer to Him? Have you ever felt overwhelmed when dealing with an enemy, but God rescued you? What did you learn? Psalm 18
2. In Luke 6:27-30 Jesus tells us to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. Why is loving our enemies so important to Jesus? What makes it difficult? Have you ever loved an enemy? What happened?
3. Once again, Jesus turned things upside down when He presented a radical shift in the way we typically respond to mistreatment or aggression. If we did it His way, what difference would it make in our relationship with Him? How about with others, including those who are on our side? Luke 6:27-30
4. Proverbs 24:17-18 advises us not to gloat when our enemies are in trouble. Have you ever been tempted to be glad when someone is in trouble? Why is it important to resist that temptation? How can we strike a balance between holding people accountable and maintaining a non-vindictive attitude?
5. Romans 12:19-21 urges us not to take revenge. It even equates taking revenge with evil. If we know God doesn’t want us to take revenge, why is it so tempting? What are some potential consequences of seeking revenge? How can leaving room for God’s wrath help us when we’ve been mistreated or wronged?
6. What specific ways can we show love to people who don’t love us?

Wrap Up: Are you facing opposition from people around you? They cheat you and rob you. They lie and spread rumors about you. They betray you, hurt you, and tell you you’ll never succeed. Who are they? They’re your enemies. We all have them. Some are right up in your face, while others are more subtle, chipping away at you slowly. Whatever the case may be, enemies are hurdles in our spiritual lives. However, it isn’t the enemies themselves who can hurt us the most—it’s our response to our enemies that will make us or break us. If it’s truly our desire to be like Jesus, we need to figure this out.