

The Problem of Enemies

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Introduction: It is an honor to have friends but it is not necessarily a dishonor to have enemies.

- A. Who your enemies are as well as your friends tells much about you. **(Lk 6:26)**
- B. It is no compliment to say a Christian lived many years without an enemy. This could not be said of Christ nor of Paul. **(2 Tim 3:10-13)**

I. Why we may have “enemies without a cause”

A. Here the problem lies within the heart of the enemy.

(Psa 35:19-22; Lk 6:45)

- 1. An enemy is one who hates you. As much as you may try, you cannot change another against their will.
- 2. Often they do not always outwardly show it, at least to others.
- 3. Often they are harboring an irrational hate that if they tried to explain would be embarrassing. **(Prov 10:18)**
- 4. The best test is in how they speak. They want evil to come upon the object of their hate. (Ex. How do they handle a questionable source of information?)

B. Unreasonable People are unfair.

- 1. Many innocent people accused when some say: “The fault is about 50-50.” **(2 Thess 3:1-2)**
- 2. Fairness takes a willingness to use reason! Do I know for sure?
 - a. Am I willing to go to the one in a meek and fair way?
Example: Brother in Florida stood up and made serious charges against a young preacher. He never apologized.
 - b. Unfair people do not have to follow any rules! They do whatever will hurt their enemy the most!
- 3. You cannot have a lasting friendship with an unreasonable person. **(Prov 13:19-20)**
 - a. They will jump from church to church.
 - b. They are filled with enmity, hate resentment, revenge and bitterness.
 - c. Every church needs to ask questions with one seeking to join them.
- 4. They often reveal their hearts in private accusations about others.
 - a. If they accuse you of lying, hypocrisy, gossip, running the church, etc., they often are really doing those things.
 - b. They often will accuse first and then look at the facts.....maybe.

C. He may be an enemy because he talked about you. **(Prov 26:28)**

- 1. When a person tells a lie to another about you they have at least two

ways to respond.

- a. He can Repent and correct the lie. Confession should be made to the full extent of the spread of the lie.
 - b. He can tell more lies and attack the one lied against. This may make the earlier lie more believable.
2. When a person's focus is on the image of another person, watch out! Enemies like to build a caricature of the person and then push that image.
- a. In time when people know the person they will see the lie.
 - b. The goal of the enemy is to deny any association with others.

D. He may be an enemy because he mistreated you.

1. This is similar to the above point. Here are a few possibilities:
 - a. A debt that is not paid.
 - b. A misrepresentation on a transaction. (Cheating)
 - c. Unfair price charged in a deal.
 - d. Job interference. Ex. Someone tries to get you fired.
2. For the Christian this temptation is removed if we confess our wrongs. **(Jas 5:16)**

E. He may be an enemy because he considers you a threat. (3 John 9)

1. You may be a threat to their dignity, popularity, social standing, financial welfare, or their ability to control a church.
2. This is why Herod killed children. "You are interfering with my plans!"

II. What to do about enemies.

A. Do good unto them. (Mt 5:44; Rom 12:19-20)

1. David's goodness to Saul. **(1 Sam 24:17)**
2. Saul's bitterness never left him.

B. Pray for them (Mt 5:44-45)

1. Jesus on the cross. **(Lk 23:34)**
2. Stephen at his death. **(Acts 7:60)**
3. It takes more courage to pray for your enemies than to backstab or even fight openly.

C. Refrain from getting on the level of an enemy. (1 Pet 2:23)

1. Do not rejoice at the failings of an enemy. **(Prov 24:17)**
2. Remember that with God's word you can become wiser than your enemies. **(Psa 119:98)**
3. Pray for the deliverance from our enemies. **(Psa 59:1)**
4. Let us remember that God is stronger than our enemies. **(Psa 23:5)**

Conclusion: I cannot always help having enemies but I can help my attitude towards them!