

Some quotes worth pondering . . .

“If a million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.”

“Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Louis Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.”

“Deal with the faults of others as gently as with your own.”



May 29, 2011

OUR ENEMIES: A TOPIC OF PRAYER  
Jim Stauffer

Sometimes we are in conflict over how to respond to our enemies. Jesus told us in Mat. 5:10-12 we are blessed or to be happy when we are **“persecuted for righteousness’ sake”**, **“when men revile you”**, **“and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.”** We are told **“great is your reward in heaven.”**

Again, He tells us to love our enemies, bless them, do good to them and pray for them. (Mat. 5:43,44)

James says we should count it all joy when we fall into temptations. He says it will build patience and make us complete.

All of this we learn is good for us and we should appreciate it to such an extent we rejoice when it happens.

We are never taught it is a good thing to enjoy suffering just for the pleasure of suffering. There would be something wrong with us psychologically if that were the case.

No, our joy comes from the strength we develop from successfully overcoming such adversity. In our vernacular today we might say, “no pain, no gain.”

While we are commanded to pray for our enemies, we are also, just as David was, entitled to pray for deliverance from ill treatment by them. In the 59<sup>th</sup> Psalm, David prayed for God to deliver him from his enemies. He said, **“deliver me from mine enemies.”**, they **“lie in wait for my soul.”** All this, David says, occurs through no fault of his. It is just that they are bloodthirsty men. We know Saul, King of Israel repeatedly tried to kill David out of jealousy. On one occasion, David’s wife assisted him in escaping such an attempt. (1 Sam. 19:11) There was nothing improper in David’s

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**MEETING TIMES**  
Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM  
Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM  
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

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attempt to foil the effort of his enemy.

We are promised protection from God. **“For He will cover thee with His pinions, and under his wings shalt thou take refuge: His truth is a shield and a buckler.”** (Psa. 91:4)

Paul says the Lord stood by him and delivered him out of the mouth of the lion. But Paul says the reason was for him to preach the message to all the Gentiles.

It is clear from this short sample of scripture and is verified over and over again with a larger sample, God does watch over us even when we are suffering for His cause. (1 Pet. 4:1)

There is both a good reason for God to allow our enemies to persecute us (*we gain patience and completeness*) and for Him to come to our rescue. (*to allow us to carry out His will*) Where we are mistaken is when we pray for our enemies to be vanquished because we hate them and what they stand for (*that is not loving our enemies*) and to be relieved from suffering for our own comfort's sake. (*that is not using trial as a way to completeness*) Both of these reasons for calling for relief from enemies are selfish in nature and do not have the cause of the Lord in the forefront.

David was trying to survive the attacks of Saul in order to fulfill God's request to lead Israel as its King. Samuel had already anointed him.

Paul was praying for release from a Roman prison to gain more freedom in preaching the gospel.

What do we pray for concerning our enemies? What is the motive? Do we pray for their destruction? If so, is it because we want to be free to teach people about Jesus or is it for our comfort? Do we pray for them because we love their souls and wish to lead them to Christ?

God will care for each and every one of us if indeed we are faithful in His service. There are no promises we will not suffer for His cause. Quite the contrary, He has promised us that, “all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2 Tim. 3:12) Let us therefore, lead godly lives confessing Him before men with such living and pray that our enemies will come to love the Lord or at the least be prevented from hindering His cause.

### **Nothing to Hide!**

Consider this:

- If a man has some printed money but is not willing to have it examined, people think it is counterfeit.
- If a man is afraid to take a lie detector test, people think he is guilty of crime.
- If a man conducts a business but is unwilling to let anyone investigate it, folks think he

is running a crooked business.

- Yet many preachers teach doctrines that under no circumstances will they test or allow to be tested by the Bible. However, millions of people will accept them as upright, honest teachers of the truth, and will risk their salvation upon them. What makes the difference? The Bible instructs us to try the teachers (I John 4:1). The truth never fears investigation! It has nothing to hide!

- **by Bill Crews**

### **Forgiving Others**

There is no doubt that one of the conditions of our own forgiveness by God is that we forgive others who sin against us. Jesus said: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14,15). He also taught us that we should extend this forgiveness again and again. Notice: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21,22).

The question arises, though, about a situation where an individual is not interested in our forgiveness. They do not ask to be forgiven and may, in fact, continue the offending act against us. What should our response be in such a situation?

Jesus gave valuable information about dealing with this problem in Luke 17:3,4: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." The teaching here clearly indicates that forgiveness must be sought before it can be granted. We must be ready to forgive - willing to forgive - even anxious to forgive. But, until the offender seeks our forgiveness, there is no way that forgiveness can be accomplished. (A moment of reflection will remind us that this is exactly the pattern that God has established for us to be forgiven by Him. He is continually ready to forgive us, but we must repent and seek His forgiveness before we can receive it.)

It's worth noting that the apostles realized the difficulty of forgiving a brother who continues to commit the same offense over and over. After hearing His command in this matter, "the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). It takes a strong faith to fulfill the Lord's will concerning forgiveness.

- **by Greg Gwin**