

A Christian faces his enemies

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Introduction: In time the Christian will have those who are their enemies.

A. Having an enemy is not pleasant but will speak concerning your character.

(Lk 6:26-28)

1. Who becomes your enemy and why they do will say much! Consider the enemies of Jesus.
2. How you respond to your enemies will truly show if you really love God.

B. What is an enemy?

1. echthros □ from a primary echtho (to hate); hateful (passively, odious, or actively, hostile); AV - enemy 30, foe 2; 32 □ 1) hated, odious, hateful 2) hostile, hating, and opposing another 2a) used of men as at enmity with God by their sin 2a1) opposing (God) in the mind 2a2) a man that is hostile.
2. You may not always be able to know who is your enemy! Some may have that passive hostility and may claim to want to “help” you.
3. The enemies that are the greatest threat to us and that could cause us the greatest hurt are those that come from crucial relationships such as family, friends and the local church. **(Psa 55:4-5, 12-14)**

I. Every Christian was once an enemy of God

A. Before we become too haughty over how others have treated us we need to see where we have been! **(Col 1:21-22)**

1. Why should anyone become an enemy of God? They have followed Satan the great enemy of righteousness. **(Mt 13:28,39)**
2. When we decide to base our lives on the flesh then we too are an enemy of God. **(Jas 4:4)**
3. To be an enemy of God is illogical, foolish, and self-destructive. We all have done this! We also may have been an enemy to others. **(Tit 3:3-5)**

B. God sought to make His enemies His children. **(Rom 5:6-7)**

1. The love of God can melt the hearts of the hateful. **(Lk 23:34)**
2. This same love of God gives us assurance of His continued work with us! **(Rom 5:10-11)**
3. Before we examine who our enemies are, we must be committed to how we will treat our enemies and what we want for them. **(Mt 5:44-45)**

II. An enemy is motivated by anger and bitterness

A. Many have not learned to fight the sin of uncontrolled anger.

1. There is a proper place for anger but we often go beyond it. **(Eph 4:26-27)**
2. The world is taught this anger as a way of life.
3. Many Christian's have neglected this as well. Some treat it as a fleabite while others laugh at it. Do you want to go to heaven? **(I Jn 3:15; Gal 5:19-21)**
4. Many come from angry homes and have learned this as a way of life.
 - a. An alcoholic home commonly has anger at its root. Many are taught to pretend the problem is not there and honesty is punished.
 - b. Some of the angriest people that I have known would deny it.

- B. Your enemy will pay dearly for his chosen path of bitterness.
 - 1. Your enemy will act and speak foolishly. (**Prov 14:29, 17**)
 - a. Example: My own anger as a youth at a model airplane.
 - b. The ones we love the most will in fact be hurt!
 - c. Bitterness will cause you to act as a crazy person!
 - 2. The family loses respect for the one controlled by anger. (**Eph 6:4**)
 - a. Often an **anger circle** is created in every relationship.
 - b. Children often take the example they have seen into their own marriage.
 - 3. A church cannot tolerate this spirit among its members. (**Heb 12:15**)
 - a. Some who seek to form cliques motivated by anger towards a common “enemy” within the church.
 - b. Some have started “fires” that consume the very ones they love! (Ex. Man who lost his children because of bitterness that he planted!)
 - 4. A bitter person will torture himself.

III. Why people may make us an enemy

A. 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. Repent and correct the lie.
 - b. Tell more lies and attack the one lied against.
- 2. When a person's focus is on the image of the person, watch out! Many like to build a caricature of the person and then push that image.

B. 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. 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**)

C. 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. Envy sees to destroy its “competitors.”

IV. Face your enemy with the power of the Lord

A. Nothing will test your faith in God as much as dealing with an unreasonable, deceitful, hate-filled person.

- 1. You cannot change another person against their will! Call upon God for help!
- 2. The Psalms are filled with pleas to God for deliverance from enemies. (**Ps 13:2; 25:2,19; 42:9-11**)

B. Satan will strongly tempt you to become like your enemy.

- 1. The world will say: “If someone ‘fires the first shot’ then all ‘rules’ are off!”
- 2. What did Jesus do with His enemies? (**1 Pt 2:21-24**)
 - a. Jesus responded this way because He trusted God.

- b. We are greatly challenged to respond in the same way. (**Rom 12:17-21**)
- C. This adversity should cause you to draw closer to God. (**Psa 27:11-14**)
 - 1. The world will scream at you: “Hit him back!”
 - 2. There is a calmness and a strength that come from knowing the battle is God’s and that He will deliver. (**Psa 60:12; 61:2-4; 31:8**)
 - 3. While your enemy frets and plots in his self-defeating bitterness, you can move on and rejoice in the manifold blessings of God. (**Psa 23:4-6**)
 - 4. You also will draw closer to Christians! What a blessing!
- D. How did God deliver king David from his enemies? How were they defeated?
 - 1. These Old Testament examples powerfully show the “game plan” for the one who seeks the power of God in defeating Satan’s allies.
 - 2. We need to see the “thinking” of one so trapped by the evil one so that we might convert an enemy into a child of God.

V. David’s mighty enemy --- King Saul

- A. Saul’s problem was never David but rather his surrender to the temptations of Satan.
 - 1. Saul was tempted by concerns for his reputation among the people. Will he be a “winning” or a “losing” coach? He faces a major crisis at Gilgal. (**1 Sam 13:5-12**)
 - 2. Saul was concerned mostly with self-Justification. (**1 Sam 15:15, 19-20**)
 - a. He was more concerned with why he did it rather than what he did.
 - b. Saul desired to be righteous before men. (**1 Sam 15:30**).
 - c. Did Saul repent? (**1 Sam 15:24-25**)
 - 3. Saul became David’s enemy because of envy. (**1 Sam 18:7-9**)
 - a. This is why the Jewish leaders killed Jesus. (**Mk 15:10**)
 - b. This is a common problem within the church.
 - 4. How can David win against the king?
- B. Saul became in many ways a “spear thrower.” (**1 Sam 18:10-11**)
 - 1. What had David done? What should David do?
 - 2. Saul tried to line up others in his quest to destroy his “enemy.” See how he tempts his son Jonathan. (**1 Sam 20:30-31**)
 - 3. Jonathan was a man of principle. He too became a “spear target.” (**1 Sam 20:32-34**)
 - 4. Even Samuel knew that Saul would kill him if possible. (**1 Sam 16:2**)
 - 4. Self-pity and emotional charges became common with Saul. (**1 Sam 22:8**)
- C. David let God win the battle.
 - 1. What did David do when he could have killed Saul? (**1 Sam 26:7-12**)
 - 2. Did Saul repent? (**1 Sam 26:21-27:1**)
 - 3. How did Saul come to an end? (**1 Sam 31:4-6**)
- D. Saul influence rose up years later in Shimei. (**2 Sam 16:5-13**)
 - 1. What an incredibly foolish action!
 - 2. Consider these tests for bitterness. (See article)

Conclusion: Are you a child of God or an enemy of God?

- A. God will defeat every enemy in time. How will it be for you? (**Heb 1:13; 10:12-13**)

B. God's love can defeat your bitterness if you would seek it.

The Bitterness of Shimei

Steve Wallace

Most have had to deal with the problem of bitterness at some time in their lives. You may have encountered it in another person or perhaps you were tempted to become bitter towards someone else. Bitterness generally does not exist by itself for long. Rather it leads to other sins. It is corruptive in nature. The problems that it causes in churches and relations between brethren in general are many.

David faced a bitter person at least once in his life. When he was fleeing Jerusalem in the face of Absalom's rebellion, a man named Shimei came out to curse him. The example of Shimei's bitterness helps us see both how one might be tempted to become bitter and the fruits of such bitterness.

2 Samuel 16:5-13

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man....And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along of the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

His Bitterness

1. Based on false premises. According to Shimei, David's suffering came upon him because "the Lord hath returned upon him all the blood of the house of Saul" (**v.8**). The idea behind blood returning upon someone is that of one's bearing guilt and suffering consequences of murdering someone (**cf. Matt. 27:25; Acts 5:28**). Whether Shimei was implying that David had something to do with the death of Saul or someone of Saul's house, the Bible shows that his charges were **false (1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-25; 2 Sam. 4:1-12; 9:1-13)**. *Shimei's bitterness against David was groundless!* But is this not the case with bitter brethren today? They imagine insults or slights. In the event that bitterness is based on an actual occurrence, it often is the result of a deed that a brother either did out of concern for the bitter one's soul or a wrong of which he has repented and for which he has asked forgiveness (**James 5:19-20; Matt. 18:21-35**). Even when it is based on something that actually happened, bitterness is always wrong. There is no good reason to be bitter (**Eph. 4:31-32**).

2. Nurtured for years! A study of the book of 2 Samuel shows that Saul had been dead for at least twenty years at this point in the history of Israel! What a terrible comment this is on the heart of one of God's people! Instead of filling himself with worthy thoughts he has utterly polluted himself with sinful ones! (**Phil. 4:8**) Bitterness is to be "put away," not nurtured (**Eph. 4:31**).

3. Rejoiced at another's misfortune. David and all the people with him were weeping as they fled from Absalom's forces (**2 Sam. 15:30**). The perverseness of bitterness is so clear at this point: The Bible shows the Christian's responsibilities to brethren who suffer (**Rom. 12:13-15; 2 Tim. 1:16-18**). Bitter people like Shimei have neither room in their heart for nor the inclination towards doing good to the objects of their bitterness, which brings us to our last point.

4. Sets a terrible example. The picture of Shimei publicly cursing David and throwing stones at him shows the shameless conduct that can result in those who harbor bitterness. The results of years of private seething ferments and, finally, when a convenient excuse is found, boils over in a torrent of abusive language or perhaps even physical harm. Thus it can come to pass that not only the bitter person and his enemy are affected, but rather "many be defiled" (**Heb. 12:15**).

Conclusion

Shimei would later ask forgiveness of his sin against David (2 Sam. 19:16-23). If you have been guilty of harboring bitterness, pray to God that he will forgive you this sin (Acts 8:22). From this brief look at this sin I believe that we can all see that it is of the devil and needs to be treated as such.