

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ENEMIES?

In life we face many enemies. We must be aware of the sources, strategies, and solutions to our suffering so that we may live in victory and freedom in Christ.

Sources: Truths about Enemies

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (ESV)

1. They Exist in your Sinful Flesh.

- Romans 7:5 “For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.”
- Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

2. They Exist in this Fallen World and Fallen Humanity.

- James 4:4 “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

3. They Exist in Fallen Angels: Satan and his Demons.

- Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

4. They Are Powerful.

- Matthew 24:24 “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”
- “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)

5. They Are Persistent.

- Genesis 39:10 “she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.”
- Judges 16:16 “she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.”

6. They Are Persuasive.

- Genesis 3:1,4 “1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'...''You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman.”

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7. They Are Defeated.

- 1 Corinthians 15:26 “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Colossians 2:15 “God disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.”
- 1 John 3:8 “The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.”
- Hebrews 2:14 “Christ took on human nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

8. They Are Limited in Power.

- Job 1:12 “And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

9. They Are Limited in Time.

- John 12:31 “the ruler of this world be cast out”

10. They Are Enslaved. Blinded. Unrighteous. Captive. Dead. Ignorant. Lost.

- Galatians 4:3 “enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.”
- 2 Timothy 2:26 “they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

Strategies - The Tactics of Enemies

2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.” (ESV)

1. Deception with Lies and Accusations.

- Revelation 12:9–10 “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ... the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”
- John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10 “with all wicked deception for those who are perishing”

2. Desires of the World, Flesh, and Pride of Life.

- Ephesians 2:2 “in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”
- Matthew 4:3 “the tempter came and said”
- 1 John 2:16 “all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”
- James 4:1 “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5 “somehow the tempter had tempted you”

3. Defeat by Intimidation.

- 1 Samuel 17:10 “the Philistine said, ‘I defy the ranks of Israel this day’”

4. Division.

- 1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united”

5. Distraction.

- 2 Corinthians 12:7 “a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18 “we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”

6. Destruction. Sickness.

- John 8:44 “the devil...was a murderer from the beginning”
- 1 Peter 5:8 “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- Luke 13:16 “this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years”
- Acts 10:38 “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

7. Depression and Apathy.

- Job 2:9 “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.’”

8. Disguise.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13–15 “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”
- Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

9. False Worship

- Consulting the dead (Deut 18:11), divination (Lev 19:26), sorcery (Deut 18:10), mediums (Lev 19:31), seeking ghosts (Ezek 13:20), witchcraft (Gal 5:20), astrology (Isa 47:13-14, Deut 4:19), spell casting (Deut 18:11), and interpreting omens (Deut 18:11)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders”
- 2 Corinthians 11:3 “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

10. Gospel- Opposed

- 2 Corinthians 4:4 “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
- Mark 4:15 “And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.”

Solution - How to Respond to Enemies

1. Expect their Presence and Attacks.

- John 15:18-20 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [20] Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (ESV)

2. Prepare for Confrontation and Questions.

- 1 Peter 3:15 “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”
- 2 Timothy 2:24-25 “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth”

3. Prayer.

- Ephesians 6:18 “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints”
- 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
- Matthew 6:13 “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

4. Understand God and His Good Purposes.

- 1 Kings 3:11 “God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right”
- Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
- Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

5. Seek Wisdom Concerning their Strategies.

- 2 Corinthians 2:11 “so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”
- James 3:13-18 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. [18] And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

6. Love in Action.

- Philippians 2:3–4 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
- Luke 6:27–31 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”
- 1 John 3:18 “let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth”
- Romans 12:20–21 “‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

7. Suffer with Endurance.

- Matthew 5:38–42 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ [39] But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. [40] And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. [41] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. [42] Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”
- 1 Corinthians 4:11–13 “To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.”
- 2 Timothy 2:3 “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

8. Truth-Filled.

- Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

9. Truth-Speaking.

- Ephesians 6:17 “and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”
- Ephesians 4:15 “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way...into Christ”

10. Gospel- Sharing.

- Zechariah 9:11 “As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.”

11. Silent Patience When Threatened, Slandered, & Abused.

- 1 Peter 2:21–23 “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”

12. Bold Confrontation against Threats, Words, Lies, and Actions.

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ”

13. Slow to Speak. Slow to Get Angry. Quick to Listen.

- James 1:19–20 “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
- 2 Timothy 2:24–25 “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness”

14. Humility. Meekness. Contentment.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 “he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

15. Count Your Suffering to be Joy. There is Purpose in your Pain.

- Matthew 5:10-11 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ‘Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.’”

16. Sometimes We Flee.

- 1 Timothy 6:11 “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”
- 2 Timothy 2:22 “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 “Flee from sexual immorality.”
- Acts 9:25 “his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall”

17. Sometimes We Stand Firm.

- Hebrews 10:39 “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”
- Ephesians 6:13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

18. Set an Example.

- 2 Timothy 3:10-13 “You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, [11] my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”
- Philippians 3:17–20 “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. [20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (ESV)

19. Seek and Trust the Lord.

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

20. Follow Jesus.

- 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. [11] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”
- Proverbs 16:7 “When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

21. Rejoice.

- Hebrews 10:32–34 “But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, [33] sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. [34] For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”

22. Forgive and Be Merciful

- Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”
- Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”
- Proverbs 24:17–18 “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the LORD see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.”

23. Pursue Peace and Trust the Lord for Justice and Vengeance.

- Romans 12:17-19 “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
- Romans 12:19–21 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ [20] To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

24. Don't Join Them in their Evil.

- 1 Peter 2:23 “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”
- Proverbs 1:10 “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.”

25. Seek Your Strength and Protection in God.

- Ephesians 6:11 “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

26. Don't Worry.

- Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life"
- Luke 12:25-26 "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?"

27. Don't Envy.

- Proverbs 23:17 "Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day."
- Proverbs 3:31-33 "Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, [32] for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence. [33] The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous."

28. Don't Fear.

- Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
- Philippians 1:28 "and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God."

29. Listen and Obey.

- Joshua 1:7-8 "Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. [8] This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 "Take every thought captive to obey Christ"

28. Grow.

- Philippians 1:6 "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."
- Romans 5:3-5 "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."
- James 1:2-4 "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

30. Reorient Your Mind.

- Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
- Philippians 3:13-14 "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

31. Pursue Holiness

- Ephesians 4:27 “and give no opportunity to the devil.”
- 1 Peter 1:14–16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”
- 1 Peter 3:16–17 “having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.”

32. Stay Confident in God’s Eternal Justice and Judgment

- Revelation 20:10 “the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”
- Revelation 12:11: “They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

33. Always Be Ready

- 1 Peter 5:8–10 “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. [10] And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

1 Timothy 1:18–19 “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith”(ESV)