

How to Recognize and Deal with An Enemy

Can a flesh and blood individual truly be your enemy? If you look at the war we're fighting, as well as other countries who have been fighting for centuries, you might think so. When you consider the number of people who get in your way for no other reason than to cause you grief; if they're not your enemy, they sure do a really good imitation of one. Even Paul said in 2Corinthians 12:7 NLT "... *I have received wonderful revelations from God. But to keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud.*" The apostle was troubled with what felt like a thorn in his flesh. The subject of exactly what this "thorn in my flesh" was has been one of much speculation amongst Biblical scholars. Some say that it was a great sickness, trouble, or temptation. Others say that it was false apostles who were manipulative and sought him out only for their own selfish agendas. I'm of the opinion that the latter more closely fits within the context of Paul's writings. People just got on his nerves because they were not honorable and Godly, but arrogant and evil.

I'm sure you know a few folks who fit the description of arrogant and evil, and you may even consider them to be your enemy, but there is something that you should always bear in mind. When you declare within yourself that you will be completely sold out for Jesus Christ; when you get fully persuaded that what God said He will do for you, He absolutely, beyond any shadow of doubt, will do it; then you have got to deal with the reality that anyone can potentially become your enemy.

Ephesians 6:12 NLT

12 For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12 is about preparedness. It's telling us, rather forthrightly I might add, that our real enemy isn't another human being, but one of infinitely more cunning and craftiness. This verse suggests to us that the person who we believe is our enemy is

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nowhere near as diabolical and deadly as the devil. You see, a human being can only visually ascertain whether or not you are wearing protective gear or have a weapon of some kind, but the devil is not so much concerned with that. The methodology he uses most is that of attacking you from the inside out. The first thing he is going to do is to mess with your mind, so that he can get you to doubt God.

Can he read your mind? Absolutely not!!! This is a huge misconception. The devil does not have the power to read your thoughts, if he did, you would be bound on every hand. If he could read our thoughts, then he would never have tempted Jesus Christ, because he would have known that it would be useless. He would have known that Jesus was committed to stand strong for our Heavenly Father and that he would not bow nor budge.

He cannot read your thoughts, but he can certainly read your actions. *"How does he do that?"* you might ask. Well that's a really good question, but before I answer it, you need to understand something with crystal clarity. Many people say *"God used me to do this...or God used me to do that..."* I know what they mean; they mean to say that the power of God was at work within them. This is a far better description than to suggest that God uses people, because to say that He will use us suggests that God will usurp our free-will, and we know that He would never do that. God doesn't use anybody. Only the devil uses people. He takes over their minds because they allow him to, and then he uses them to become a stumbling block in the lives of born-again believers.

Ephesians 6:11 NLT

11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.

How does the devil read your actions? Well one of the ways he does it is through your so-called enemy. He uses your enemy to gauge whether or not your spiritual armor is in tack, loose, or missing. If he can get you to react to what is being thrown your way rather than to resist it, then he knows your weakness. And that weakness gives him just the entrance he needs to continue to run you in the ground. So listen, don't stand for this...stand for Christ!

The only power and authority that the devil recognizes is that of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:21 NKJV says that his name is *"far above all principality and power and*

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might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." This is the stuff that we're working with if we are born again. The Apostle Paul said in verse 19 of this same chapter, that he prays that we could begin to understand the incredible greatness of Jesus' power, because his power is OUR power, the same mighty power as faith.

Jesus Christ has taught us how to make our enemies our footstools. This doesn't mean that they are beneath us or that they will be made to be submissive or subservient towards us. That can certainly happen, but we ought not to want that. Those you call your enemies are slaves to a tormenting master; they are being used, and when the devil finishes using them against you, he will chew them up and spit them out. As difficult as it can be, you must have compassion on those that come against you. Your heart must be to see them saved and filled with the glorious light of Christ.

Understand that if any human being is getting the better of you, whether it's the other woman, the other man, the co-worker, family member, or former friend, they are only pricking you in the side because some part of your armor is missing; your sore spot is exposed. Go in search of that missing piece and purpose to put it on with the love of Christ. You are more than a conqueror. Your victory has been etched in stone, so don't act as if it hasn't. Deal with the enemy by demonstrating the strength of God's love through the example of Christ, that's the only way to kick him to the curb.

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