

Lord, Bless My Enemies

Prayers that Heal

By Niko Peele

What a unique time in history! In the midst of a global pandemic, we also have seen a high rise in economic struggle, political unrest, and racial tension. Many are drawn into the hostility of cultural arguments, counting those who disagree with them (and their causes) as enemies.

We see this especially in today's "cancel culture." Many have zero tolerance for anyone who tweets, posts, speaks, or does something they deem as offensive. This is the kind of attitude and response the world encourages a generation to embrace—a hatred for our enemies.

Love Grown Cold

If we examine the fruit and outcome of these behaviors, we realize the root cause of the deep division and polarization in our culture isn't from just simple disagreement. It is the fruit of hatred rooted in the increase of sin and wickedness. Jesus spoke of this day:

"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24:12–13).

We've all had run-ins with people whose "love has grown cold." Or perhaps we are the ones with the cold hearts toward others.

Let's look at two types of enemies. The first is the kind who intentionally attacks others. They are people or groups who openly desire to hurt and harm, whether in word or deed.

The second kind of enemy can sometimes be more camouflaged and even justified by our own personal biases. This is the enemy we create and attack through an attitude in our hearts toward them, either knowingly or unknowingly. In this case, many times the person or people don't even know they have offended us or, quite frankly, that we even exist. Other times we cancel them out in our interactions, avoid them, or simply close off our hearts to them.

Let's look at Matthew 24 again. In the same verse where Jesus describes the increase of sin and the decline of love in a generation, He also speaks of a remnant that will stand firm and endure to the end. This remnant is the Church, His Bride—you and me!

In the context of a lawless society where it is so easy to make enemies, Jesus prophesies there will be those who outshine the hatred and wickedness. This can only happen when we are filled with the truth and light of His love while being grounded and established in His Word.

Be Countercultural!

In Matthew 5, we hear Jesus yet again calling us higher. Line by line He presents a radical message to the world, laying out the core values of the Kingdom of God. In verse 44 He says:

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (NKJV).

Jesus makes the antidote for dealing with our enemies so clear in this passage: Love them, bless them, do good to them, and pray for them.

I know, I know, so much easier said than done, right? While this is completely the opposite of what our culture teaches us, it is a foundational principle that is key to standing firm as the remnant.

Herein lies one of the beauties of Jesus' leadership: When we are not fully capable of doing what He has called us to do, His grace enables us. This means that His strength is activated to overcome our inability to do what is difficult. Jesus can infuse us with grace to love because He has already overcome the spirit of the world.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Lord declares this truth to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." And Paul concludes: "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." Praise God for His enabling power!

The value system of the Kingdom of God is revolutionary, countercultural, and will always prove to be the higher way. There is such rich blessing and deep freedom that comes when we walk in the way of Jesus. We become enemy-less as He grants us, through His grace, an unoffendable heart—one that looks more like His!

"Son, Pray Longer"

Prayer is the most powerful place to start in blessing our enemy because it is also the most powerful weapon we have. It disarms our hearts from offense. It shatters any hatred in our thoughts. It shifts our perspective away from ourselves and into a higher reality where we begin to gain God's heart and vision for others. Prayer is the most beautiful place, a piece of heaven on earth, where we can experience real breakthrough as we align with God's will for our enemy.

God set my own heart free of having an enemy through my time in prayer with Him. A few years ago I struggled with an offense in my heart toward a brother. Every time I saw him, I felt it. It was a terrible feeling that I knew was not of God.

I tried to ignore it and just go about life, but during my times of prayer his name would come up. The Lord invited me to pray for him. Well, I'd pray for about two seconds and then

move on. When I did, I felt the Lord say, "Son, pray longer."

The longer I prayed, the more God began to reveal His heart to me for this person. My heart and emotions began slowly to shift. I continued to pray for this "enemy" of my heart.

Soon enough, all the terrible things I felt toward him were outnumbered by all the incredible truths God spoke to me about him. Before I knew it, God had eradicated the offense in my heart. It was completely gone, and my relationship with this brother began to flourish in a new way!

I understand this was a situation where this person had done nothing to me. Sometimes we think it's easier to pray for someone who did not intentionally hurt us versus someone who purposefully attacked us in some way. It may seem so, but truly the principles are the same for a person who spitefully hurts another. Jesus prayed for His enemies while they were crucifying Him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Even when an injustice is done toward us, when we choose to pray God's heart for people, our emotions begin to change toward them. We were not born to live in the bondage of keeping enemies. We were not born to live in hatred and wickedness. We were born to walk in the ways of Jesus. The way of grace and mercy brings deep healing and rich freedom.

We were born to be countercultural, Kingdom ambassadors who bless those who do us wrong while keeping no record of their wrongs.

Prayers that Bless and Heal

Here are three practical ways you can pray blessings over your enemy:

- 1. Be Transparent Before God.** The first step to breakthrough in prayer is being honest with God. He is

not afraid of our true thoughts and feelings toward a person. He wants us to bring our feelings to Him and not hide behind them. Prayer is the place of divine exchange. God is able to replace any wrong thought and emotion with truth.

2. **Ask God for His Help.** Through our transparency and honesty, we can easily identify the specific areas that we need God's help. From this posture, ask for God's help to love and bless your enemy. God's grace is ready to fill and empower us in this area.
3. **Pray God's Word Over Them.** God's Word is truth. It is His thoughts and desires toward others and us. When His Word is spoken over others, it releases blessings! When we pray His will over our enemies we begin to see and relate to them differently. Resist the temptation to pray "fix-them" prayers. If you are offended with people, your "fix-them" prayers will most likely come from an impure place.

Today, I release you to bless your enemies with the Word of God, in Jesus' name.

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