

Would you agree that by definition, “the enemy” is “the bad guy?” The word comes from Latin “inimicus” which means “not friend.” I remember some time ago, I got in the car with my younger son and the stereo came on. I had been listening to some history podcast on the origins of World War I. I shut it off, but my son asked if we could listen to it. So, we started learning about some fairly obscure details of the Balkan wars and how Montenegro attacked the Ottoman Empire... blah blah blah. Actually, I don’t really remember those details, but I do remember my son, maybe 10 years old at the time, asking me, “who were the bad guys, the Ottomans or the Balkans?” Hmm. That’s a good question, right? It is an easy question if you are an Ottoman, or a Balkan. In Exodus 17, the Israelites are confronted with their first national enemy – Amalek and his army. The Amalekites were “not-friends.” Before that, in Genesis 14 is a story of a war between some kings, and like my son, I could have asked, “who are the bad guys, Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer, and Tidal, or the opposing group of kings, Bera, Birsha, Shinab, Shemeber, and the king of Bela?” From our perspective it may not have mattered at all, except for when Chedorlaomer and his nasty cronies won the battle and took Abram’s nephew, Lot, captive... Oops, **they messed with the wrong guy and became enemies** of God’s chosen. This is not a position anyone would want to be in.

*The mountains saw You and quaked; The downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, It lifted high its hands. Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, at the radiance of Your gleaming spear. In indignation You marched through the earth; **In anger You trampled the nations. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For the salvation of Your anointed.** You struck the head of the house of the evil to lay him open from thigh to neck. Selah. (Habakkuk 3:10-13)*

Reading through the old testament, one may get the impression that God has a violent job to do – to displace and destroy the evil populations that have inhabited the land He was giving to His chosen. Compare this with the stories of God’s actions in the new testament where there was relatively little violence. The new testament stories **speak more loudly and directly of gentleness and forgiveness** than they do killing and purging the land of evil. Jesus gave us an example to follow - that is one of love.

A futile wish I have is that the world leaders would recognize this and stop considering others their enemy. But, doesn’t it start with us? Paul tells us that people are not our enemies in Eph 6. Yes, we’ll get to that... Right now let’s consider another enemy that you really need to keep in mind as you walk.

*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be **a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** (James 4:4)*

Please, read that whole chapter 4 of James. It is awesome! I believe that James, and much of the Bible, uses the phrase “the world” to refer to the entirety of the ungodly, societal system that we live in. Here in 1 John, we read another hint at my reference above to Eph 6... Yes, we’ll get to that.

*We know that we are of God, and that **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.** (1 John 5:19)*

Friendship with the world is brushing right up against friendship with the evil one. Looking through the filter of the Word of God, we need to discern what good decisions are as we walk through this world. I guess **we are living in enemy territory** and need to be careful to choose life!

*For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:6-8)*

Does this passage identify yet another enemy? Yes, our flesh is indeed an enemy that needs to be crucified. That word "hostile" is the same Latin root I mentioned, "inimicus," that means "not friend." Galatians 5:9-21 gives us a list of deeds of the flesh: *immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these*. But, I think our flesh, the enemy, shows up in other ways as well. We battle fear, insecurity, guilt, worry, doubt, etc. These things and others are topics of **conversations we have with ourselves that can be harmful** and distracting, drawing us away from God.

All these enemies we have identified here have a common source. Strife between people and nations, the societal system we live in, our internal conversations and struggles, all come from that craftiest beast of the field introduced to us in Genesis 3:1. The real enemy is that evil one, the adversary.

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against **the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places**. (Ephesians 6:12)*

Our ability to thwart this enemy is given to us through the following 6 verses. The next 5 verses (Eph 6:13-17) are spelling out the armor of God. But let us always remember that all important 6th verse:

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, (Ephesians 6:18)

I've heard so often that **our only offensive implement in the armor is the Sword**, which is the Word of God, but that is not true at all. Our prayers are also a formidable weapon against the enemy! And we are not instructed to pray for ourselves, but to pray for each other. Remember, God does not want any to perish, but that ALL come to repentance. (2Pet3:9) We are an undefeatable force when we are together. God is our front line and our rear guard (Isa52:12) and wherever two or more are gathered in His name, He is there (Mat18:20.) **We need each other.**

"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 mistreat you. ... for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36)

Pray for each other, keep your focus on God, be strong and courageous, and put on your armor daily!

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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