

## Enemies: The Necessary Evil or Just Drama Queens?

### Why Do We Have Enemies?

Ever wonder why some people just seem determined to make your life miserable? Maybe you borrowed their stapler and never gave it back, or maybe they just don't like the way you chew your food. Either way, enemies exist, and even King David had one—King Saul, who was obsessed with hunting David down like a reality TV villain.

Saint Augustine reminds us, "*The evil man is his own enemy; the righteous man is his own friend.*" So sometimes, the problem isn't really about "having enemies" but people being their own worst enemies! Some folks (like Saul) create their own drama and then invite you to be the main character in it.

### Who Is the Real Enemy?

The real enemy isn't your grumpy neighbor who complains about your lawn, or your coworker who takes the last donut—it's sin. **Evil loves to make people think that other people are the problem**, when in reality, the spiritual battle is much deeper. St. Paul says, "*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world*" (Eph 6:12).

The devil, much like that one person who starts arguments at family gatherings, loves stirring up trouble. St. John Chrysostom warns that our real battle isn't against each other but against the temptations that pull us into hatred and division.

### How to Love Our Enemies (Without Losing Our Minds)

Jesus says in **Luke 6:27**, "*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.*" Easier said than done, right? Loving your enemy is like hugging a porcupine—painful and counterintuitive. But let's break it down:

- 1. Pray for Them** – It's hard to stay mad at someone when you're praying for their well-being. Try it. Next time your rival at work takes credit for your idea, say, "*Lord, bless them... and maybe teach them about honesty too.*"
- 2. Do Good to Them** – Not just *pretend* to be nice, but actually do something kind. St. Ambrose said, "*You vanquish an enemy when you make him your friend.*" Imagine that! Kill them with kindness (metaphorically, of course).
- 3. Don't Seek Revenge** – David had a golden opportunity to take out Saul, but instead, he showed mercy. In psychological terms, this is called "emotional regulation"—or as we know it, *not losing your cool*. Revenge feels good for about 10 seconds, but then it turns you into the villain.

### What Happens If I Don't Love My Enemies?

If you refuse to forgive and love your enemies, a few things might happen:

- 1. You'll Become Like Them** – Holding onto hate makes you the very thing you dislike. St. Jerome said, "*He who is his own enemy is not another's friend.*" If you keep fighting fire with fire, you'll both just end up crispy.

2. **It Will Eat You Alive** – Science backs this up: resentment increases stress, blood pressure, and overall misery. Meanwhile, forgiveness has been linked to lower anxiety and better health. So basically, love your enemies... for your own sanity!
3. **You'll Miss Out on God's Mercy** – Jesus makes it clear: "*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*" If we hold grudges, we close the door to the grace God wants to pour into our lives.

### **Final Thoughts: Be Like David, Not Like Saul**

David had every reason to strike back, but he chose the high road. Jesus calls us to do the same. So, the next time someone cuts you off in traffic or sends you an all-caps email, channel your inner David and let it go. Or better yet, pray for them—and if they keep being a problem, at least you know you'll live longer by not stressing over it.

As St. Augustine put it: "*Resentment is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.*"

So, love your enemies—it's cheaper than therapy, better for your soul, and guaranteed to confuse them.