

# PRAYERS

## TO PRAY WHEN

### LOVING IS TOUGH

**S**ome of us know that we have enemies. Others of us may not think that we have any enemies, but consider the person who cut you off in traffic, the family member who insulted you, or the fellow believer who gossiped about you. In that moment, don't you feel a little bit as if those people were your enemies? And just think—there may be people who consider you to be their enemy!

While our first inclination might be anger toward our enemies, we need to pray for them—but we can only do that after God changes our hearts, not theirs. Use these Scripture prayers so that you can love your enemies and pray for those who curse you (Mt. 5:44).

**BLESSINGS:** Heavenly Father, pour out Your blessings on the people who insult, persecute, and falsely say all kinds of evil against us. Saturate them with Your goodness and kindness, merciful God, and cause Your face to shine upon them. (Mt. 5:11; Ps. 67:1)

**LOVING OUR ENEMIES:** Lord, You've told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, even as You found it in Your heart to love us when we were Your enemies. Show us how to love those who are against us, do good to them, and pray for them, even when they wrong us. May we be as merciful and compassionate as You are, God. (Lev. 19:18; Ro. 5:6,10; Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:36)

**FORGIVENESS:** Father, forgive us for our part in causing or contributing to conflicts that lead to others becoming our enemies. Grant us Your grace, God, to honestly evaluate ourselves so we clearly see our own sins. Cleanse us from all our offenses against You. Righteous Lord, help our enemies to forgive us for any wrongs we have committed against them. (Jer. 17:9; Ps. 51:1-4)

BY RIETTE WOODS

**MERCY:** We confess, Father, that we often judge or condemn our enemies even when we know we shouldn't. Remind us to first remove the plank from our own eyes before we attempt to remove the speck from their eyes. Instill in us, Lord, the desire to turn instead the other cheek, go the second mile, and do to others what we would like them to do to us. (Lk. 6:37,42; Mt. 5:39,41; Lk. 6:31)

**CONDUCT AND SPEECH:** Lord Jesus, You were despised and rejected, oppressed and afflicted, yet You did not open Your mouth. Help us to follow Your example. Give us Your strength and love to get rid of all bitterness, rage, and every form of malice. May we not say anything unwholesome, Lord, but instead help us to encourage and build up those around us. (Isa. 53:3,7; 1 Jn. 2:6; Eph. 4:29,31)

**THOUGHTS:** O God, help us not to dwell on the pain caused by other people. Sanctify our minds, Father, and enable us to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. May we meditate only on what is true, right, just, pure, lovely, and admirable. (2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8)

**ENDURANCE:** Lord, we rejoice when we face trouble because of those who are against us. Remind us that such suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope. Help us to be patient in affliction and not to repay evil for evil. (Ro. 5:3-4, 12:17)

**GOD'S CHARACTER:** Send forth Your mercy and truth, Holy Lord, and show both us and our enemies Your perfect ways. Convict us of our sinfulness and reveal Your truth to us about what is right and wrong. Lead us to repentance by the riches of Your goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. (Ro. 2:14-15)

**WISDOM:** Glorious Father, give our enemies the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that they may know You better. Give both them and us wisdom like Solomon's and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Remind us that wisdom gives us patience and that it's to our glory to overlook offenses. (Eph. 1:17; 1 K. 4:29; Prov. 19:11)

**GOD'S LOVE:** Thank You, God, that You don't show favoritism to any person. Thank You that You love all people everywhere so much that You gave Your only Son to give us eternal life. Unless You draw them to Yourself, O Lord, our enemies cannot come close to You. Pour out Your compassion, goodness, and loving-kindness on them. (Ro. 2:11; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 6:44; Ps. 86:15)

**RECONCILIATION:** Thank You, God, that You bless all peacemakers. Grant us a spirit of tranquility and calmness when dealing with our enemies, because Your Word says those who sow peace raise a harvest of righteousness. Give us the courage to take the first step, when possible, toward reconciling the broken relationship and settling matters quickly. (Mt. 5:9; Jas. 3:18; Ro. 12:18; Mt. 5:24-25)

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