

Unleashing the Power of Prayer to Overcome Evil

By Kim Butts

How do we pray appropriately and powerfully in the midst of the circumstances in which we currently find ourselves as a nation? First, let's make some careful distinctions. The ultimate antagonist is not a person—he is Satan. “For our struggle is not against flesh and, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12). His heart can not be changed by prayer, because his outcome has already been determined (Revelation 20:7-10).

There are people whose hearts are evil, and who have set themselves up as our enemies. In doing so, they do the work of Satan, and they must be opposed. “And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:2-3). They are determined to do harm; however, their hearts can still be changed. Even the most evil person is not outside of the loving reach of Almighty God when we pray. So, how do we reconcile these seemingly opposing forces? We pray that God will soften and change the hearts of those who desire to do evil. We also pray that they will come face to face with the Living God, and that He will bring good out of everything meant for evil. The acts of evil must be stopped—and sometimes that means that evil men, as well as godly ones, will be casualties of war. But the power of Christ can reach into any circumstance—even the most desperate ones and bring glory to Himself!

God has much to say about loving our enemies. He is clear that we are to hate evil, but not those who carry out evil. He also tells us that we are not to be afraid, because He will take care of us. So, knowing all of this, how do we pray effectively for protection for ourselves and our families? And, how do we lovingly pray for those who mean us harm? Here are some suggestions:

HOW TO PRAY SO THAT EVIL WILL BE OVERCOME WITH GOOD

1. Pray for the Lord to receive honor and glory—not man: “And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand” (Genesis 14:20). “Rather, worship the LORD your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies” (2 Kings 17:39). “I do not trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame” (Psalm 44:6-7). “With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies” (Psalm 108:13).
2. Pray that you will be very careful how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Pray that you will not be foolish, but that you will understand what the Lord’s will is. (Ephesians 5:15-17)
3. Pray that the Lord will protect you from evil as you honor him with your life: “If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone” (Psalm 91:9-12). See also Psalm 121:5-8, Psalm 31:15.
4. Pray for deliverance from fear. “. . . today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way

to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory” (Deut. 20:3-4).

5. Pray for the faith to trust God wholeheartedly. “. . . in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me” (Psalm 25:2).
6. Pray for enemies. “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:44-45).
7. Pray for the wisdom to recognize that our times are in His hands and not our own. “But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me” (Psalm 31:14-15).
8. Pray that you will have compassion in your heart for those who have set themselves up as our enemies: “When a man’s ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him. If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink” (Proverbs 16:7, 25:21). “But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36).
9. Pray that you will not be overcome by evil, but that you will overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).
10. Pray that you and your family will be self-controlled and alert, but not afraid: “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings” (1 Peter 5:8-9). “So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children” (Genesis

50:21). “‘Don’t be afraid,’ the prophet answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them’” (2 Kings 6:16).

May your prayers be powerful as you seek His face “for such a time as this” (Esther 1:14).

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