

Three Enemies

Read [Matthew 6:9-13](#)

DIGGING DEEPER....

Let's dig a little deeper now and see what some other Bible passages have to say about being delivered through prayer. We'll look at what the Scriptures say, then consider how it applies to our personal lives.

Three Enemies (from [Galatians 5:16-17](#), [19-21](#); [James 4:4](#); [1 Peter 5:8](#))

Galatians 5:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

James 4:4 (NASB)

⁴ 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.

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The third enemy that brings conflict into our life is the devil:

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

It is a mistake to put too much emphasis on the devil. He is only a fallen angel, served by other fallen angels, now called demons. He is nowhere near as powerful as God. He is not even as powerful as the least powerful holy angel. When he was evicted from heaven for rebelling against God, he lost all of his real power. It is a mistake to put too much emphasis on him.

It is also a mistake to be unaware of him. Two of the most devastating days in American history were the **Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941**, launching us into World War II, and the **terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001**. Both of these attacks were the result of our nation being unaware of an enemy. Likewise, it is unwise for the Christian to be unaware our enemy Satan.

What do you think is the main way Satan attacks us and brings conflict into our life? When people think of Satan, the prince of evil, bringing spiritual warfare against them, they may imagine some special spiritual weapon or power he has to bring against them—like something out of a Hollywood movie. But in truth his greatest weapon can be as quiet as a whisper. The main way Satan attacks us is with a simple lie.

This is the weapon he brought against Adam and Eve in the first temptation. God had told them they would die if they ate the forbidden fruit ([Genesis 2:17](#)), but Satan said to them, **“The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”** ([Genesis 3:4-5 \(NASB\)](#)). He simply lied to them. They would in fact die as a result of eating the forbidden fruit, and they would *not* become like God—quite the opposite.

The lie is the weapon Satan uses to attack us. If we believe his lies, we fall for his temptations, and he gains power over our lives.

In **1996**, a 38-year-old security guard at a Pennsylvania middle school convinced 14-year-old Tanya Kach to run away and live with him. To keep her with him, he convinced her that no one cared she was gone, and that her parents weren't looking for her. “You're stupid,” he told her. “You're immature. Nobody cares about you but me.” She stayed with him for 10 years, not knowing any better.

Eventually, Tanya was allowed to take short trips away from the house while the man was at work. She became friends with the owner of local Deli Mart, who learned her real identity, and alerted the police. Tanya was rescued and reunited with her family.

Tanya learned that she had been lied to all those years. In fact, her father had been desperately searching for her all along. He had posted her picture on thousands of flyers and milk cartons. He said, “It was exactly 10 years, one month, and 11 days, and there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't think of her. I just say thank you, there is a God, and he brought my little girl back home.” The man had controlled Tanya through a lie.

Satan works the same way against us. Using our own misguided thoughts, the words of other people, messages from our culture, and various other means, he tells us a lie: **“God doesn't love you.” “Doing those drugs won't hurt you.” “You can't be forgiven.” “Go ahead, you won't get caught.” “God doesn't answer your prayers.”**

If we believe his lies, we fall for his temptations, and he gains power over us. That is why Jesus said, *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* ([John 8:32](#)).

Can you think of any lies you’ve been tempted to believe?

Our three enemies bring conflict into our life—**the flesh through our natural weaknesses, the world through the pressure to conform, and the devil through his lies**. Because of this conflict, we often find ourselves in situations from which we need to be delivered. That is why it is good to know that God has promised to *“deliver us”* if we ask.

[Matthew 6:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]”

He will even deliver us when the trouble we find ourselves in is of our own making—if we’re in trouble because we’ve allowed ourselves to be defeated by one of our enemies. A friend of mine related the following story to me about someone he knew and was very close to him:

“A friend of mine several years after becoming a Christian developed a substance abuse problem. He was cocaine/marijuana dependent. His addiction had grown so terrible that his wife left him. Finally, desperate for help, he checked himself into a rehab center in Atlanta, Georgia.

An initial urinalysis collected upon check-in showed extreme levels of THC in his system. Cocaine will stay in a person’s system for only a few days, but marijuana for over a month.

That night he fell to his knees on the cold tile of a hospital room and called on God to change his life. It seemed to him that an incredible light was present in that dark little hospital room, though when he opened his eyes the room was still dark. It seemed that he spent only a few minutes in prayer, but he realized later it must have been over half an hour.

God heard him. My friend’s life was changed that night. His marriage was restored and he eventually went into youth work, then seminary, and finally the mission field.

But here’s the amazing thing. The very next morning, according to standard protocol, another urinalysis was taken at the rehab center. A few hours later, they asked him for another urinalysis, then another, and finally one more—all in the span of 10 hours. The reason? The tests showed no traces of the drugs that had been in his system the night before! They had never had a client go from extreme positive in THC levels to extreme negative the next morning. In fact, this was impossible. They figured there must be some mistake. Later in outpatient care he was even accused of faking the initial test, though all admitted they could see no reason why he would, or even how he could.

What happened? God heard my friend's heart cry for a new life. God heard his sincere prayer for change. And he instantly delivered him that night, even to the point of immediately and miraculously clearing the THC out of his system.

Of course, it doesn't always happen like that. Sometimes a person prays just as sincere a prayer and still has to struggle step by step toward freedom. But in this case Almighty God chose to deliver my friend immediately (though, he points out, it has taken his prayer life and walk with the Lord to continue to stay clean)."

God will "*deliver us*" even when the trouble we are in is of our own making, even when we've allowed one of our enemies to defeat us. That is not to say that we can presume on his mercy, and expect him to continue to deliver us if we continue to rebel against him. God does expect us to get our lives straightened out.