

5 Ways to Pray for Those Who Persecute You

“I have no right to **gossip** or slander you all in any way. And I refute and deny any claims that I have. I have purposely kept silent and will not curse you in any way with my words.”

Jane got an email from Gary with those claims the day after a mutual friend called her with a mouthful of gossip, slander and curses Gary spewed about her. In other words, Gary sent the out-of-the-blue email to “refute and deny” **gossiping** and slandering Jane less than 24 hours after the corrupt communication came out of his mouth. Gary was trying to cover his sin. But it was too late. And Jane’s associate wasn’t the only one who came back to her with a mouthful of Gary’s **persecuting** words.

See, when someone is **gossiping** about you, slandering you or otherwise cursing you behind your back, the devil will do everything he can to make sure those words get back to your ears. Much of the time, the gossip, slander and curses just make your accuser look like a fool. Mature, discerning Christians recognize evil speech for what it is, refuse to give an ear to it—and wouldn’t think of spreading it. But the enemy often finds less mature messengers through which to deliver his **fiery darts**.

When you find out someone is speaking gossip, slander or Christian curses over you or your family, you have two choices: You can react in the same wicked spirit as your persecutor, or you can resist the temptation to act like the **accuser of the brethren** and respond like your Father in heaven instead. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;

for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:44-45).

So, what does this look like in action? How do we love our enemies and bless those who curse us and do good to those who hate us, practically speaking? How do we **pray** for those who purposefully, knowingly use and abuse us? How do we act like sons and daughters of our Father in heaven? Here are five ways:

1. Pray that God would forgive them. Although it’s vital that you **forgive** your persecutors, we walk the way **Jesus** walked when we **pray** for God to forgive our enemies. Both Jesus and Stephen, while they were being persecuted by enemies of the **gospel**, prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60). If you want to be more Christlike, pray like Christ prayed when He was **persecuted**.

2. Pray for God to give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus. Obviously, your persecutors need a greater **revelation** of Jesus, because the more we truly know Christ, the less we’ll allow the devil to influence our thoughts, words and deeds. **Pray** “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to [them] the spirit of wisdom and **revelation** in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of [their] understanding being enlightened; that [they] may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power” (Eph. 1:17-19).

3. Pray for God to root them and ground them in love. We know that love is kind (1 Cor. 13:4) but whoever slanders is a fool (Prov. 10:18). The **Bible** doesn’t have anything good to say about fools, but God still loves them—and if they were rooted and grounded in the love of God, they would not gossip, slander or persecute people. **Pray** that they, “being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the

saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that [they] may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:17-19).

4. Pray for God’s love to abound in them. You can’t walk out the Beatitudes without abounding in love. Pray that your persecutor’s love “may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that [they] may approve the things that are excellent, that [they] may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:9-11).

5. Pray for God to show them His will. Once your persecutor is rooted and grounded in love and understands God’s will, they will be more likely to **repent**. Pray that they “may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that [they] may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9-10).

Beyond that, intercede as the **Holy Spirit** leads you until you feel a release in your spirit. And remember, Paul admonishes us to “bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Rom. 12:14). At its root, to bless means to speak well of, and to curse means to speak ill of. So don’t respond to your persecutors by running all over town telling people what they did to you. If you do, you’ll be guilty of gossip, slander and cursing your enemy. Move in the opposite spirit. If you respond God’s way, you’ll be blessed.

As for your enemy, well, he’s likely to be blessed with some conviction from the **Holy Spirit**, and your **prayers** pave the way for you both to grow in the character of Christ as you guard your heart from bitterness. Amen.

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