

“Recognize People Trying to Hurt You”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Nov., 2, 2024.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled “Recognize People Trying to Hurt You.” This presentation was a follow-up to a presentation that I gave on Saturday, Oct. 26, titled “Post-Feast Reminders.” (That previous presentation had seven points, and this Wednesday-night presentation expanded upon only the fourth concept.)

The Bible is full of comforting words about trusting in the Father and the Son for comfort and deliverance. The Bible is filled with valuable instruction about how to deal with adversity.

One of those great concepts is found in Philippians 4:8 (about dwelling upon the noble, the just, the pure, the lovely, the good report, the virtuous and the praiseworthy).

However, I strongly believe that a mature and confident disciple should also recognize people who are trying to hurt them. Let’s notice a few of the scriptures to support that realistic approach.

Real enemy

It is important to understand who the real enemy is.

■ Genesis 3:15—When the Lord God pronounced a consequence upon the serpent for his role in deceiving Adam and Eve, He announced the conflict that would exist between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent—including the temporary success that the serpent would enjoy.

■ Ephesians 6:12—When the apostle Paul taught that disciples do not wrestle against flesh and blood, he listed the opposition.

We wrestle against principalities.

We wrestle against powers.

We wrestle against rulers of darkness.

We wrestle against spiritual hosts of wickedness.

No revenge

When you recognize that someone is trying to hurt you, it is important to avoid seeking revenge.

- Romans 12:17—"Repay no one evil for evil."
- Romans 12:18—"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."
- Romans 12:19—"Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath."

Old Testament examples

Following are only a few examples from the Old Testament about recognizing people who are trying to hurt you.

His mother reacted to the danger

- Exodus 1:22—Pharaoh gave a decree to kill Hebrews' sons.
- Exodus 2:2—Moses' mother hid him for three months.
- Exodus 2:3—When she could no longer hide him, she put him into an ark and placed it into the river.

Rahab reacted to the danger

- Joshua 2:1—Joshua sent two men to secretly spy out the land, "especially Jericho."
- Joshua 2:2-3—The king of Jericho heard about the spies arriving, and he told Rahab to turn over the spies in her home.
- Joshua 2:4—Instead, she hid them on her roof (verse 6).

Then, she gave four statements. (The last three statements were different ways of providing the same misdirection.)

- "I did not know where they were from." (They were sent by Joshua.)
- "When the gate was being shut (when it was dark), the men went out." (She hid them on the roof.)
- "Where they went, I don't know." (She hid them on the roof.)
- "Pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." (She hid them on the roof.)

Men of Israel reacted to the danger

- 1 Samuel 13:6—When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid (in caves, thickets, rocks, holes and pits).

David reacted to the danger

It is true that David reacted bravely and aggressively to a dangerous situation with Goliath (in 1 Samuel 17). But notice his approach in other situations.

- 1 Samuel 19:2—Jonathan told David: “My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore, please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place and hide.”
- 1 Samuel 24:2-3—Saul took 3,000 chosen men to find David and his men—who were hiding in a cave.

New Testament examples

Following are only a few examples from the New Testament about recognizing people who are trying to hurt you.

James and Peter faced danger

- Acts 12:2—Herod killed James.
- Acts 12:3—Herod seized Peter.

Paul faced danger

- Acts 9:23-25—When the Jews plotted to kill Paul, the disciples lowered him over a wall in a basket.
- Acts 17:5-9—When a mob of people was looking for Paul, the mob harassed Jason.
- 2 Corinthians 11:13-15—False apostles were deceitful workers.
- 2 Corinthians 11:20—The people had to deal with five bad behaviors from the leaders.
They allowed alleged leaders to take them into bondage.
They allowed alleged leaders to devour them.
They allowed alleged leaders to steal from them.
They allowed alleged leaders to exalt themselves over them.
They allowed alleged leaders to hit them.
- 2 Timothy 4:14-15—“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord reward him according to his works.”

Son of God reacted to danger

- Matthew 16:21—The Son of God told His disciples that He was about to suffer many things from the elders, chief priest and scribes—before they would kill Him.
- John 8:59—When the people took up stones to throw at the Son of God, He hid.
- John 10:39-40—When the people sought to seize the Son of God, He escaped to the area beyond the Jordan River.

- John 11:53-54—When the religious leaders plotted to kill Him, He would no longer walk openly among the Jews.
- John 12:36—The Son of God departed and hid from the crowd.
- John 16:2—The Son of God warned His disciples that they would be put out of the synagogue and be killed.
- John 17:14—In a prayer to His Father, the Son of God acknowledged that His disciples would be treated as He was treated.
- John 19:11—The Son of God told His persecutors that they had no power against Him unless it was given from above.