

# Be on Guard: *Christians Will Have ENEMIES*

*How to deal with those who oppose you and your faith 2 Timothy 4:14-15 Chris Mueller 3-24-2019*

## Introduction:

**Romans 12:18** *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

**1 Peter 4:8** *Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*

**Matthew 5:11** *Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

**John 15:18** *If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.*

**Philippians 1:28** *in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

**Luke 6:27** *I say to you ..., love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.*

**2 Timothy 4:14** *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.*

## #1 When opponents \_\_\_\_\_ you, respond with \_\_\_\_\_, not revenge

**2 Timothy 4:14** *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.*

**Calvin** No class of enemies is more dangerous than this.

**Acts 19:33**

**1 Timothy 1:20**

**2 Timothy 1:16** chains

**2 Timothy 4:16** first defense

**John Phillips** Alexander likely opposed Paul in Rome at the time of Paul's first appearance in court. Perhaps he mobilized Jewish public opinion against Paul and Christianity and in support of Nero. The Jewish community in Rome, though powerful in its own right, might have been glad to have the spotlight removed from them and focused on the Christians. In Acts 18:2, we know the Jews had tasted Roman anti-Semitism and were always nervous about it.

Nero was well acquainted with the Jewish community because he had married a Jewess; during their more *compatible* moments, Nero might well have listened to her Jewish views. Perhaps Nero welcomed and encouraged Jewish Alexander. His sneers and slanders might have been a *balm to Nero's guilty soul* during his crusade against the Christians. Nero might have been nervous about confronting Paul and might have wanted Alexander's help in the trial. Paul was no pushover, even for a Roman Caesar.

**Leviticus 19:18** *You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord. Deuteronomy 32:35* *Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them. Romans 12:19* *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

**Psalm 62:12** And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, For You recompense a man according to his work. **Romans 2:5b-6** The righteous Judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds. **2 Corinthians 11:15** It is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

## #2 When opponents vigorously \_\_\_\_\_ your beliefs, respond with guarded \_\_\_\_\_, not naivety

**2 Timothy 4:15** Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching

**2 Peter 3:17** You...be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness.

**Zwingli** The Christian life, then, is a battle, so sharp and full of danger that effort can nowhere be relaxed without loss.

**1 Peter 5:9** But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

**John Calvin** A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent.

### Take Home:

**1<sup>st</sup>** If you don't have opposition, then something is \_\_\_\_\_ with your walk with Christ

**Matthew 5:11** Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

**2<sup>nd</sup>** When opponents \_\_\_\_\_ you, respond with trust in Christ

**Proverbs 3:5** Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

**Luke 14:11** Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

**3<sup>rd</sup>** As opponents oppose your \_\_\_\_\_, respond with truth and grace

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh...full of grace and truth.

**4<sup>th</sup>** Everyone is \_\_\_\_\_ for what they say and what they do

**Matthew 12:36** But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.

**Revelation 21:8** But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

### QUESTIONS FOR GROWTH IN CHRIST

1. Why do non-Christians and pseudo believers attack born again Christians and make enemies with them?
2. Why is it that many believers do not experience an opposition to their faith?
3. Why is it so wrong to seek revenge? And what kind of horrible consequences occur when believers seek revenge?
4. List all the reasons you can come up with as to why Alexander the Coppersmith wanted to cause Paul harm.
5. How can Christians deal with opposition naively, and what does it mean to deal with opposition wisely?
6. What kind of steps should you take in order to be more opposed by the world but not be foolish?
7. How should your life change (and our church change) as a result of this passage?