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# Romans 14

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“...the Lord is able to  
make him stand.”



# 1. Everyone has enemies

The human condition produces enemies. Everyone encounters people that we feel threaten us in some way whom we want to act against.



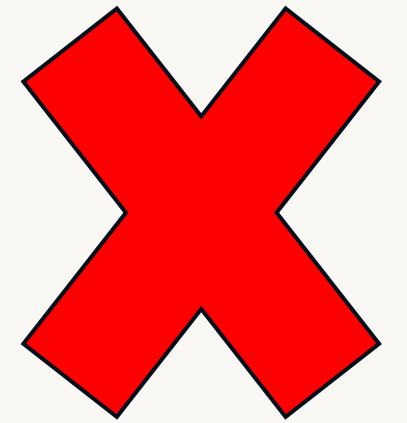
## Definition: Enemy

An entity that threatens you.



# Kinds of Enemies

There are many types of threats...



**Physical-** military, terrorism, gangs, abusers, bullies...

**Economic-** boss, competitor, government...

**Government-** tyranny, favoritism, corrupt, incompetent...

**Moral-** profligate, anti-social, immoral, degenerating...

**Religious-** legalistic, authoritarian, factionalist, evil...

**Social-** climbers, back stabbers, gossips, busybodies...

**Ideological-** dangerous, visceral, unjust, destabilizing...

Neither denial nor naivety are helpful.

Recognize they are enemies.

Admit you feel (& are) threatened.

The frog had just enough time to gasp, "Why"  
Replies the scorpion, "It's in my nature."



The story of The Frog and the Scorpion is both profoundly true and a morally dangerous tale. How would you affirm its truth and critique it's implications with the Mind of Christ?

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## 2. Love your enemies

This is one of THE distinctives of  
the people of Christ.




## Matthew 5:44-48

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be **sons of your Father** who is 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. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

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Christians are supposed to do better than the World and then not boast about it. We are not supposed to boast that we are better, and then not do it. Saying “we’re not better” and then not being better isn’t faith or virtue.









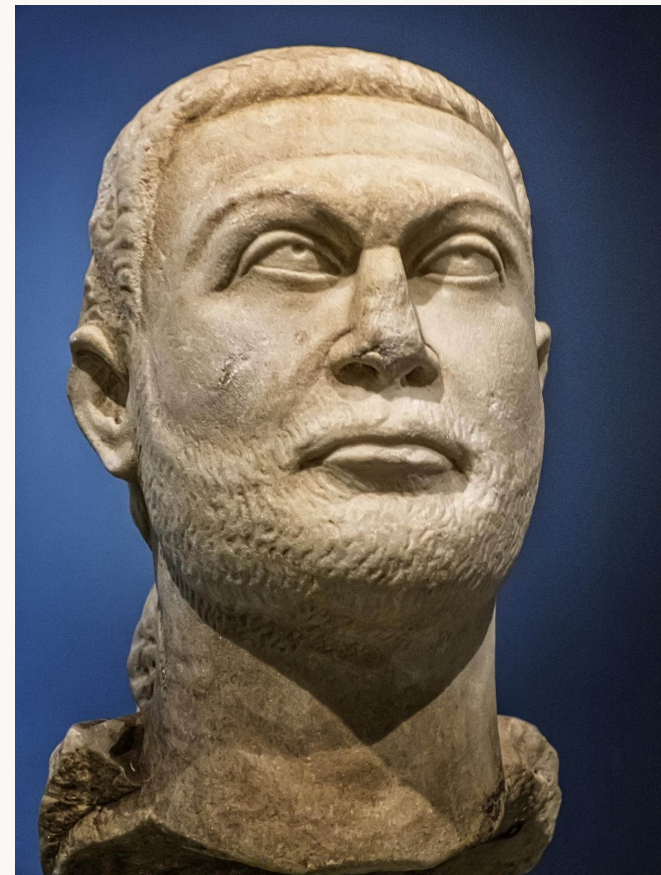
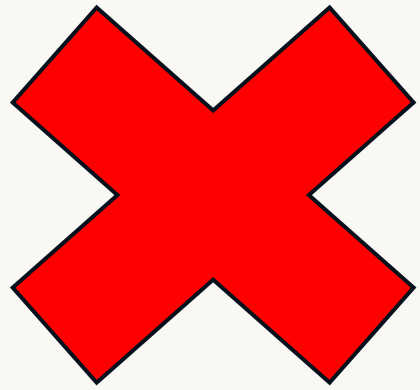
## Romans 12:17-21

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

<sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**



# Haters of Humanity vs. Stabilizers of Humanity



Christians are meant to be the glue of civilization (stabilizing) even as they are the activists for justice and peace (reforming) through the Gospel's combination of grace and truth in Christ's suffering and promise.

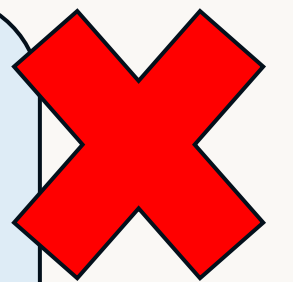
## Exodus 23:4-5

<sup>4</sup> "If you come across **your enemy's** ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him.

<sup>5</sup> If you see the donkey of **someone who hates you** fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it.

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Peace and justice start with the demonstration that you care about another's rights and wellbeing, especially when they hate you or are your enemy.



# Dealing with our Enemies

## Fearful Reaction or Evil Agency

1. Fear and Pride
2. Trust in World, Flesh, Devils: Mammon
3. Pursuits: 7 deadly sins
4. Results:  
Suffering  
Division  
Hardening  
Anxiety  
Injustice and violence

## Faithful Agency

1. Trust in Humility
2. Trust in God's will, mind of Christ, and the Spirit
3. Pursuits: Virtues
4. Results:  
Suffering  
Peace  
Solidarity  
Justice



# Loving Your Enemies: The Basics

1. Believe in your own need in forgiveness and reconciliation (Matt 20)
2. See mistreatment for righteousness as worship and honor (Matt 5:11-13)
3. Get on board with the Kingdom mission of reconciliation
4. Help your enemies in ways that defend them (Exodus 23:1-6)
5. Give charitably to your enemy (Romans 12:20)
6. Make symbolic Sacrifices: 2 Miles, coats and cheeks (Matt 5:39-45)
7. Prefer losing justice to divisive conflict (1 Cor 6:4-8)
8. Make whatever sacrifice to heal blood breaches (2 Samuel 3)
9. Submit to the good faith political need of the others (Acts 21:17-30)
10. Do not repay evil for evil, or take revenge. (Rom 12:17, 19)
11. Do everything you can do to make peace (Rom 12: 18)
12. Be meek and a peacemaker (Matt 5:5,10-11)



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Loving your enemies is the substance of salvation.  
It is not additional or optional.



# 3. Love your ideological enemies

From the “bigotry of small differences” to a “clash of civilizations”, our ideological enemies are a people to be loved.





# Ideology

Pejorative definition

A set of beliefs that unify a party over against others as its unifying and distinctive characteristics, and that justify its judgments and remedies.

Your ideology is the argument for your faction.  
Allegiance determines your enemies.



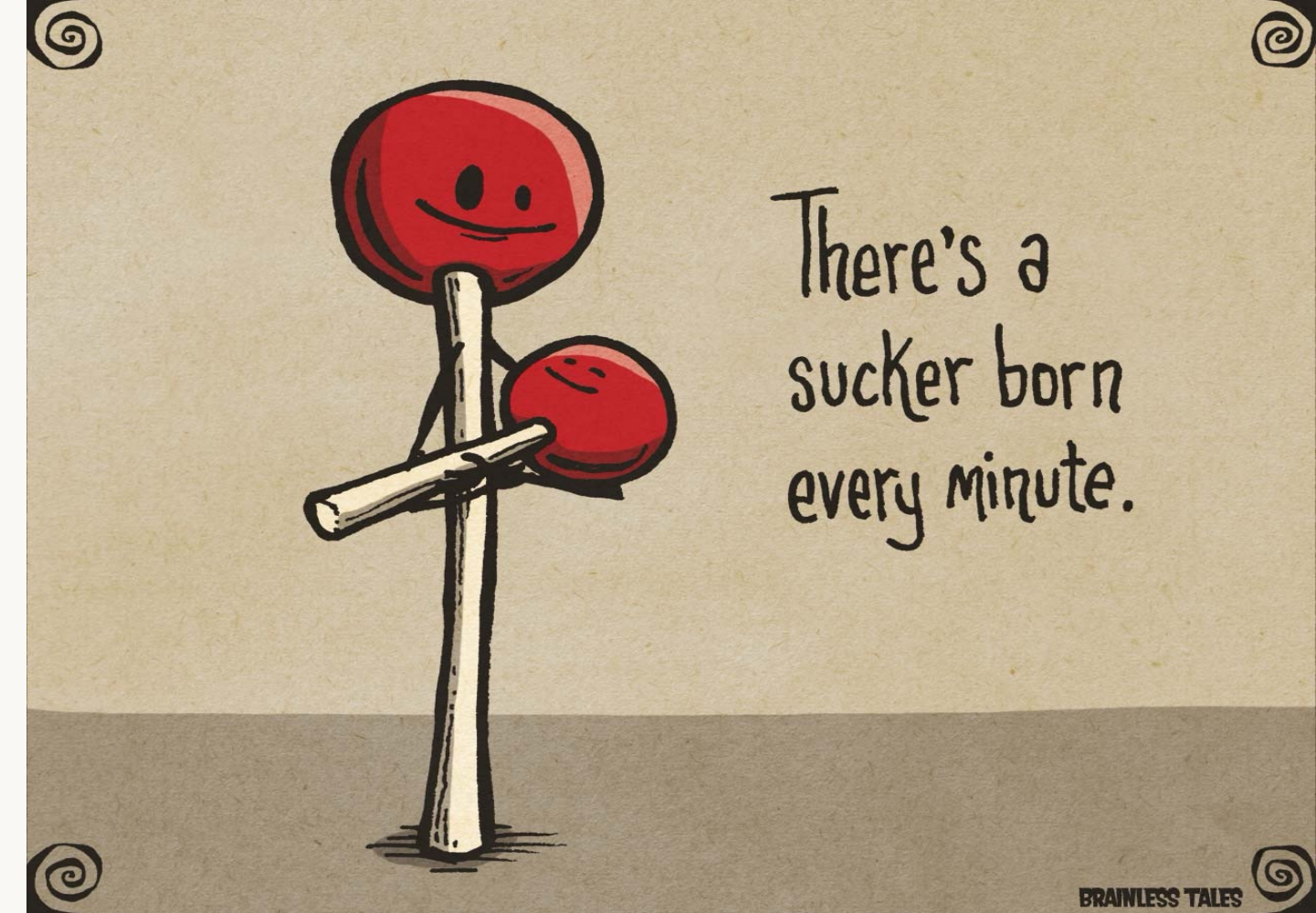


Our ideology is never as good a steed in social battle as we think it is. No matter how armored we are in our will to ride it.

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How do we practically remedy this blindness?





## 4. Tribal creatures are suckers for factional ideology

Ideology is increasingly the unifying idol of faction and favoritism, and the justification for its injustices (sins).

# Vulnerability wants a tribe

Who can I count on? Who is like me? Who is on my side?

Vulnerability + Sociability

Norms/culture

Sorting + Distinction

Division + Separation

Caricature + Self-justification

Injustice + Covert Oppression

Violence: Overt Oppression & Retaliation

Resentment + Bitterness

Generational + Categorical Hatred

Only Mythology and Ideology can make a tribe that is larger than a clan.

# Vulnerability wants a tribe

Who can I count on? Who is like me? Who is on my side?

Vulnerability + Sociability

Need

Norms/culture

Order

Sorting + Distinction

Flesh

Division + Separation

Caricature + Self-justification

Sin

Injustice + Covert Oppression

Violence: Overt Oppression & Retaliation

Resentment + Bitterness

Generational + Categorical Hatred

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# Vulnerability wants a tribe

Who can I count on? Who is like me? Who is on my side?

Vulnerability + Sociability

Norms/culture

Sorting + Distinction

Division + Separation

Caricature + Self-justification

Injustice + Covert Oppression

Violence: Overt Oppression & Retaliation

Resentment + Bitterness

Generational + Categorical Hatred

## Tribalism

# Vulnerability wants a tribe

Who can I count on? Who is like me? Who is on my side?

Vulnerability + Sociability

Norms/culture

Sorting + Distinction



## Tribalist

## Tribalism

Division + Separation

Caricature + Self-justification

Injustice + Covert Oppression

Violence: Overt Oppression & Retaliation

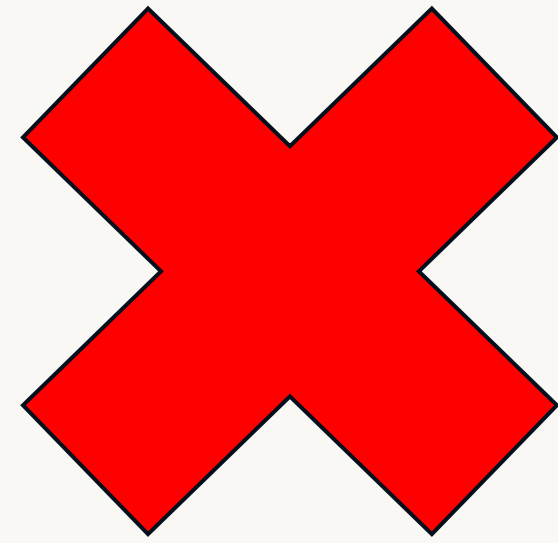
Resentment + Bitterness

Generational + Categorical Hatred



**5. Jesus makes one people out of many tribes.**

If your tribe matters more than Jesus, then Jesus isn't your master.





# How Jesus kills tribalism among tribalist creatures:

(Romans 11-15 is all about making unity and solidarity in human division: 11. Jews and Gentiles, 12. as living sacrifices 13. in society and government 14. in maturity gaps and disputes 15. in strength differences and sacrifice)



# Unity disciplines against tribal impulses

Romans 14

1. No superiority or legalism - They are not your servant (vs. 1-4). They stand even if wrong.
  2. Be committed and devoted in your convictions- seek truth and to please God.
  3. Believe in individual judgment x2 (vs 10-12).
  4. Respect conscience even over correctness (vs 14-15).
  5. Distinguish “disputable matters” from vital ones.
  6. Help your brother's faith over keeping your rights.
  7. Keep your opinions (hot takes) to yourself.
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# No superiority or legalism



Vs. 3-4 “The man who eats everything **must not look down on him** who does not, and the man who does not eat everything **must not condemn the man** who does, for God has accepted him.

<sup>4</sup> Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”



# Be committed and devoted in your convictions

14:5-6 <sup>5</sup> One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.



# Believe in individual judgment x2

14:10-12 <sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." <sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.



Respect conscience even over  
correctness



Peace







# Distinguish “disputable matters” from vital ones.



14:16-19 <sup>16</sup> Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. <sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, <sup>18</sup> because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. <sup>19</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.





# Help your brother's faith over keeping your rights.



14:13-16 <sup>13</sup> Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, **make up your mind not to put any stumbling-block or obstacle in your brother's way.** <sup>14</sup> As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. <sup>15</sup> If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup> Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.





# Keep your opinions (hot takes) to yourself

14:21-23 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. 22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.



# 6. Jesus Loved his Enemies

Romans 5:5-11

...hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, **Christ died for the ungodly.** 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: **While we were still sinners,** Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were **God's enemies,** we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.





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