

Love Your Enemies - cont.

What kind of effect might this have on your enemy? Who knows? It just might lead a soldier to look up to the cross of Christ and proclaim, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39). Jesus loved His enemies, and some of them eventually confessed Him to be the Son of God and they became Christians. What kind of people were among the first to become Christians by obedience to the Lord through baptism and then were added to the Church? The very enemies of Christ who were accused of crucifying Him (Acts 2:36-37).

The Lord taught earlier in the same sermon to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Our love of our enemies is not to only make friends, but to make them friends of Jesus Christ by blessing them, doing good to them, and praying for them.

- Chris Kramer -

Sentence Sermons

- Your work is a commentary on your character.
- A clear conscience, like your favorite pillow, will help you sleep well.
- Be "conservative" in your thinking and "liberal" in your giving.
- Be lowly, but not lying.
- Be meek, but not weak.
- Be considerate, but not compromising.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Guest Article: Love Your Enemies

In Matthew 5:43-44 the Lord said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 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."

What? How am I supposed to love someone who hates me? How am I supposed to feel love toward a person who has treated me badly and did something wrong to me?

We commonly define "love" as an emotional feeling. Therefore, people will struggle with their feelings when trying to figure out how to show love. Not to say that we cannot have a heart of emotion, but in this context it's not about emotional love. It's about action. Jesus was very specific and did not leave anything to the imagination when He said to bless them, (to speak well of, or to, without cursing), do good unto them, and pray for them. It's that simple. Do for your enemy the same that you would do for anyone. Don't ask

yourself how you should feel, but tell yourself what you must do. That's how to love.

Just think of how you show love to someone you care for, and especially to someone whose soul you are concerned about. How do you treat them? You bless, do good, and pray for them. Just do the same for your enemies and perhaps they will no longer be your enemy. Consider Proverbs 15:1, "A soft word turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Rather than reacting to someone who has wronged you with words of strife, a prayer and a blessing goes a long way.

In our society, too many people seek revenge. They want to curse rather than encourage. Even the world sees what Christians are supposed to be...kind, understanding, and forgiving. If our enemies cannot see that in us, then how are they going to see it in our Lord? They may never give Jesus a chance.

What result could love have on our enemies? The actions of a Christian will distinguish a follower of Christ from the rest of the world. Would your enemy

expect you to feed him or quench his thirst? Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21 in Romans 12:20 when He says, "Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.'" This could very well cause shame and humility in the one who has wronged you, and in their realization, they just might make a change.

In the previous verses of Matthew 5, Jesus gives His disciples some surprising applications before the command to love their enemies. For instance, verse 41 says, "and whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two." Just imagine yourself as a Jew living under Roman rule in the first century. If a Roman soldier were to compel you to carry something for him, you were required to go up to a mile. More than likely, you aren't trying to impress this soldier and you would probably consider him your enemy. And he feels the same way about you. Now, just imagine you fulfill the compelled duty of a mile, yet you continue to go another mile for him.