

# Lesson 3: Love your Enemies

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**Reference:** **Please Read:** Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:32-36

**Theme:** Unlike the World, God Expects More from Us because of God's Grace

**Context:** The Love Law of the New Covenant vs the Law of Moses and Outward Conformity

## Introduction:

Human nature says, "If you're nice to me, I'll be nice to you, if you're mean to me, then I'll be mean to you." It's a tit for tat kind of thing. So along these same lines, it's human nature to love your friends and to hate your enemies.

- **Please Read: Matthew 5:38-42**
- The concept of the punishment fits the crime comes from the Mosaic Law- Lev. 24:17-21
- From a justice standpoint this rule of law makes sense for the Old Covenant people
- Since they did not have the Spirit of God within them to lead them by the Law of love
- However this stipulation breeds the propensity to seek revenge and bear grudges
- So God also instituted another provision to help offset that sinful human tendency

**Leviticus 19:18**, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

- The Law of the New Covenant in John 13:34 extends the above directive
- By God's grace, we are love children of a love God- it's our nature to love as God does
- The potential is there, but we still need to abide in the vine and grow the spiritual fruit

**Question:** "So does turning the other cheek mean that we become a door mat for people to grind their feet into, exploit and take advantage of?"

I don't believe the Bible teach a brand of passivity that does not defend oneself, family and property from others? If our nation was called to war would we go and fight?

- Before Jesus went to Calvary, He told His disciples to purchase two swords- Lk. 22:35-38
- What Jesus is saying is don't retaliate, seek revenge, be vindictive or mean spirited
- Unless of course we willingly submit ourselves to martyrdom- Hebrews 11:35
- If we are wronged or cheated by another believer- should be settled by the church
  - o Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 7:8-13

## The God Kind of Love

- In the world, there is a certain justification to hate one's enemies and wish them ill will
- Natural human love can quickly turn to hatred/bitterness if it doesn't get its way- selfish
- "Enemies" can appear as both other Christians and Non-Christian alike
- Scripture is clear, we must always and without exception walk in love towards them
  - o Romans 13:8, 1 Corinthians 13; Philipians 1:27; 2 John 6
- There are basically three kinds of love in the Greek mentioned in the Bible:
  - o *eros*- known as "erotic love" or strong feelings of romantic love between a couple
  - o *phileo*- a friendship kind of love between the same or different genders
  - o *agapao*- The God kind of love, the supernatural nature of God- unconditional love

### Our Response of Love verse an Ugly Reaction

**1 Peter 2:21-23**, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

- I believe the above Scripture is what it means to "Turn the other Cheek"
- When people are ugly to us and we return the same, it only justifies their ugliness
  - o Don't return the same nastiness back, don't lower yourself to their level

**Proverbs 26:4-5**, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes."

- When offense come, we have a choice to respond or react – fight or flight
- Whatever we are full of is what's going to come out when put on the spot- Luke 6:43-45
  - o If we are full of the Word and the Holy Spirit- our automatic response is love
  - o As love is a choice, so is becoming offended
  - o **Please Read: Romans 12:9-21**
  - o **Question:** "When we get offended, what's behind it or fueling it in our lives?"

One of Satan's top strategies is to rob us of our joy and peace by trapping us into becoming offended. What initially begins as anger, if not properly dealt with, will digress into a grudge, resentment, unforgiveness and finally bitterness. Hebrews 12:15, "*See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*"

What every Christian needs to realize is that they always have a choice in becoming offended or not- we are not victims, they did not make us offended, we accepted it. We do not need to take Satan's "offense bait." That's why walking in love always makes us victorious, untouchable, shields us from hurt and offenses- leaves Satan with little to work with.

## Pray for those who persecute you

- If we understand that persecution comes with the territory we won't be surprised
  - o Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:20; 2 Timothy 3:12
- As a result, our attitude is to count it all joy according to James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 4:12-19

**1 Corinthians 4:12-13**, "When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly."

- **Question:** "What benefits are there to praying for your enemies as Jesus instructs us?"
- Praying for your enemy actually heals the hurt and offense- releases the bad feelings
- It also paves the way for their salvation and deliverance from the enemy
- Ephesians 6:10- 18 We wrestle not against flesh and blood- people are not our problem
- We should bind the enemy whose behind them, energizing them against us
- Actually I pity anyone who persecutes us and gives us trouble
- Herod who murdered James and put Peter in jail died a horribly- Acts 12; 1 Cor.3:17
- Saul who became Paul was warned by the Lord to repent or else...

**Acts 26:14 AMP**, "Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute Me [to harass and trouble and molest Me]? It is dangerous and turns out badly for you to keep kicking against the goads [to keep offering vain and perilous resistance]."

- The Power of forgiveness- releases God's blessing and intervention
  - o That's what Jesus did on the cross- Luke 23:34
  - o Stephen also forgave them as he was being stoned- Acts 7:59-58
- Let's not forget what happens when we fail to forgive people in Mark 11:25
- When things get tough, remember Jesus understands, He suffered persecution too

**John 16:33**, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

### Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect

When we read Matthew 5:48, we can misunderstand what Jesus meant by the word "Perfect" and despair due to the fact that in our personal lifestyles, none of us is perfect. However, with a little closer analysis of the Greek concerning the word "perfect" it's speaking of maturity. Greek: *telios*- to be complete or completeness as it pertains to growth and maturity; mental and moral character.

**Matthew 5:48 AMP**, "You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect. [Lev 19:2,18.]