

1 **Love Your Enemies**

Matthew 5:33-35

2 **Matthew 5:33-35 (LEB / ESV)**

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor' and 'Hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, because he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust."

3 **Matthew 5:33-35 (KJV)**

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

4 **Whose Enemies?**

- Proverbs 16:7 -- *When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*
- However, when our ways do not please the Lord, He will often allow enemies to oppress us to draw us back to Himself.
 - God often allowed other nations to attack Israel after they had forgotten Him.
 - Prophets often announced impending judgment.

5 **Elijah & Ahaziah**

- Ahaziah
 - Wicked king of Israel during the divided kingdom stage; helped lead Israel further away from God
 - Sent soldiers to arrest Elijah
- Elijah called fire down from heaven to destroy 102 soldiers.
 - Thus Elijah was a minister of God's judgment to the king and to the nation that had turned from God. (2 Kings 1)

6 **Elisha & the Syrians**

- 2 Kings 6:8-23
- God used Syria to afflict Israel because they had forsaken God.
- But Elisha often prophetically divulged Syria's plans to King Joram of Israel.
- The King of Syria comes to arrest Elisha.
- Elisha asks God to temporarily smite the "great host" of Syria with temporary blindness.

7 **Elisha & the Syrians (2)**

- Elisha takes the blinded host of Syria to King Joram.
- King Joram wants to kill those whom he considers his enemies.
- But Elisha instructs King Joram to feed them a banquet and then send them back to Syria.
- *"...the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."*

8 **PERSONAL ENEMIES**

9 **Romans 12:20-21**

- *But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this, you will heap up coals of fire upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*
- "The best way to destroy your enemy is to make him your friend." – Abraham Lincoln

10 **What our enemies do to us**

1 Four reactions from our enemies

- 2
1. They curse us
 2. They hate us
 3. They slander us
 4. They persecute us

3 Four questions we need to ask

- 4
1. Are we being hypocritical?
 2. Have we cheated them?
 3. Have we embittered them?
 4. Have we offended them or someone they love?
 - 5.

11 **Actions we need to take**

1. Correct the deficiencies in our lives our character; then bless them for pointing out these problems to us.
2. If we have cheated them, privately give them what belongs to them (Prov 21:14).
3. Seek forgiveness of those whom we have wronged; ask God's forgiveness.

12 **1 Corinthians 4:12-13**

- ... *When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.*
- Bless = Verbally bless the other person and give to their benefit
- Endure = Remain faithful to God and others
- Entreat = Patiently win their hearts

13 **Abraham Lincoln**

- When General Robert E. Lee's surrender was announced in Washington, the city exploded in celebration.
- On April 10, 1864, delirious crowds stormed the White House, demanding a speech from the President.
- He told them it was a serious moment and that he had no speech ready for them. But then he added:

14 **Abraham Lincoln (2)**

- "I have always thought "Dixie" one of the best tunes I ever heard. I insisted yesterday that we had fairly captured it. I presented the question to the Attorney General and he gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize. I ask the band to give us a good turn upon it."
- In his 2nd inaugural speech, he had promised, *"with malice toward none; with charity toward*

all."

15 **POLITICAL ENEMIES**

16 **A present focus**

- When Jesus spoke this command, Israel was under Roman rule.
- We all want righteous rulers for a good reason (Proverbs 29:2).
 - *When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.*
- We must vote for righteous men, but also acknowledge that God puts into office those of his choosing (Rom 13:1; Ps 75:6)

17 **Pray for existing authorities**

1 Timothy 2:1-4 -- *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

18 **Benefit others**

- When candidates run for office, the ugly campaigns often leave them embittered toward those who opposed them.
- More important than opposing candidates is finding ways to serve and influence them after they come into office. The power of love can overcome them.
- To "do good unto all" you must serve those in authority over all.

19 **Pressures that authorities face**

- Marital tensions – Campaigns and the demands of office magnify tensions
- Family conflicts – Children often ignored due to demands of job
- Health problems – tensions, schedules, hurts, disappointments can lead to chronic health problems
- Financial pressures – They often operate with great personal debt

20 **RELIGIOUS ENEMIES**

21 **What can you do?**

- This is the hardest group to win, because they are not persuaded by words; they are only persuaded by love in action.
 - When they have a crisis, cry out for them.
 - When they have a need, pray on how you can meet it.
- 2 John 10-11 warns us to not invite them into our home or wish them Godspeed if they are spreading false doctrine.

22 **Not an easy or quick win...**

- You can feed a hummingbird from your hand, but it takes patience to get them to accept you.
- Proverbs 25:15 -- *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone.*

23 **ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

24 **Bless others**

- Greek word *eulogeo* means to speak well of others.
 - Find something good to say about your enemies.
 - Pray for God to bless them AS they follow His principles.
- Develop a reputation for speaking well of others and for praying a blessing over others.

25 **Do good to others**

- People who hate you don't want you to serve them
- But when you do serve them, they find it hard to keep hating you
- Get to know the person; and then pray for their needs
- God will bring other needs into their lives that they cannot handle
- This gives you an opportunity to serve them

26 **Pray for others**

- If others spitefully use us and persecute us, their animosity toward us is an indicator that we need to pray for them.
- Real conflict is spiritual in nature (Ephesians 6:12).
 - Ask God to rebuke the "principalities and powers" in their lives and turn their hearts toward Him.
 - Pray fervently in the name and in the blood of the Lamb.

27 **God pleads with those who oppose Him**

- Jeremiah 7:23-25 -- *But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.' But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day.*

28 **Jesus' example**

- Romans 5:8 – *But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*
- God loved us when we were His enemies.
- 1 John 4:10-11 -- *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*
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