

I Give Up-Enemies

Matthew 5:43-48

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⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

1. Enemy: A person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something. A person who we feel said or did something that offended or hurt us.
 - a. May be someone you don’t know personally or someone in your own household, but for some reason you feel that they are opposing you in some way. (Matthew 10:36)
 - i. Thermostat on 72 or 78, squeeze toothpaste in the middle or from the bottom, ketchup in the fridge or in the cabinet?
2. In this passage, Jesus is telling us how we are to deal with enemies. Most of us know that as followers of Christ, we are to love, but sometimes when we are faced with enemies, we do not respond properly and find ourselves harboring feelings of bitterness, hate and offense even though we know we shouldn’t. There is a part of our flesh that resists us doing the right thing.
3. Sometimes it helps move us into action when we really think about why we should or should do something. Today, God wants to give us 3 reasons why we should give up enemies.
4. We find the first one in 45. To be like our Father. We are created in His Image and we should imitate Him. **Ephesians 5:1-2 says Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.**
5. How does God deal with His enemies? Romans 5:8-10 says, **“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”**.
 - a. He reconciled us to Himself, not with hatred and anger, but with lovingkindness.
 - b. Verse 45 He gives rain and sun on both the evil and the good.
 - c. We should be good both to our neighbors and our enemies.
6. The second reason we should give up enemies is to maintain a Kingdom atmosphere.
 - a. **Atmospheric conditions: Conditions that comprise the state of the atmosphere in terms of temperature, wind, clouds and precipitation.** Certain conditions must be present in order for us to experience certain weather patterns.
 - b. There must be certain conditions in our lives if we want to see God move. **The atmosphere of the Kingdom is found in Romans 14:17. It says, “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”**.
 - c. If you still have enemies, then you have different atmospheric conditions. **James 3:16 says, “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there”**. This is an atmosphere where Satan can move.

7. The third reason we should give up enemies is to leave room for God's vengeance. We think we are "punishing" our enemies when we hold negative feelings in our hearts, but we are actually punishing ourselves.
- a. **Romans 12:17-20** says, **Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 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.**
 - b. Coals of fire is not just of get back at them. Coals of fire represents purification. **In Isaiah 6:6-7 we see this. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."**
 - c. When we are good to our enemies, we leave room for God to deal with them the way He sees fit. Our goodness will open the door for them to repent.
8. So what is God asking us to do? Four things, love, bless, do good and pray for our enemies.