



Sunday, July 16th, 2017 • Matthew 5:43-48

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Love Just the Lovable & Hate Haters? God Expects Better than That

Jesus cannot possibly be serious. Did He ever live down here and try this Himself? Clarifying the heart of God's Law, Jesus tells his disciples in Matt. 5:38-42 they should allow someone a second shot at publically disrespecting them and give the one suing you more than what they ask. Further, we should comply with an oppressor, doing more than required, and loan and give without expecting anything back, much less make interest. As if there were not enough, He goes on tell His disciples to love and pray for our enemies and welcome those I would prefer to reject? What kind of kingdom is this?

"You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." **(Matthew 5:43-48 - CSB)**

"Well, I figured since you told us... that I could..." "But, you said... (insert misquote)" Our Heavenly Father knows what it's like when kids twist your words in a pitiful effort to get away with something. It pains parents when their kids try to hide behind wrong assumptions, presumptions, or just ignoring things you have said. See if you can find in this text where God's people used a wrong, yet "seemingly" logical next step to justify their sin.

What DID God say? Check one:

- "Love your neighbor..." (Yes! Lev.19:9-18; Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:31)
- "hate your enemy." (Nope! Inferred, conjecture used as an excuse)
 - Don't assume you *always* know what God means (Mark 7:1-13; Luke 11:37-41)
 - Don't reshape what God has said (Gen. 3:1; 1 Sam. 15; 1 Tim. 4)
 - Beware assuming "logical" next steps (Matt. 15:1-20; Is. 29:13; Ps. 7:3-5)

What DOES our Heavenly Father Expect:

- Love Our Enemies:** Ex. 23:4, 5; Rom. 12:17-21; Prov. 24:17; 24:29; 25:21
Who is acceptable to hate, even among God's people?
How can you love those who don't love you?
- Pray for Our Persecutors:** "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60)
Call up to heaven on the behalf of those chasing you down
Study: Luke 6:27, 28; Acts 16; Phil. 1; Rom. 12:14; 1 Thess. 5:14-18
What "enemies" do we need to start praying for, loving, greeting?
- Act like HIM!** "...be children of your Father" (cf. Eph. 4:32-5:2)
Love Excessively, like Him! (Rom. 5:1-11; James 2:8; Deut. 22:1-4)
He dispenses common grace on the evil and good (Lk. 6:36). Do you?
He blesses Law keepers and Law breakers (Rom. 5:8-11). Do you?
 - Go beyond safe, self-seeking love.
 - Set standards higher than sinners.
 - Welcome, greet everyone, with wisdom.
 - Be more gracious than the godless.
 - Be Mature, complete in love (Eph. 4:32-5:2; Rom. 12:17-21; Luke 6:36)
- Who do you need to quit hating, but love, pray for, bless, welcome?
- How can you "go and do likewise" (see Luke 10:36, 37; John 13)?
- **BONUS:** Study Romans 5:1-11 & how GOD loved the unlovely (us!).