

Bible Studies

Your enemies



"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' Matthew 5v43
In this passage Jesus mentions the need to love your neighbour. He goes on to comment that it is said love your neighbour and hate enemy.

Is this a quote from the Old Testament?

Read Leviticus 19v18

Is the command to love your neighbour in the context of friends or enemies?

Confronted with this verse from Leviticus, one man asked Jesus, "who is my neighbour" Jesus went on to tell the parable of the good Samaritan.

In the end who did the mans neighbour turn out to be?



Read Matthew 5v43-48

The Bible is very specific about how we treat people we do not like. It is a test of our maturity and the genuine nature of our faith.

What did Jesus say it was easy to do?

Do you get any credit for this?

What Point is Jesus making by comparing us with tax collectors and Pagans?

Perhaps the reason that Jesus approaches the issue in this way is to avoid the embarrassing position of his followers acting no better than sinners. He is pointing out that we have to live by a higher standard and that sometimes this standard requires us to do painful things, like loving our enemies.



According to this passage what should we do to our enemies?

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Which of these do you think is the hardest?

What tends to happen if you pray for someone?

If we follow Jesus instruction it will eventually lead us to reconciliation.

What is the result for us before God when we do this?

This passage says that by doing so we show ourselves to be sons and daughters of God. The reason for this is that we are acting Just as God does. God's Standard here is very high. It is not natural to love your enemy, it requires God's divine help.

In what way does God show love for His enemies?



Read Romans 5v8-10 & Colossians 1v21-22

How did God treat us when we were His enemies?

Who is my enemy?

We need to start get personal and practical.

Who is my enemy? What makes them my enemy?

Spend any time thinking about questions like this and you will realise there are all kinds of enemies. In Matt 5 Jesus described our enemies as those who persecute us. In Luke 6v27 He called them those who hate you, or ill-treat you.

The list of our enemies may include;

Those who are against us because we are Christians.

People who have somehow acted against us.

People we are in competition with.

People we do not like. Someone you hate.

These can be individuals or the can be ethnic groups or nations. Some times the reasons for hostility are very strong at other times they are very weak or even non existent.

How do you make a person your enemy?

If you are mean or unpleasant you will make enemies.

Is it inevitable that we are going to have enemies?

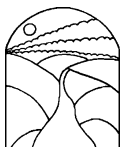
The fact that Jesus tells us how to act towards them assumes that for one reason or

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another we will always have enemies. This is certainly true of those how are against us because of our faith. God, after all, has enemies. Heb 10v27

Our language lets us down. The word enemy given no indication as to where the antagonism rests. Paul come to our rescue

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12v18

We may be other peoples enemies, but we are not to have enemies ourselves.

Paul's verse implies we have a responsibility to our enemies, what is it? When might it not depend on us?

You cannot stop people from being your enemy. But the fault should never rest with us. If we have done wrong we should put things right. We should be the ones who seek reconciliation. Paul acknowledges that this is not always possible, but where it is we should take the initiative.

2 According to Romans 12v14-21 how should we treat our enemies?

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What are we not to do?

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**What will happen to them as a result?
What will God do as a result?**

Paul explains the danger to us if we do not do this. Face with evil, unless we do what is good, the evil swallows us to. We end up bitter and Isolated from God. If we take retaliation we usurp a position that belongs to God.

3 According to Luke 6v32-35 how should we treat our enemies?

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What will the result be?

Is it OK just to avoid someone who irritates you?



Read 1 Corinthians 6v7-8

What does this passage say about the way that we should treat people who have become our enemies?

This is a useful passage because it helps to explain one of Jesus difficult teachings. Paul applies this to believers, Jesus applies it to unbelievers.



Read Matthew 5v38-41, Luke 6v29

(Notice that main passage about loving your enemy follows on from this teaching)

**Does this mean that if someone attacks you, you should not protect yourself?
Does this mean we should not stop someone from stealing from us?**

Some people have taught that this means you must never stand up for yourself, defend yourself or even resist against evil in society. An 'eye of an eye' is all about retaliation, (in OT context it was about Justice), Jesus is telling us that we must not retaliate. We are not the ones to use evil and be overcome by it. Even if it means sacrificing or being unjustly treated we must not respond with evil. Better have two bruised cheeks than become the aggressor or evil doer. Jesus is saying that we should not even harbour resentment. You must respond out of grace not retaliation. Jesus gave us a very clear precedent in the way He suffered injustice and sacrifice.

What is the connection between forgiveness and loving our enemies?



We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:19-21

Are you allowed to hate people?

We are allowed to hate sin. We are allowed to hate what people do, but not to hate people.

We have listed the ways we should treat our enemies from three passages of Scripture.

**What will happen to you and your enemy, if we obey what we have learned?
What should our goal be towards our enemies?**

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Love

Pray

Greet

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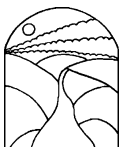
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2 According to Romans 12v14-21 how should we treat our enemies?

Bless, live in harmony, Give food & drink

What are we not to do?

Curse, repay evil, take revenge.



What will happen to them as a result?

What will God do as a result?

Convicted

Justify avenge.

Paul explains the danger to us if we do not do this. Face with evil, unless we do what is good, the evil swallows us to. We end up bitter and isolated from God. If we take retaliation we usurp a position that belongs to God.

3 According to Luke 6v32-35 how should we treat our enemies?

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What will the result be? God will reward you.

Is it OK just to avoid someone who irritates you?



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