

# Love Your Enemies

Skin color, political beliefs, economic status, and national origin are creating enemies around the world. Jesus tells us to love our enemies.

## Introduction

Jesus taught some very controversial ideas during his earthly ministry. Ideas that went against the common practices of the Jews and Gentiles alike. We understand that to be because Jesus came from God the Father to redeem us from sin and get us back onto the path of righteousness God had ordained for us since the beginning of time.

Many of Jesus' teachings were very countercultural and caused people to think and turn to God with their heart instead of their mind. Our motivation for doing something is every bit as important as the action itself, and often even more so. Loving our enemies is no different.

We have an entire discussion series titled *Controversial Statements of Jesus* that you can watch on our website. It is a series of group discussions for a small group with downloadable study and discussion sheets. After this teaching, we encourage you to take a look at that discussion series.

Today we are going to read part of Jesus' teaching in what is referred to as the Sermon on the Mount or the Beatitudes. Let's read Luke 6:31-36.

## Luke 6:31-36

(31) Do to others as you would have them do to you. (32) "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. (33) And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. (34) And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. (35) But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. (36) Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

We are going to discuss this passage of scripture about loving our enemies and how it applies to life today.

## Easy To Love Those Who Love You

It is easy to love the people who love us. This could be family, friends, people with common beliefs or interests, or even neighbors and fellow citizens. These are people that think like we do, laugh at what we laugh at, believe the same as us, and do the same things we do. This is not just Christians, either. Most everyone loves the people that love them.

This is exactly what Jesus is saying in Luke 6:32-34.

## Luke 6:32-34

(32) "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. (33) And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?



Even sinners do that. (34) And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

Loving those who love us, serving those who serve us, and helping those who help us is easy, and just about everyone does. But it is meaningless. What is the motivation? Does it point to Christ? Does it glorify God?

This is how the world sees things. The world repays wrong for wrong. The world looks at someone suffering and says, "They deserve that." The world would have us turn our backs on someone for any reason, especially those we do not agree with. But what does that say about our hearts?

Jesus tells us to love our enemies.

### We Love Our Enemies By

How do we love our enemies? Fortunately for us, Jesus is quick to guide us and lead us. He gives us instructions. He also tells us why and what the reward is. Jesus really is the ultimate leader, but that's another topic for another day.

Jesus tells us how to love our enemies in this very passage. He starts out in verse 31 saying:

Luke 6:31

(31) Do to others as you would have them do to you.

This is often referred to as the golden rule and it is very straightforward. Treat others the way you wish to be treated. Encourage them, trust them, help them, all in the way you would like whether they do or not. As we said earlier, this is easy with the people we like or think like we do or believe as we do. It is much harder to serve someone who does not believe the same things we believe. It can be difficult to give to someone who needs something when someone in our own family or neighborhood needs the same thing. But we must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We must lead with those ministries that Matthew refers to in Matthew 25 and not hold back. We must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, free the captive, give water to the thirsty, and house the homeless regardless of whether they speak our same language, worship God, look the same as us, or even return the favor.

It is imperative that we do not serve or give to others in order to receive something in return. This is in direct opposition to what Jesus is teaching. We are loving our enemies just as much as we love ourselves and those around us.

This is the motivation in our heart that Jesus calls us to have. It is the motivation Jesus had as he walked among us 2000 years ago. This is also the motivation God had when he sent Jesus to save us. Romans 5:8 says:

Romans 5:8

(8) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



Mankind was against God. We had rebelled against him and brought sin into the world. We were separated from Him. However, God loved us so much that he sent Jesus to save us. Mankind was not worshipping Him. We were selfish and looking out for ourselves. This made us enemies of God and destined us to eternity apart from Him in Hell. But God loves us. He loves us so much he sacrificed his one and only son so we could return to Him.

### Our Reward When We Love Our Enemies

Earlier we said we must love others without expectation of a return. We must lend without expectation of being paid back. Our motivation in all we do must be love in our heart, worshipping God, and pointing to Him through Jesus Christ. Nothing more, and nothing less. When our motives are pure, there is a real reward.

Luke 6:35 is the pinnacle of this teaching. It says:

Luke 6:35

**(35) But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.**

When we love our enemies Jesus tells us our reward will be great. It's not love if we serve them so we get a reward. It is love when we serve others because Jesus asked us to, whether we are going to receive something in return or not. But God is so gracious and loves us so much that He does have a reward for us. It is a heavenly reward of eternal life.

Jesus tells us what that reward is in Matthew 19:28-29.

Matthew 19:28-29

**(28) Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.**

The Lord will return all we have given up for His sake 100 times as much. That is our reward. Eternity with Him in paradise. All because we showed love and compassion for others, whether we liked them, agreed with them, had things in common with them, or not.

### Conclusion

Jesus is clear, we are to love everyone and serve them. This is a cornerstone of our faith. Jesus did not turn his back on anyone, nor should we. We are to love and serve. The amazing part is we often get more out of it than the recipient. When we forgive, we are forgiven. When we help lift someone's burden, our burdens are lifted. We are freed from our bitterness when we genuinely love others.

Love your enemies before they love you because Jesus loved you long before you loved Him.

