

Love for Enemies - Matthew 5:43-48

This is a serious matter! If we don't love our enemies, we are no better than an unbeliever. We are NOT God's sons and daughters.

- Example of love for an enemy: the "Good Samaritan" - Luke 10:29-37.

"Love for Neighbor" (which includes one's enemies) is one of the two most basic obligations we have as humans. (The other obligation involves "Love for God.") See: Matthew 22:36-40.

SO... WHAT IS KIND OF LOVE IS THIS?

There are many kinds of "love" - some good, some bad. Which kind is being mentioned in these verses?

NOT: Lust

- Actually, lust is the *opposite* of love; it's *self-gratification*.

NOT: Romantic Love

- In the proper context, this is good and honors God. But the type of love mentioned in these verses applies to *everyone* (including our enemies), not just to a marriage partner.

NOT: Friendship Love

- There are many verses in the New Testament which talk about this kind of love. This love can be good... but it would not necessarily apply to enemies!

YES: Commitment Love

- "I am committed to doing whatever I can to bring about good in the lives of those around me - even for my enemies."
- *This type of love does not depend on the other person responding back with love.*

THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE: JESUS (Romans 5:6-10)

- He loved us even while we were still his *enemies*!
- His expression of love was quite painful for him. He ended-up dying on the cross.
- *But afterwards, there was great joy!*

Hebrews 12:2 - He focused *not* on the pain he had to endure, but on the joy that would follow.

- Note that his willingness to endure the pain results in great joy for us - for us who look to him for salvation!
- What Jesus did is also a source of encouragement: Verse 3+ tells us to look to his example, so we won't become discouraged and give-up.

[Psalm 73 shows us an example of someone who almost did give-up. But then he realized what a horrible loss it would have been - worse than anything else that could ever happen to him.]

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