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“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27-28 NIV)

One of the more challenging commands given by Jesus is to **love your enemies**. Yet when taken to heart and applied properly, loving your enemies can bless and transform your own life and truly make this world a better place.

“Our only hope for loving our enemy is to be a new creation in Christ. And our only hope for being a new creation in Christ is to be reconciled to God through the death of his Son.”

When you rise to the level of love, of its great beauty and power, you seek only to defeat evil systems.

## The 3 Responses That We Should Have Towards Our Enemies

### DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU

If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. (Luke 6:29-32 NIV)

The Bible talks about not loving the world, or the things of the world. We are commanded to come out from among them and be separate. We are called to be salt and light in a sinful world. We are called to speak out boldly calling people to repentance. But all of this must be presented with compassion and concern. Truth must be spoken in love. Like Jesus, we are to people full of grace and truth. **Our culture must know us as truth-tellers, but we must be truth-tellers with tears.**

Why would we even think of helping someone who only wants to cause us harm? Proverbs 25:21-22: “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.” We do destroy our enemies when we make them our friends. It is only by showing love to our enemies, and doing good to those who hate us that we display to them the love of God.

We show love to our enemies because that is what God has done for us when we were His enemies, and that is how we were brought into His family.

### BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18 NIV)

When we bless, a blessing is returned to us. In many, many ways, we reap what we sow. What do you want to inherit, blessing or cursing? That’s what you should speak to others. Words of grace and patience produce more good fruit than words of anger and frustration. There are certainly times when it is right to correct and even rebuke, but we must always do so in love (Ephesians 4:15) and patience (2 Timothy 2:24-26), remembering that, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1).

When we bless those who curse us, we break the cycle of anger and hatred. This was Paul’s counsel to the Roman believers, following Proverbs 25:21-22: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:20-21).

Let’s break ugly, destructive cycle of the flesh and follow in the footsteps of our Master who forgave those who crucified him. It is the path to life and blessing – not just for us, but also for those who oppose us.

### PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREAT YOU

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 NIV)

What are you praying for your enemies — the people who treat you badly? Here is a good place to start — the way you pray for yourself. Would it not be strange if a prayer for our enemy should ask for less important things than we are told to ask for ourselves? Do unto others what you want others to do to you (Matthew 7:12). No. More than that. Do unto others what you *should* want them to do for you. And pray for others the way you *should* want them to pray for you.

I wish the word “should” were not necessary as an expansion of the Golden Rule. But many professing Christians are so worldly that they only pray for natural things rather than spiritual things. That is, they pray for food and health and safety and success and happy relationships. But they don’t pray for more faith, or holiness, or contrition, or purity of heart, or love for Christ, or courage in witness. So it won’t do to say to them, *Pray for others the way you want others to pray for you*. They show by their own prayers that the things they really need they don’t pray for.

The place to start in praying for our enemies is the prayer that the Lord taught us to pray. Pray like these, Lord, grant my enemies that they would treasure you above all, and reverence you, and admire you more than anything. That my enemy would love to do your will the way . That my enemy would have all the physical resources of food and clothing and shelter and education and health-care and transportation that he needs to fulfill your calling on his life. And forgive my enemy his sins, as you have forgiven me also, as you bring him to repentance, and make him a forgiving person, and protect him from overpowering temptations, and from the destructive power of the devil.



- 1.) How was your heart lately? Are you dealing with any anger for an enemy?
- 2.) Describe how it affects your life?
- 3.) What do you think of the 3 steps given above? How will you apply it in your life.