



**WORD**

<sup>43</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." **MATTHEW 5:43-45**

The natural, emotional, and popular response to having an enemy is to hate him or her. However, Jesus commands His disciples to do the opposite. As a reflection that we are God's children, we are to be like God who hates sin and yet cares for everyone, including the wicked. When we are faced with a choice to hate or love our enemies, Jesus commands us to always choose love. In this lesson, we will look at how we can honor God when we respond towards our enemies.

**1 Do good.**

<sup>38</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." **MATTHEW 5:38,39**

When we are wronged, we can retaliate and take matters into our own hands, or we can trust God about what happened and honor Him in how we will respond. How do we overcome evil (Romans 12:21)?

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**2 Bless.**

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **ROMANS 12:14**

When others speak ill of us, we can say worse things about them and curse them, or we can bless them and pray for them. Recall a time when you chose to bless someone instead of curse. What happened?

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**3 Forgive.**

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times." **MATTHEW 18:21,22**

When we are tempted to hold a grudge, we can either become offended and bitter, or we can obey Jesus' command and forgive. Why do you think Jesus wanted us to forgive seventy-seven times? Why should we forgive without keeping track of the other person's sins against us?

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