

What do these people have in common?

- King Herod
- Adolf Hitler
- Jeffrey Dahmer
- Mary Tudor
- Ma Barker
- Lizzy Borden
- Osama Bin Laden
- You
- Me

Love Our Enemies?

It's a command, not a choice.

Jesus' Toughest Command

- *44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven.*

Matt 5: 44-45

- This is **not** an option for Christians.
- If we want to be a true Christian, our thoughts and actions have to be that of God.

Who are our enemies?

- In a broad sense, anyone who turns against us through actions or words.
- Most of our enemies are in our sphere of influence.
 - Family
 - Peers
 - Co-workers
 - Church Members
- *Can you think of someone who you see an enemy?*
- *What have they done to deserve that title?*
- *Do we have any part in what they did?*
- *Do we feel there is hope for the relationship? If so, what can we do to fix things? If not, why is there no hope?*

Jesus Gave Us the Example

- *32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.
33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.
34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23: 32-*



The World vs God

- The world says:
 - *Get even!*
 - *Get angry!*
 - *Don't waste your time loving bad people.*
- God says:
 - *Seek the good of those who harmed you.*
 - *Pray for them.*
 - *Love them anyways.*

When people mistreat us, we can

- hate them with total hatred.
- struggle to hold back anger.
- hold a grudge.
- pray for God to bless them.
- This choice accomplishes nothing.
- This is emotionally exhausting for us.
- We are then a captive of the grudge.
- This opens the door for God to bless us as well.

How Are We to Love Our Enemies?

- These are ways we can try to mend the relationship from our end. God does not want us to have enemies, but to show each other love. This should be our goal as Christians.
- **Greet Them**- ⁴⁷ *“And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?”* Matt 5: 47
- If we avoid our enemies, nothing is going to change. Smile, shake hands and say hello. This is a good first step.

How Are We to Love Our Enemies?

- **Forgive Them**-¹⁴ *“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* Matt 6: 14-15
- We need to forgive others in our hearts, even if they do not ask for it. We also need to talk with them about the situation. They may not even be aware of what they did.
- **Do Good to Them**- ³⁵ *“But love your enemies, **do good to them**, and **lend to them without expecting to get anything back.**”* Luke 6: 35
- By doing good for our enemies, we see them for their humanity and that they are, just as we are, made in the image of God. We should make the first move towards reconciliation.

How Are We to Love Our Enemies?

- **Disarm Them:**²⁸ *bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6: 28*
- We can disarm our enemies by doing the very thing they least expect. One way is to speak nicely of them when no one expects it. *“Don’t give them bulletin board material.”*
- If we talk over and over again of how someone hurt us, we will never find the strength to forgive.

How Are We to Love Our Enemies?

- **Thank God for Them and Ask Him to Bless Them**- When confronted with someone who has mistreated us, we should pray that God's does for them, what we would want him to do for us.
- God places our enemies in our lives for a reason. Our response to them gives us a chance to grow spiritually.
- *Enemies let us know if we really want to be like Christ.*
- Joseph in Genesis 50:20 said the following to his brothers, "*You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.*"

Conclusion

- Jesus' teachings, the example of His life and His death and resurrection show us love is the only way to heaven.
- If we believe in Jesus, we must say to our enemies, "*I love you.*"
- **Jesus had enemies. They killed Him. He loved them anyways.** *Do we want to be like Jesus?*