



NOTE: Our lesson questions are based on the NIV 2011 edition. Our preference is your first time through the questions, you answer without consulting commentaries - delight in what the Holy Spirit will reveal to you.

Lesson 13

Matthew 5:43-48

1. What truth, verse or insight from the study of **Matthew 5:38-42** corrected some wrong thinking and how were you able to put Jesus's teaching into practice?

2. Prepare your heart to receive more difficult teaching on kingdom relationships in the sixth teaching on doing right by others from **Matthew 5:43-48**. Read Jesus' words calling His followers to love their enemies with an unsentimental biblical love that evidences you belong to God. Who would you consider to be among your enemies? How do you feel about this group of people generally? What is your initial reaction to Jesus' command to love your enemies?

3. Jesus makes a statement affirming the authority of the Torah in **V43**. What does He say had been the understanding regarding relationships (**Leviticus 19:18**)?
*Note: It is believed that the phrase "but hate your enemy" would have been how **Leviticus 19:18** was popularly understood. There is no law commanding personal hatred.*

4. a) From **Matthew 5:44**, how does Jesus express this command from a kingdom point of view? In what ways does this go well beyond His prior call to turn the other cheek?

b) Jesus speaks of *agape* love in **V44**, which is rooted in the nature and character of God. The love of God is unmerited and gracious, not some overwhelming sensual force or a sappy sentimental feeling. Find some nuggets of truth to help you characterize *agape* love from the verses that follow:

- **Romans 5:8**
- **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
- **Ephesians 2:4-5**
- **1 John 3:16**

5. Jesus said we are to pray for those who persecute us (**Matthew 5:44**). What would you pray over your persecutors? How might praying for them shift your attitude? Recall how Stephen faced his persecutors in **Acts 7:59-60**.

6. a) According to **Matthew 5:45**, what do the actions taken to love your enemies demonstrate? How does God treat the evil and the unrighteous?

b) Read **Matthew 5:46-47**. How is loving your enemies such a deviation from how people normally behave? Why is loving those who love you not a mark of a redeemed life?

7. Loving your enemies does not include condoning or affirming their sin (**Ephesians 4:22-25**). If an evil or unrighteous act done by an enemy is an obstacle to being willing to love them, trust God to make things right in His time and in His way. What consolation do the following verses provide as you seek to obey God's command to love your enemies?

- **Deuteronomy 32:35**
- **1 Samuel 24:12**
- **2 Thessalonians 1:6**

8. a) What does Jesus say in **Matthew 5:48**? As you wrestle with His statement, what do you think He is really asking of you?
- b) The Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleios*, which has several meanings, including without moral flaws, mature, whole/complete, to fulfill one’s purpose. As you review *teleios* in the following contexts, how do you now understand **V48**?
- **1 Corinthians 14:20**
 - **Ephesians 4:13**
 - **James 1:4**

9. **JESUS SAID: LOVE YOUR ENEMY**

Jesus commands His followers to take action and demonstrate love for our enemies, even though they do not deserve it. Maybe that’s the point. John in his first epistle said, “We love because he first loved us.” **1 John 4:19**. Love for our enemies is an outgrowth and expression of God’s love for us.

Our enemies may live far away, down the street or within our own homes. Pray for a new appreciation of the truth that while you were an enemy of God, Jesus sacrificed His life for you. Settle on one act of love directed to an enemy you can commit to this week, an act of simple obedience out of love for God. Don’t tell anyone about it. Just love them.

MEMORY VERSE: "We love because he first loved us." **1 John 4:19**

NAME

PRAYER REQUEST