

## *How to...Treat your Enemies*

April 5 & 6, 2008

**Jesus said, “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.”**

*Luke chapter 6 verses 27 & 28 (786)*

☺ ☺ Jesus isn't talking about my emotions here! He's talking about my choices!!

### Sweet Revenge??

- Hatred destroys me physically through high blood pressure which leads to heart problems, strokes, breathing problems, the inability to rest & sleep. It also weakens my immune system, making me more prone to sickness & disease
- Hatred destroys me emotionally because hatred leads to depression & guilt, and it makes me an angry person...which no one wants to be around
- Hatred destroys me spiritually because God is love...it's impossible for a hate-filled person to be close to God

### Do good to those who hate you

- Jesus didn't say to get even with those who hate you or to hate them back
- ***If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them water to drink.*** *Proverbs chapter 25 verse 21 (499)*
- ***Don't rejoice when your enemies fall; don't be happy when they stumble.***  
*Proverbs chapter 24 verse 17 (498)*
- Do good...and stop escalating the hatred
- Do good...and diffuse the situation
- Do good...and free yourself from the power of hatred in your life
- Do good...and show that God's working inside of you
- What if looks like to do good...mowing the lawn of a hateful neighbor, filling in for a mean co-worker, choosing to help a spiteful class-mate, being kind to an ex-spouse, providing for a mean parent

### Bless those who curse you

- ***Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.***  
*Proverbs chapter 12 verse 18 (489)*
- “Bless” is to speak well of, to thank
- ***A gentle answer deflects anger....*** *Proverbs chapter 15 verse 1 (491)*
- Blessing those who curse you...complement the person who verbally cuts you down, thank the person for allowing God to grow you through them, complement their family or job or appearance or accomplishments (*to their face & in front of others*)
- ***Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will bless you for it.*** *1 Peter chapter 3 verse 9 (936)*

(over)

### Pray for those who hurt you

- Ever notice how those who mistreat you tend to dominate your thoughts??
- ***Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.***  
*Philippians chapter 4 verse 6 (901)*
- Jesus on the cross - ***"Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."***  
*Luke chapter 23 verse 34 (807)*
- Stephen as he was stoned to death - ***"He fell to his knees, shouting, 'Lord, don't charge them with this sin!' And with that, he died."*** Acts chapter 7 verse 60 (836)
- ***Jesus said, "Whatever is in your heart determines what you say."***  
*Matthew chapter 12 verse 34 (743)*
- ***God does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.***  
*2 Peter chapter 3 verse 9 (939)*

### Praying for those who hurt me...

- Pray that God brings that person to repentance
- Pray that the person becomes a Christ-follower
- Pray that God does a "heart-work" in the person's life and frees them from their destructive ways
- Pray that God allows the person to live the kind of life that brings them blessing

### Why should I do it Jesus' way??

- *This is opposite to what all of us feels - There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.* Proverbs chapter 16 verse 25 (492)
- *It reminds me that life is not about me - "If it's possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine."* Jesus' prayer right before his crucifixion, Matthew chapter 26 verse 39 (757)
- *It shows God that I desire to please him, not myself - It is impossible to please God without faith.* Hebrews chapter 11 verse 6 (926)
- *It allows me to make a difference by partnering with God in reaching the world*  
***I brought glory to You here on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do.***  
*Jesus' prayer shortly before his crucifixion in John chapter 17 verse 4 (825)*

***Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.***

*Luke chapter 6 verse 35 (786)*

### More...

1. How is anger, hatred affecting me? Destroying me?
2. Whom is God asking me to do good to? What will this look like?
3. Whom is God asking me to bless? What will this look like?
4. Whom is God asking me to pray for? What will this look like?
5. How does my situation with my enemies fit into God's big picture? God's plan for my life?
6. What is God teaching me through my enemies? How is He growing me through them?
7. Have I thanked God for my enemies? For what He is doing in me through them?

**Next week:** *How to...Find a Mate*