

A Love I Can't Shake

Love Your Enemies – 3/24 Talk

I'm so excited for this series, and I think it will be so impactful for your groups! Don't feel like you have to go through everything that is written! If your group needs to spend more time on one part, feel free to do that. The goal of this series is to learn from Jesus' teaching on love and to see how He practically lived it out. Make sure you take time at the beginning to welcome any new people or guests and don't assume that everyone knows everyone. Give them a chance to introduce themselves and to share a little about what is happening in their lives.

- Did anything from the talk stand out to you this week?
- Read Matthew 5:43-48
 - How would you define neighbor and enemy from this passage?
 - In this context, neighbor means someone that is similar to you culturally and it benefits you to love them, an enemy is someone who is different than you culturally and it doesn't benefit you to love them
 - What does it look like, practically, to love your neighbor?
 - What does it look like, practically, to hate your enemy?
 - Are these natural responses?
 - Jesus says to love your enemies instead of hating them:
 - Does this look the same as loving your neighbor?
 - Why or why not?
 - Is this a natural thing to do?
 - Why would you love your enemy?
 - Verse 45 says, "so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."
 - Does loving your enemy make you a child of God?
 - No, but it is indicative of being a child of God
 - Only an adopted child of God can love their enemy the way Jesus is telling us to
 - It can only be done through the Holy Spirit in us, changing us
 - The rest of verse 45 speaks of God causing the sun to rise on the "evil and the good," and sending rain on the "just and the unjust."

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- How does God feel about your enemies?
- Should that change the way you feel about them?
- Should that change the way you treat them?
- Who loves people that love them back?
 - The whole world!
 - Does God want Jesus-followers to be different than the world?
 - Verse 47 specifically speaks to who should be greeted by Jesus-followers
 - The word greet is referring to making someone feel welcome when they initially show up
 - How would you rate yourself on greeting people who maybe aren't your neighbors?
 - On Sundays
 - At work
 - At school
- Jesus says that even tax collectors treat their friends and family well
 - Since Jews who farmed the taxes for the Romans (that is to say, who paid Roman authorities for the privilege of collecting taxes) were considered traitors to their own people, the term *τελώνης* has strongly negative connotations in the NT – Louw-Nida
 - What is ironic about this is that the author of this book, Matthew, was a tax collector!
- Read Matthew 9:9-13
 - How does Jesus calling Matthew and eating with this group of people display what Jesus taught in chapter 5?
 - What do we have in our hands because of Jesus' love for Matthew, whom most would have considered an enemy and not talked to?
 - This book!
 - What impact can your love of an enemy have?
 - Do you think the other disciples struggled with Jesus' love for Matthew?
 - What do you think Jesus said to them?
 - Will others try to convince you that you shouldn't love an enemy?
- Where is one place that you can practice loving your enemies this week?