

people. When you learn to forgive, you not only see your own hurt, but you see their hurt, too. Then you start to understand why they acted in such evil or selfish or hurtful or abusive ways. You can pray for them, and you can even pray for God to bless them. It means you relinquish your right to get even and respond to evil with good.

**Biblical Principle:** Pray for your enemies and think of the best ways to serve them showing God's love HUA (HB)

? **Question:** *Who is your current enemy – how can you serve them?*

## **DO | What are you going to do about it?**

*John 13:35*

**By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.**

- **Scripture is clear that our love is a powerful testimony to our sonship.** The distinguishing mark of a Christian is love. How many people know you are a Christian because of your loving lifestyle? Because the world will know about God's love by the way we love each other—and especially by the way they are loved by Christians.
- You cannot live a loving lifestyle as a Hermit. You spell love T-I-M-E. It takes time to love other people. If you love your family, friends, neighbors you've got to spend time with them. If you love Jesus, you've got to spend time with Him. Love always costs time and energy. But it's always worth it. Can you imagine what would happen if everyone in the church loved like this—if we all committed ourselves to acting in love and giving our time unselfishly so that people could experience a taste of how much God loves them? It would change the world. It would grow God's Kingdom. It would make God so happy.

**Biblical Principle:** People are attracted to Christ more than they are persuaded to Him. They're attracted by the love of God shown through the people who claim to follow Him. And they won't care what we know until they first know that we care. HUA?

**Question:** *Are you reaching out each week – men's group??*

## -----**Stories from the Field**-----

*Standing Firm in the Christian Life means Loving your Neighbor and Your Enemy. The importance of loving is to recognize the high priority God places on how we conduct our relationships and how we interact with both our neighbors and enemies. We need to have the same kind of anguish and love for the lost as God does!*

Fact is, it is not easy for any of us to love someone else as thoroughly as we love ourselves. Our love of self does everything possible to secure our own happiness and satisfaction, protect our own welfare, produce our own comfort, and meet all our own interests. **It seeks our own pleasure and fulfillment, and it knows no limit of effort to secure all of these things.**

The love we are instructed to show to our enemies is not emotional but volitional. **The Greek word "agape" speaks of the love of the will. It's not related to any personal fulfillment, rather it is focused on acting for the others personal welfare and benefit.** It's not interested in repercussions. Christ words add two practical applications of the love we are to show our enemies. **Do good to those who hate you and bless those who curse you.** Christ gave them a new commandment. That you love one another just as I have loved you. He perpetually put their needs above His own, loving them in spite of themselves, and in the end, He laid down His life for them. We are to pray for those who persecute us, those who are violent and are hostile toward us. Even while Christ was on the cross, He was pleading with His father for the sake of those who were inflicting pain. Christ instructs us not to just forgo revenge, but to petition him on behalf of our opponents and tormentors. **Loving our enemies means pleading with God for their forgiveness and repentance.**

**We demonstrate that we are children of God when we manifest His characteristics. How will the world know we truly belong to him unless we love as He loves?** And the more we behave in a godly manner, the more readily apparent it becomes that we are His children and possess His character. **Scripture is clear that our love is a powerful testimony to our sonship.** The Lord told His disciples **"by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** God shows His love **1qst** in the fact that He holds back His wrath and in the fact that the



**Men of  
Valor**

Lord provides temporal protection of the loss against His immediate righteous judgment. **God also loves the lost in that He warns them of the judgment they will face unless they repent. In His word and through His people, God is constantly calling sinners to turn from their ways and submit to him in faith.**

We also see God's love for the loss in His compassion. Scripture is clear that God is grieved by the perversion of His image in man's rebellion and by the eternal consequences of unrepentant sin. Jesus is saying that there is a love of God that extends beyond His love for His own. **God's demonstrates His love to sinners through general goodness, pity, warnings, admonition, real grief (anguish) over their plight, and His pleading offer of the saving gospel.** God loves even His enemies. And if we are going to be known as our father's children, we need to manifest the same kind of love and anguish for the lost.

**We need to prioritize the Lost's general welfare.** If that means a meal, clothing, money, or some other kind of assistance, we give it freely out of sincere desire for their good. More than that we show them pity, compassion, and grief over there slavery to sin and the consequences that await, if they do not repent. **Loving our enemies also means warning them of God's judgement.** May we learn to share God's love faithfully, not only with our fellow believers but others who are not easy to love and even those who qualify as our enemies.

### **Talk about it:**

**Question for contemplation and discussion:** What did God enlighten to you in the text?

### **KNOW | What does God want us to know?**

Matthew 5:43-45/22:39

*You have Heard that It was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your father who is in Heaven. ... love your neighbor as yourself*

- Unfairness is part of the human condition. You can't live on this earth for long without feeling like someone has treated you unfairly.

- **These are foundational truths on how God wants His people to interact with their neighbors and enemies.** Blessing our enemies involves the *invoking of God's benefits upon them*. As God states in the passage, He blesses the evil and the good with sunshine and rain. He will bless our enemies because it can be a means to bring them to repentance. "*Knowing that the goodness of God leads to repentance*" (Romans 2:4). Therefore, we should **pray that God will rebuke the principalities and powers that are controlling their lives and free them to respond to the love and truth of God.**
- When people hurt you, they expect you to retaliate. They expect you to seek revenge. But God wants you to do the exact opposite. He wants you to respond in love. Respond to mistreatment with love, and you keep the other person from controlling you. Booker T. Washington once said, "I will never allow another man to control my life by allowing him to make me hate him." You can't control when another person treats you unfairly. You can control whether you get bitter in the process. **You can control your response to injustice.**
- **Biblical Principle:** If you love your enemies and treat them well, you will surely show God is Lord of your life. **HUA**

?**Question:** *What do you feel toward those who oppose you – anger or anguish?*

### **BE | How does God want us to become more like Him?**

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Luke 6:27-28

**Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.**

\***Comes down to this idea of an inner motive of the highest good – free them from their sin** Notice these three verbs: "do good," "bless," and "pray for." A big part of forgiveness is responding to evil with good. How do you know when you've genuinely forgiven somebody? You can pray for God to bless that person. You also start seeing that person's hurt. When people are hurting inside, they take it out on others. Hurting people hurt