

## HOW TO LOVE OTHERS

Matthew 5:44 ... "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

Do you struggle with how to love other people? Especially people who do not love you, or people who have cheated you, or lied to you? How about people who hate God, or abuse others? How can we possibly obey the command of Christ to love others, when many people are so unlovable?

The truth is, most of us cannot love the unlovable under our own power. Our own hearts are filled with pride, jealousy, and greed from the moment of our births. Some of the things we hate about other people are true of us, too. When we see people committing the same sins that we practice, it makes us angry with ourselves. We hate our own sins, so when we see those same sins in others, we lash out at them. Liars hate other liars. Thieves hate other thieves. It is really an ugly picture is it not? You hate yourself for your sins, so you attack others who commit those same sins.

So, from where do you get the love that Christ expects you to share with others? You get it from the same source that Christ got it when he was on earth, your heavenly Father. Christ was attacked, accused, threatened and, eventually, captured, tortured and killed. Yet, he did not defend himself or accuse his attackers of their sins. On the cross moments before he died, he forgave everyone who mistreated him. Christ's source of love for others – even the worst of humanity – is your source. God will supply you with the love he commands you to display to others, even those who hate you.

There is a woman in our community who has stolen from us, lied to us, and cheated us. She lives in a perpetual state of sin, plus she has spread ugly lies about us. She hates us in every sense of the word. As awful as she is, her lies do not trouble us because no one believes her. Recently, she asked us for money to help a sick relative. If we had only our own source of love and blessings to share with the woman, we might have ordered her to leave. However, we shared the blessings God gave us to share with others; we gave her money in Jesus name to take the relative to the hospital. We did not lecture her, yell at her, accuse her of her sins, or belittle her. We just gave her what she needed because our source of love for her is God.

If you find it difficult to love your enemies, you need not feel guilty. It is natural and to be expected. The solution is to ask God to supply you with the love he demands that you give them. Then, sit back and watch God work in that person. Your act of forgiveness and blessing might be the thing that motivates a person to seek God and turn their life around.

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