

Love Your Enemies  
Matthew 5:38-48

Review:

1. Jesus says Christians shouldn't insist on our rights, but should humble ourselves before those who try to take advantage of us
2. Jesus says we should love our enemies in the same we want God to love us.
3. The only way we can love in the unconditional, self-sacrificial way that God loves us is to be filled with the Spirit of Christ.

Go Further: Read I Corinthians 13

1. In verse 1, how effective does Paul say that loveless communication is? Does it matter how eloquently we speak such loveless words?
2. What spiritual gifts does Paul list in verse 2? What does he say is essential for any of them to be exercised effectively?
3. What great works of faith does Paul describe in verse 3? How effective are these if love does not accompany them?
4. In verse 4, Paul begins with two positive characteristics of love. Do you tend to behave in these ways with people you love? Why is this?
5. In verses 4 and 5, Paul lists seven things that love never is or does. How does love's focus on the good of the beloved help to explain why these things never accompany true love?
6. At the end of verse 5, Paul says that love "thinks no evil," or doesn't take account of wrongs we have suffered. How does truly loving others prevent us from holding grudges against them or thinking the worst of them? How does love inspire us to look for the best in those we love?
7. According to verse 6, what is the connection between holiness and love? Why do you think true love has to shun sin and seek truth?
8. What four things does Paul say love always does in verse 7? How do these behaviors mark both our love for God and our love for other people?
9. In contrast to love's permanence, what three things does Paul say will pass away in verse 8?
10. How does Paul explain in verses 9-10 that we will no longer have a need for these spiritual gifts when Christ returns?
11. In verse 11, what does Paul say he has outgrown? How is this natural development similar to the transformation Paul expects to experience when Christ returns?
12. Ancient mirrors were made of polished metal, and thus did not render a clear image to the viewer. In verse 12, how does Paul compare such an imperfect mirror to the way his perspective will be changed when Christ returns?
13. What three great gifts does Paul list in verse 13? Which gift does Paul say is the greatest?

Apply:

1. Many modern people often confuse lust, which is primarily focused on the self, with love, which is concerned for the good of the beloved. How does Paul's description of love help us distinguish between the two?
2. In verse 13, Paul insists that love is somehow greater than faith or hope. Given his discussion in verses 8-12, why do you think this is the case? How should love's eternal permanence inspire us to love God and other people more deeply today?