

Loving Your Enemies

Scripture Reading — "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5:44

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Life without forgiveness is torture. When people have sinned, they often suffer guilt pangs. When people have been sinned against, they are often tormented by anger and hatred. The gospel of Jesus brings relief both to sinners and to those who have been sinned against.

If you've been abused or deeply offended, the memories can be as devastating as what actually happened. You may carry a grudge and wish the worst upon the person you hate. Or the memory may be so frightening that you can't bear to think about what happened. But when you trust in Jesus, you receive power to forgive sins committed against you. Jesus enables you to deal with your memories and face the awful truth about how deeply you've been hurt. The person who hurt you has been your enemy in a terribly painful way, but you receive strength to love and pray for that person.

Loving your enemies is not a burden but a blessing. You begin to experience new freedom. Your enemy no longer controls your feelings toward him. Hatred is no longer your automatic reflex to a painful memory. Loving your enemies is a gift of God that helps you experience God's love for you in a deeper and more powerful way. Every time you love an enemy, you realize again that while you were God's enemy, Jesus loved you and died for you (Romans 5:10).

Prayer

Lord, thank you for freedom from resentment. If I have unresolved anger, help me to deal with it. Give my enemy the same joy and blessing that you have given me. Amen.

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Written by David Feddes — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/david-feddes>

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