

# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

FAMILY DEVOS



# Love Your Enemies

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:43-48

**Memory Verse:** Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.”

## For My Family:

In our last devotion we learned that we are to be the light of the world by going above and beyond what others expect or require of us. Today, we are going to learn that followers of Jesus are not just to love those who love them back, but everyone, even their enemies. Keep in mind that Jesus had told His disciples that their righteousness must exceed (be greater than) that of the Pharisees if they wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven. From Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus has gone on to explain what He meant by that by saying again and again, “you have heard that it was said.... But *I* say to you...” Jesus is teaching that the law requires much more than and outward show of obedience. It requires a clean heart.

There was a teaching in Jesus’ day that said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemies.” While it is true that God’s Word commanded that you shall love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18), nowhere in the Bible did it say that you shall hate your enemies. This was a false teaching from the religious leaders of the day, and it serves as a reminder to us why it is so important for us to read, study, and know God’s Word for ourselves. We aren’t supposed to just love some people and not others. We are to love everyone, just like our heavenly Father does. “For God so loved the *world*...” (John 3:16).

“Love... bless... do good... pray.” This is how we are to respond to our enemies. We already learned the blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake and for Jesus’ sake. Our response to persecution earlier in the chapter was to rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is our reward in heaven. But here, we are taught further how we are to respond to our enemies. Love them, bless them, do good to them, and pray for them. These are difficult instructions! When is the last time you prayed for someone who made fun of you or did something mean to you?

Why are we supposed to respond in love? “That you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” This doesn’t mean that loving our enemies is how we get saved. Jesus is simply saying that once you are a son or daughter of God, there is a way to live that shows the world that God is your Father (5:16). Jesus started this section by saying we needed to be more righteous than the Pharisees, and now He closes this section with “be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” This is impossible in our own strength, but Jesus died for us, in love, while we were His enemies (Romans 5:10), so that we could be made perfect, spotless, and pure. Through Jesus and the strength that He provides, we can love our enemies.

## Questions for Young Children:

Who did Jesus say we are supposed to love?

How are we supposed to love our enemies?

When we love those who are mean to us, what does that teach them about God?

## Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

The Bible says, "You shall love your neighbor." Who is your neighbor?

How have you responded to your enemies in the past?

Loving our enemies is easier said than done. How do we get to the place in our day to day interactions where we really do love our enemies?