

Summer on the Mount Discipleship Guide

In **Matthew 5:43-48**, Jesus addresses and demands something that can only be done by God's power. Loving our enemies goes against the grain of our natural being, but it's clear that it is something Jesus could do and wants His followers to do in His Spirit.

In 1 Samuel 18:29, we are told that King Saul was David's enemy *continually*. In spite of that, it's interesting to note how David, relying upon God, responded to Saul. This week, sit down and read 1 Samuel 24. Anything we could learn from that?

Following are some biblical texts to study, reflect and act upon:

Romans 5:1-11; 1 John 3:1

Reflect: We were once enemies of God. How did He treat us? Why did God pour His love into us?

Act: Spend some time this week thanking God for loving you and for giving more love than we could ever need for ourselves. Make a list of people in your life that could especially use that "leftover love" – consider people in whom God desires reconciliation to occur.

Pray for your enemies (Mt. 5:44)

In 2 Corinthians 13:9, Paul states that he continually prayed for the Corinthians' restoration – in spite of how horribly they had treated Paul. Each day this week, pray for someone's restoration and for God to demonstrate His grace to them.

Provide for your enemies (Mt. 5:45)

Romans 12:20a tells us to give food or drink to our enemies if they are hungry or thirsty. That means meeting their needs – just like God does for us when we don't deserve it. This week, make it a point to meet someone's need – bring a cup of coffee to an estranged co-worker or something simple like that. This means paying attention to other people and really listening to them, asking God to help you discern their needs.

Greet your enemies (Mt. 5:47)

Again, Romans 12:14 tells us to bless those who curse us. Blessing involves bringing a good word or a kindness to someone verbally. Be ready to engage someone you might be at odds with this week. Initiate verbal kindness to them no matter how they speak *to* you or *of* you. Consider what words you would define as good words to hear if someone spoke them to you, and then start speaking them to others.

God's brand of love means giving sacrificially and giving even though it might hurt. Loving our enemies isn't taking baby steps – it means taking a giant leap (of faith) into sharing God's grace with a broken world. That's what it looks like to follow the One who did it for us.