



Lesson Eight

Jesus Says, “Love Your Enemies”

Heart Preparation & Bible Background

The bully next door and that mean girl who shares the same worktable at school are living proof that even little children must cope with enemies. How should we teach our children to deal with those who stand against them? How should God’s people treat those who don’t love God or his people?

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught how we must respond to our enemies, what we must do from the heart. He said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44) Those in the kingdom of God are told to forgive others and love the unlovable.

As God’s children, we are to imitate our heavenly Father who “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good.” (Matthew 5:45) We are to love our enemies, recognizing the fact that God loved us while we were still his enemies, lost in sin.

We cannot do what God commands in our own strength. As we experience the love of Jesus and his forgiveness in our own lives and as the power of the Holy Spirit enables, we can love the way Jesus taught.

As you read Matthew 5:43–48, your thoughts may be drawn to people at work, in your neighborhood or even in your church who have dealt unkindly with you. You may have to face bitterness in your heart towards those who have deliberately hurt you.

Face up to the enemies in your life and do what Jesus did. Pray for them and ask God to forgive them (Luke 23:33–34). Ask God to put his love for them in your heart. Pray for your children, too, to have loving, forgiving hearts enabled by the Holy Spirit.



Bible Truth

Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies and to pray for them.

Scripture

Matthew 5:43–48



Lesson Focus

Love those who don’t love God and who don’t love you.

Goals for the Children

- Explain that Jesus teaches them to love their enemies.
- Ask God to help them forgive others and show kindness.
- Plan ways to show love when people hurt them.



Memory Minute

Review memory work:

1 John 3:1a
1 John 4:10a
Galatians 5:22a
Jeremiah 29:12b
Matthew 22:37a