



## Why Should We Love Our Enemies?

**Matthew 5:44-45:** (NASB) *<sup>44</sup>But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*



We live in a time of great contradiction. There are voices that shout, rant and insist for all in our society to embrace and accept everyone no matter what their choices in life are and no matter what their actions in life may be. Their message in many ways is framed as one of love - love for those who are opposite or different. Then there are those like myself who say, while I am willing to accept and love people regardless of their choices, I will not embrace anything I believe is not moral or righteous. I will love the person but not the action. For this I have been called a "hater" by those who preach that you should embrace those who are different

than you. Jesus told us to love our enemies, but what exactly does that mean? Am I not loving enough? Do I need to change?

Before Jesus spoke the powerful words of our theme text about loving our enemies, he taught us several lessons that would help us to be able to accept that particular teaching.

 **Little tree, Love Your Enemies, Martin Luther King, Jr. (November 17, 1957)**

- There is a little tree planted on a little hill and on that tree hangs the most influential character that ever came in this world. But never feel that that tree is a meaningless drama that took place on the stages of history. Oh no, it is a telescope through which we look out into the long vista of eternity, and see the love of God breaking forth into time. It is an eternal reminder to a power-drunk generation that love is the only way. It is an eternal reminder to a generation depending on nuclear and atomic energy, a generation depending on physical violence, that love is the only creative, redemptive, transforming power in the universe.*

**Here is what Jesus taught us to do when we are treated badly:**

**Matthew 5:38-39:** (NASB) *<sup>38</sup>You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.*

Does this mean we just let evil run roughshod over us?



(Source: Biblical commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) Our Lord's own meek, yet dignified bearing, when smitten rudely on the cheek (John 18:22,23), and not literally presenting the other, is the best comment on these words. It is the preparedness, after one indignity, not to invite but to submit meekly to another, without retaliation, which this strong language is meant to convey.

**Proverbs 20:22:** (NASB) *Do not say, I will repay evil; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.*



Stand for and speak for what is right, but do not retaliate in like manner. Rise ABOVE what the Law of the Old Testament would have allowed you to do.

First Lesson

LOVE

Endure harshness that is physical

 Introduction, *How Two Bitter Enemies Became Friends*, CBS News (April 2015)

- (News anchor) We end the week with Steve Hartman and a confrontation between a cop and a criminal. It may sound like the start of an all too familiar story, but this one takes a couple of unexpected turns on the road.
- (Reporter) They were the bitterest of enemies. For more than a decade, here on the streets of Milwaukee, two men shared a mutual disgust. One was a hard-nosed cop named Ray Robakowski.
- (Ray) I wasn't a social worker; I was a police officer. My job was to take care of what was needed to be taken care of.
- (Reporter) Which is why you didn't like him?
- (Ray) Definitely didn't.
- (Reporter) The other, a drug dealer and gangbanger named Jacob Maclin. Jacob got arrested so many times you can watch him grow old in his mug shots.



Matthew 5:40: (NASB) *If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt let him have your coat also.*



(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) ...but will wrangle and quarrel in a private way, in order to take away thy coat, by force and violence, let him have thy cloak also; do not forbid, or hinder him from taking it;

(Source: Biblical commentary by Henry Alford) Take away - i.e. in pledge for a debt (see Exodus 22:6). Coat - the inner and less costly garment. Cloak - the outer and more valuable, used also by the poor as a coverlet by night.

In the Old Testament, you were not allowed to take someone's coat overnight.

Luke 6:29: (NASB) ...and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

1 Corinthians 6:7: (NASB) Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

Second Lesson

LOVE

Endure harshness  
that is related  
to your "stuff"

Don't enter into the personal, petty wrangling of life - even if it costs you, live above it!

Jesus taught us that our actions and attitudes should be different than the norm when things go wrong in life. We are to act differently than others.

### Is Jesus teaching us to be pushovers?

Matthew 5:40: (NASB) Whoever **forces** <29> you to go one mile, go with him two.

**Forces** is not the best English translation. Compare with the Greek:

**Forces**: Strongs #29 *aggareuw aggareuo ang-ar-yew'-o*, to impress into public service, to employ a courier, dispatch a mounted messenger; hence to compel to perform a service.

### For example:

Matthew 27:32: (NASB) As they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they **pressed into service** <29> to bear his cross.



Serve in a way that is beyond expectations!

Third Lesson

**LOVE**

Endure inconvenience regarding your time and effort

As followers of Jesus, we are instructed to live to a higher standard.

 **The glare, *How Two Bitter Enemies Became Friends*, CBS News (April 2015)**

- *(Reporter) And it was that career thug and this officer who sat down one day over a cup of coffee. The district attorney's office arranged it. The meeting was to see if cop and criminal could work together and come up with a way to get out of this vicious cycle. But neither guy was buying it. Ray was only here because his boss made him come. And Jacob was tricked into coming, told he had a job interview. So they basically just glared at each other the entire time.*

**Matthew 5:42:** (NASB) *Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.*

*(Source: Biblical commentary by C.T. Russell) Not that we should lend to anybody who asks for a loan of money or goods, but that we should not turn away from those in need.*

**Matthew 25:35-36:** (NASB) <sup>35</sup>*For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; <sup>36</sup>naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.*

Have your eyes and heart open to those individuals who may be needy and be someone who they can go to for help!

Fourth Lesson

**LOVE**

Willingly help those in need- even at personal cost



What is Jesus teaching about our response to those who may give reason to be viewed as our enemies? Endure physical harshness, do not be petty regarding your stuff, serve with vigor and beyond expectations and touch those in need. With these lessons, we can now be ready for the hardest one of all:

### Christian love says love your enemies!

Matthew 5:43-45: (NASB) <sup>43</sup>You have heard that it was said, you shall **love <25>** your neighbor and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, **love <25>** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.



**Love:** Strongs #25: agapao, 1. of persons - to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly. 2. of things - to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing.

- *It has been said* - Jesus here is not quoting from the Law but instead is quoting from a Jewish "tradition." The Law never said to love your neighbor and hate your enemy.
- The *love* here is a benevolent love that does not require reciprocation. This is a **KEY LESSON!** This kind of love gives without taking.
- To love an enemy dissolves any potential traces of vengeance or retaliation - a characteristic that would have had the potential to grow in the previous four lessons.
- To bless and pray for those who hate and abuse you, can only be truly accomplished based upon our striving for that selfless love towards them.
- Be like God - God is good and just to all as shown in the cycles of nature. We have to rise above and be willing to give to all. That is easy to say but hard to do!

Let's look at the practical application of the matter spoken by one who was *not* perfect - the Apostle Paul:

Romans 12:14-17: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup>Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.



**Blame, What Does it Mean to Love Your Enemies, Pastor Tim Chaddick**

- *What exactly is "love for our enemies" according to Romans 12:17-21? And I think you will be surprised at what some of these things say. We'll do this section briefly. First of all, to love your enemy is to blame your enemy. Interesting. To love your enemy is to blame your enemy. Notice the context. Paul calls evil, evil. He calls an enemy, an enemy. He calls it what it is. When you forgive someone - and I wonder if you've ever thought about it like this - to forgive is to blame. When you forgive someone, you're blaming them.*



*You're not pretending that they didn't do anything wrong, you're not pretending that no evil existed. You are blaming them.*

"Blame" is acknowledgment of an action and does not need to imply emotion or retaliation.

**To blame someone kind of sounds petty.  
How can our blaming be good and godly?**

Notice how the Apostle follows the pattern that Jesus laid out in Matthew 5: Romans 12:14-17: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* <sup>15</sup>*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.* <sup>16</sup>*Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.* <sup>17</sup>*Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.*

These verses come right after the verses about sacrifice and playing your role within the true church.

Verses 14-16: Rather than retaliate, *bless* - enter into others' realities whether they are happy or sad. Do not play favorites, do not be proud; be humble. This sets the table for appropriate blaming.

Verse 17: Acknowledge and recognize: call evil what it is - evil. This is blaming done with godliness.

 **Blame through love, *What Does it Mean to Love Your Enemies*, Pastor Tim Chaddick**

- *So, to love our enemies begins by blaming them. To not blame their evil, to not call evil what it is, is not love at all. It's not loving to someone to pretend that their evil does not exist. It's not loving at all. Their evil is an offense to God, it's harmful to themselves and it's harmful for other people. Do you think it's loving to pretend that it doesn't exist? Absolutely not. But usually we all say this: "Oh, I love them too much. I just don't want to tell them what they're doing is wrong." No. You love yourself too much because you don't want confrontation. You just don't want to deal. You love yourself too much. But if you really loved them, you would call evil what it is.*

This helps them take responsibility for their actions so they can grow up and out of whatever it is that has happened.

There are many other sources that verify the scriptural teaching on loving our enemies. For example:

(Source: <http://goodlifezen.com/7-simple-steps-turn-enemies-friends>)  
Seven Steps to turn your enemies into friends:

- Refuse to be their enemy
- Change the label
- See yourself in them
- Keep talking (communicate)
- Disarm them (don't give them something about you to fight with)
- Overwhelm them (with goodness, kindness and communication)
- Conquer their hearts with unrelenting love



🔊) Job interviews, *How Two Bitter Enemies Became Friends*, CBS News (April 2015)

- (Reporter talking to Ray about Jacob) What were you thinking?
- (Officer Ray) You're going to screw up, and I'm going to find you and put you back.
- (Reporter talking to Jacob) He was dead set upon putting you back in jail.
- (Jacob) I'm glad he changed his mind.
- (Reporter) Or you changed his mind.
- (Reporter) Eventually, over the next couple months, Jacob proved to Ray that he wanted to get a job and turn his life around.
- (Jacob) He sent me on maybe 14 or 15 interviews in two weeks and one of them was Community Warehouse.

It took several of these "get-togethers" before Ray would give Jacob help. Notice he did not ignore that Jacob committed the crimes, but there was a coming together for change. More on this soon!

Let's examine an example of appropriate blame: Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Alfred Barnes) ...He was accused of blasphemy in speaking against the institutions of Moses and the Temple, that is, against everything held sacred among the Jews. To meet this charge, he gives a statement, at length, of his belief in the Mosaic religion, in the great points of their history and in the fact that God had interposed in a remarkable manner in defending them from dangers. By this historical statement he avows his full belief in the Divine origin of the Jewish religion, and thus indirectly repels the charge of blasphemy.

**Acts 7:51-58:** (NASB) <sup>51</sup>You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. <sup>52</sup>Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; <sup>53</sup>you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it. <sup>54</sup>Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup>But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; <sup>56</sup>and he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. <sup>57</sup>But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. <sup>58</sup>When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

The blame was obvious and necessary, but did Stephen do anything else besides blame?

🔊) Rather die than hate, *Love Your Enemies*, Martin Luther King, Jr. (November 17, 1957)

- So this morning as I look into your eyes, and into the eyes of all of my brothers in Alabama and all over America and over the world, I say to you, "I love you. I would rather die than hate you." And I'm foolish enough to believe that through the power of this love somewhere, men of the most recalcitrant (to stubbornly refuse to obey the rules) bent will be transformed. And then we will be in God's kingdom. We will be able to matriculate (to become a student of a school) into the University of Eternal Life because we had the power to love our enemies, to bless those persons that cursed us, to even decide to be good to those persons who hated us, and we even prayed for those persons



*who despitefully used us.*

Jesus knew that teaching us to love our enemies would need to be done in stages, so he does that in Matthew 5 by telling us to endure physical harshness and not to be petty regarding our stuff. We are to serve with vigor and beyond expectations and touch those in need. Built on top of these things comes loving our enemy with a benevolent love.

recap  
recap



True and benevolent love requires blame to be appropriately attached to those who do wrong. Warning! Ending with blame is NOT the whole story when it comes to loving our enemies!



A caller from Connecticut suggests God can be harsh to protect the innocent per Deuteronomy 19. The Apostle Peter summed up a different standard for the Disciples. 1 Peter 3:14: *If you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye.*



**Spare, What Does it Mean to Love Your Enemies, Pastor Tim Chaddick**

- *Secondly, to love your enemy is not only to blame them but it's to spare them. It's to spare them. It is to forgo retaliation and retribution on a personal level. To spare them, Paul says do not repay evil for evil. Miroslav Volf, in his book, "Free of Charge" says that forgiveness is to condemn the deed but to spare the doer. You're calling evil exactly what it is, and you're naming a person who did it - they are guilty - but you're sparing them personal retribution and retaliation.*

### **Sparing those who do evil:**

Romans 12:18-19: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup>Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

This is a difficult step, for it requires us to give away our perceived right to retaliate! Why would we do that?

### **Let's look again at Jesus' teaching:**

Matthew 5:43-45: (NASB) <sup>43</sup>You have heard that it was said, you shall **love <25>** your neighbor and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, **love <25>** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

So, loving our enemies requires placing appropriate blame - but not with retaliation in mind. It requires proving this selfless blaming by sparing them our retaliation and by praying for the other person to show we are in line with God dealing out all judgment and not ourselves dealing out judgments.

### **This is exactly what Stephen did:**

Acts 7:59-60: (NASB) <sup>59</sup>They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! <sup>60</sup>Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them! Having said this, he fell asleep.

This was a wonderful example of rising above and being more than those around him - a higher standard of living, a higher sacrifice and a higher level of humility.





🔊) **Very grateful, *How Two Bitter Enemies Became Friends*, CBS News (April, 2015)**

- (Reporter) *Community Warehouse is a non-profit, home improvement store that hires ex-cons and teaches them job skills. Jacob started working here eight years ago and is now on the management team. To this day, he can't thank Ray enough.*  
(To Jacob) *Are you grateful?*
- (Jacob) *Very, very, very...oh man, very...*
- (Reporter) *He said "very" at least half a dozen times.*
- (Jacob) *Very much so.*

**Once we get it into our heads the value of sparing them, we begin to become walking epistles:**

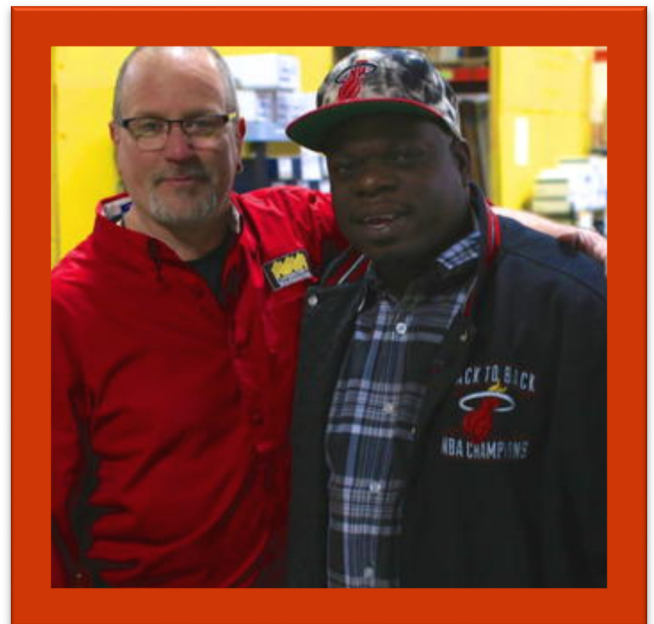
**1 Peter 3:13-16:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; <sup>16</sup>and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

By standing in Christ, we can properly and humbly represent truth and righteousness. By so standing, those who oppose such things can see the things they previously did not perceive. It becomes a “win-win” situation. We can help people and dramatically affect their lives for the good if we are willing to step out and be vulnerable.

**Is truly sparing our enemies retaliation enough to get God's attention?**

🔊) **Tables turned, *How Two Bitter Enemies Became Friends*, CBS News (April 2015)**

- (Reporter) *And as for that very helpful cop, he retired from the police force last year.*  
(To Ray) *But you still wanted to work, you wanted a job? So who did you turn to for work?*
- (Ray) *Jacob Maclin, and he laughed. Now he held the cards, but I wanted to be here.*
- (Reporter) *Through Community Warehouse, with his new friend Jacob, Ray has now helped more than a dozen other ex-cons leave their past behind.*





## The Apostle Peter takes our lesson to another level by applying its principles to everyday life:

**1 Peter 2:18-25:** (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. <sup>19</sup>For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup>For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.*

Stand for serving with dignity and respect - even if dignity and respect are not shown to you. Today this could be a boss or a co-worker. This is loving those who act as enemies in an everyday environment - this is a whole different level here!

### Why do this...?

<sup>21</sup>*For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, <sup>22</sup>who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; <sup>23</sup>and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to Him who judges righteously;*

### ...Because that is what Jesus did!

<sup>24</sup>*and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*

By so doing, you will stand in Christ, like Christ and be blessed! *You were continually straying like sheep* - Jesus taught us to love our enemies, realizing we were once enemies of God. God loved you by sending Jesus before we could even approach Him. We are not breaking any new ground when we love our enemies - we are following the example of God and Jesus who changed our lives and absorbed our sins.



This brings us to the third point of loving our enemies:

### Bless, *What Does it Mean to Love Your Enemies*, Pastor Tim Chaddick

- *Thirdly, to love your enemy is to bless them and to do good to them. That's just a starting point of a real brief overview of what it means to love your enemy. Jesus did these things. He accused the enemy to his executioners who were nailing him to a cross. He said, "Father, forgive them." What was he doing in that moment? He was blaming them, but he was also dying on the cross for their sins so he could pardon them and he was doing good for them. To blame, to spare and to bless.*

Blessing those who do evil completes the “love your enemies” training.

**Romans 12:20-21:** (NASB) <sup>20</sup>*But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. (As quoted from Proverbs 25:21-22) <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*



How is this blessing someone? This is a tough verse to understand - the following are a few possible explanations:

(Source: <http://www.hiskingdomprophecy.com/heaping-coals>)  
Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893-1962) was a noted New Testament Greek scholar and wrote on this point: "In Bible times an oriental needed to keep his hearth fire going all the time in order to insure fire for cooking and warmth. If it went out, he had to go to a neighbor for some live coals of fire. These he would carry on his head in a container, oriental fashion, back to his home. The person who would give him some live coals would be meeting his desperate need and showing him an outstanding kindness. If he would heap the container with coals, the man would be sure of getting some home still burning. The one injured would be returning kindness for injury."

Robert Jewett's relatively recent Romans commentary "Romans: A Commentary - Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible" image icon suggests that since Proverbs draws on some Egyptian literature, it is probable that it refers to an Egyptian practice of a repentant person carrying on their heads, some form of vessel with hot coals in it, symbolizing their repentance. Thus the idea of Proverbs 25:21-22 would be to feed and give drink to your enemy so that he or she will repent of their animosity toward you.

Regardless of which is correct, the person has blessed the other individual and did good for them. They were spared animosity and retaliation and given something of great value.

### How do we "bless" our enemies - and what happens if it is not possible to bless them?

Finishing the context, we see a "blessing" suggestion:

Matthew 5:46-48: (NASB) <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Therefore you are to be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.

*Greeting* - treating someone with much more friendliness than a mere acknowledgement.



A CQ App user suggests: We overlook a lot when dealing with our friends and family. Maybe we can give our enemies the same leeway and benefit of the doubt.



**Conclusion, *How Two Bitter Enemies Became Friends*, CBS News (April 2015)**

- (Reporter) *Is Ray a different guy than when you first met him?*
- (Jacob) *Oh, definitely!!! Did I say that too loud? (laughing)*
- (Reporter) *Jacob, of course, is equally unrecognizable. Today his only high-speed chases are around swing sets. He's got four kids and has vowed the cycle stops with him. All proof that if you can find the trust, sometimes your enemies can be your best allies.*

Sometimes your enemies can be your best allies because you rose above the circumstances. This is what Jesus taught us to do.

**Sadly, Stephen never did get a direct chance to bless his enemies:**

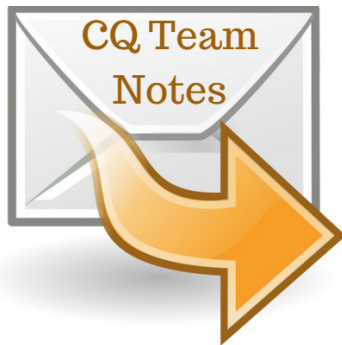
Acts 8:2-4: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.



We should seek, if at all possible, to be able to engage this step in this present life because we never know when circumstances will change. Opportunities may be fleeting.

(A CQ Team Member on a personal experience with an enemy)

**Becca says:** On a completely practical side, I am dealing with my own "enemy" right now. The boss at my job is really not a good person. He lies, he treats people poorly and it is really awful working for someone like that. This past week in a meeting with a number of my colleagues and me, my boss essentially called me a liar in front of everyone (for something that was not true) and I took some very deep breaths and was furious. After the meeting (and after I had calmed down), I really did some thinking about Jesus and what he went through and the things HE was called and what he endured, and I realized what I am dealing with is very small in comparison. I know I won't be at this job forever (or much longer hopefully) and this is not my life at stake, nor is it blasphemy like Jesus had to deal with. In retrospect, what I should have done (and what I need to do more of) is pray every time I am confronted with my boss so that I can act in a way that is appropriate and representative of Jesus.



What would Jesus do? He would appropriately blame them, spare them judgement at that moment and would bless them. How do we get to a point where we can bless our enemies without reacting poorly in the immediate moment? Becca draws strength from comparing what Jesus went through. The challenge is to "spare" and find a way to bless.

**When circumstances (not excuses) make it so we cannot bless our enemies, we will do so in the future:**

**1 John 2:1-2:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

When we sin, we have an advocate, Jesus, who stands by us and represents us to God. But he died not only for our sins but for that of the rest of the world. That means the rest of the world is in a position (maybe not now at this moment) where they can be blessed.

We still want to do what we can now. Remember when Peter cut off the ear of Malchus (Matthew 26:51) and Jesus healed it? Malchus then took him to what would be his crucifixion. Jesus blessed his enemy.

**As we read this text, let us remember the death of Stephen and the blessing he could not then give:**

**Romans 8:18-22:** (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*



The entire creation will be blessed and set free from slavery.

🔊) Ending prayer, *Love Your Enemies*, Martin Luther King, Jr. (November 17, 1957)

- *O God, help us in our lives and in all of our attitudes, to work out this controlling force of love, this controlling power that can solve every problem that we confront in all areas. Oh, we talk about politics; we talk about the problems facing our atomic civilization. Grant that all men will come together in the struggle that at the cross of Christ can solve these problems — the international problems, the problems of atomic energy, the problems of nuclear energy, and yes, even the race problem. Let us join together in a great fellowship of love and bow down at the feet of Jesus. Give us this strong determination. In the name and spirit of this Christ, we pray. Amen.*

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19:** (NASB) <sup>18</sup>Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

To *reconcile* is to bless. We must learn now to properly blame our enemies, spare them of our own retaliation and bless them, for that will be our future opportunity to bless all the families of the earth who had once been enemies of God. They will all be brought back into friendship with God.

*So, why should we love our enemies?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



**First, the larger context of Matthew 5 and Jesus' teaching on loving our enemies:**

**Matthew 5:38-48:** (NASB) <sup>38</sup>You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup>If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt let him have your coat also. <sup>41</sup>Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup>Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. <sup>43</sup>You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**The Romans Scriptures with commentary suggestions for “coals of fire on his head” meaning:**

**Romans 12:14-21:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup>Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup>Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>But if your enemy is hungry, feed, and if he is thirsty, give him a

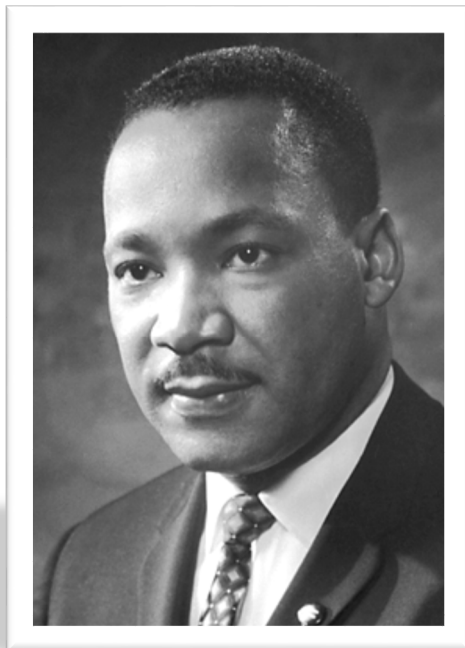


*drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

(Source: <http://www.hiskingdomprophecy.com/heaping-coals/>) Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek scholar and wrote on this point: "In Bible times an oriental needed to keep his hearth fire going all the time in order to insure fire for cooking and warmth. If it went out, he had to go to a neighbour for some live coals of fire. These he would carry on his head in a container, oriental fashion, back to his home. The person who would give him some live coals would be meeting his desperate need and showing him an outstanding kindness. If he would heap the container with coals, the man would be sure of getting some home still burning. The one injured would be returning kindness for injury." Wuest's explanation however, raises the question: Would the injuring party actually go to the home of the injured party and seek out such benevolent action?

Robert Jewett's relatively recent Romans commentary (Romans: A Commentary (Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible) image icon suggests that since Proverbs draws on some Egyptian literature, it is probable that it refers to an Egyptian practice of a repentant person carrying on their heads, some form of vessel with hot coals in it, symbolizing their repentance. Thus the idea of Proverbs 25:21-22 would be to feed and give drink to your enemy so that he or she will repent of their animosity toward you.

([www.jewishencyclopedia.com](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com)) The word "coal" is often used in a metaphorical sense: 2 Samuel 14: 7 speaks of the "quenching of the coal" of a man, meaning the complete annihilation of his issue; while in Proverbs 25:22 kindness bestowed upon an enemy is called "heaping coals of fire upon his head," since it tends to waken his deadened conscience and help him to realize his wrong. Eccclus. (Sirach) viii. 10 compares the smoldering and easily roused passion of the godless man to the coal that is easily lighted and breaks forth into flame.



(Source: <http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2015/01/19/martin-luther-king-jr-on-loving-your-enemies/35907>)

A sermon Martin Luther King Jr. wrote/revised from a jail cell in 1962: The relevance of what I have said to the crisis in race relations should be readily apparent. There will be no permanent solution to the race problem until oppressed men develop the capacity to love their enemies. The darkness of racial injustice will be dispelled only by the light of forgiving love. For more than three centuries American Negroes have been battered by the iron rod of oppression, frustrated by day and bewildered by night by unbearable injustice, and burdened with the ugly weight of discrimination. Forced to live with these shameful conditions, we are tempted to become bitter and to retaliate with a corresponding hate. But if this happens, the new order we seek will be little more than a duplicate of the old order. We must in strength and humility meet hate with love.

Of course, this is not practical. Life is a matter of getting even, of hitting back, of dog eat dog. Am I saying that Jesus commands us to love those who hurt and oppress us? Do I sound like most preachers — idealistic and impractical? Maybe in some distant Utopia, you say, that idea will work, but not in the hard, cold world in which we live.

My friends, we have followed the so-called practical way for too long a time now, and it has led inexorably to deeper confusion and chaos. Time is cluttered with the wreckage of communities, which surrendered to hatred and violence. For the salvation of our nation and the salvation of mankind, we must follow another way. This does not



mean that we abandon our righteous efforts. With every ounce of our energy we must continue to rid this nation of the incubus of segregation. But we shall not in the process relinquish our privilege and our obligation to love. While abhorring segregation, we shall love the segregationist. This is the only way to create the beloved community.

To our most bitter opponents we say: “We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we shall continue to love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. Throw us in jail, and we shall still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our community at the midnight hour and beat us and leave us half dead, and we shall still love you. But be ye assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer. One day we shall win freedom, but not only for ourselves. We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory.”

Love is the most durable power in the world. This creative force, so beautifully exemplified in the life of our Christ, is the most potent instrument available in mankind’s quest for peace and security. Napoleon Bonaparte, the great military genius, looking back over his years of conquest, is reported to have said: “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I have built great empires. But upon what did they depend? They depended on force. But centuries ago Jesus started an empire that was built on love, and even to this day millions will die for him.”