

Love Your Enemies

Key Verses: *“I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.”*
—**Luke 6:27,28**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 6:27-36

TODAY'S LESSON COMES

from Luke's account of Jesus' sermon on the mount. It is important to remember that these words were addressed only to our Lord's footstep followers: "But I say unto you." While it is not possible for Christians to perfectly live up to every feature of the Master's instructions, all need to understand and acknowledge this supreme standard. Each should examine his consecrated walk closely so as to attain as

much as possible the divine requirements of character.

In our Key Verse Jesus says to do good, bless and pray for those who might do evil against us. The fulfilling of this commandment is difficult because we have waived what might previously have been our personal rights, and have vowed to sacrifice all earthly aims and ambitions. Our life's mission is to suffer with Christ so that we might reign with him in his promised kingdom.—II Tim. 2:11,12

Our Selected Scripture verses give us three examples of how to love our enemies. The first is stated as follows: "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other." (Luke 6:29) When our Lord was smitten by one of the Jewish officers as he stood trial before the high priest, he did not invite the smiting of the other cheek, but rather questioned the reason for being struck. (John

18:22,23) His enemies continued to smite him, however, to which he subsequently remained silent. (Matt. 26:67,68; 27:27-31) Let us give a similar witness of love and forbearance when we find ourselves being unjustly attacked for righteousness' sake. As the Apostle Peter wrote, we are never to render "evil for evil."—I Pet. 3:9

The second example is provided in Matthew's account. "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." (Matt. 5:40) The follower of Jesus may properly resist such an action based upon an honest defense. Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul, under certain circumstances, turned to the laws of the governments which had jurisdiction over them. However, if the court were to rule against them, if even unjustly, they knew to submit without murmuring. Thus, while Jesus and Paul used honest argument in their defense against mobs and judges, they never resisted the decisions made. This is a great lesson for us.

The third example may be the most difficult to follow: "Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back." (Luke 6:30, *New International Version*) The broadest interpretation of this command is that we should err on the side of generosity instead of selfishness. We should not take these words so literally, however, to give something that may cause injury to him that asks. Spiritually-guided wisdom should always regulate our actions in these matters.

Let us remember that the majority of those who may perpetrate evil against us do so because they do not appreciate godly principles in the matter. Their appointed day to learn these is in the coming kingdom under favorable conditions. For the faithful Christian, however, now is the time when we should be exemplifying divine love in our dealings with others. Let us, therefore, manifest this eminent quality of character to all those around us by loving not only our friends and family, but let us even love our enemies!

