



**Main Idea:** Jesus calls us to respond to our enemies differently than the world does by doing good, speaking blessing, and praying with love instead of responding with hate.

**Scriptures:** Luke 6:27-36

Hi everyone! Welcome to \_\_\_\_\_. We're so glad you're here. I'm excited to open God's Word with you today. As we jump into things, I want you to think of someone you don't like. We all have people in our lives we don't like. People we think are our enemies. If you had the chance, what would you like to do to your enemy?

[Leader Note: Consider sharing a funny or lighthearted story about an interaction you had with someone you once viewed as an enemy.]

Don't say this out loud, but what names would you write down on a paper if I asked you to name your enemies? I don't know why you can't stand this person. Maybe your enemy is someone who's nasty with you. Maybe it's someone who bosses you around. Maybe they hurt you. Maybe they are a know-it-all or are incredibly demanding or are always wanting their own way. These are people who press your buttons and just make your blood boil. People who just rub you the wrong way. We have all had someone come into our lives who challenged our patience.

There is a legend about Leonardo Da Vinci when he was working on his famous painting of the Last Supper. This story may be true, or it may be just one of those stories that gets passed down and takes on a life of its own. But in this version of the story, Leonardo had become very angry with one of his assistants. He scolded the man without mercy. After banishing his assistant from his studio, he went back to work on his painting. As an act of revenge, he used the person's face who had offended him for the face of Judas. But as he tried to paint the face of Jesus, he couldn't do it. No matter how hard he tried, he was unable to paint the face of Jesus. So, he stopped painting, went to the man who had received the full force of his anger, and asked his forgiveness. Only when the man forgave him and they reconciled was Da Vinci able to return to the Last Supper and paint the face of Jesus.

Our natural response to those who mistreat us, insult us, hurt us, or offend us is to retaliate, vocalize our anger, or hold a grudge. This is true when people annoy us, like the person who cuts us off on the highway or leaves us extra work to do. It is also true of how we respond to those who are our true enemies: those who have really hurt and mistreated us. This might be a bully, siblings, a parent, a former friend, an ex, a teacher, a coach, or a boss.

It is natural to respond to mistreatment with resentment, anger, and revenge; but Jesus calls Christians to a supernatural response.

*<sup>27</sup> “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:27-36, NIV)*

So, are we supposed to love our enemies? YES. We really are supposed to love our enemies. I don’t know about you, but to me that seems impossible. How in the world can you love someone who doesn’t love you? How in the world can you love someone who wants to do you harm and tear you down? It’s much easier for me to love people who already love me.

But Jesus comes along and tosses a monkey wrench into the works. He says that not only are we to love those who love us, but we’re even to love those who don’t love us! Many of you hear that and think, “Are you kidding me?”

How do you respond to people who badly mistreat you? Or to say it another way, what do you do when you've been done wrong? How do I get along with my enemies?

The answer comes in three parts, and they come from what Jesus teaches us in Luke 6. Jesus shares three responses we're to have towards our enemies:

**Point #1: Do good to those who hate you.**

***27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you..." (Luke 6:27, NIV)***

When someone does something to us, our first instinct is to get back at them – to make them pay and to make them hurt as much as they hurt us. This was a teaching that was totally foreign to the society of Jesus' day. The rabbis were teaching at this time, *"You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."* Makes sense to me. Most of us would be pretty good at following this law.

But you know what? It doesn't take any supernatural power to do that. Jesus said in verse 32:

***32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?" (Luke 6:32, NIV)***

When Jesus calls us to love those who hate us, he's calling us to do something that's totally contrary to our human nature. Human nature tells us when someone messes with us, we're going to give them what they deserve! Check out what Paul wrote in the book of Romans:

***17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (Romans 12:17-19, NIV)***

We think revenge is sweet! We think it's going to make us feel better. But guess what? Hatred is a horrible tool that literally destroys us. It destroys us physically. Scientific studies have shown the damage hatred does to us.

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