
I. Aim for Change / Learning Objectives…
   By the end of the lesson, we will…

   Learning Objectives:
   A. EXPLORE Jesus’ teaching about what it means to love our enemies,
   B. REFLECT on times when we felt hate toward others or were hated by others,
   C. IDENTIFY ways to love our enemies.

Unifying Principle—A True Friend Intervenes. We often wonder how we should treat our enemies. How should we respond to them? Jesus taught his disciples to love their enemies by forgiving them, responding to their needs, and being nonjudgmental.

   Key Verse— “But 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, KJV).

People Places and Times
The Disciples. The word disciple means learner or student, and it was common for rabbis to take on students as Jesus did. These students of Jesus were distinct from the multitudes that gathered when He preached and performed miracles. The Gospels refer to the Twelve and another larger group of unnamed disciples. Jesus spent intensive time with the Twelve; the other larger group of disciples did not spend as much time with Jesus but accepted and followed His teaching and practices. These close students, rather than a massive crowd, are the main audience for the Sermon on the Plain.

The Sermon on the Plain. Today’s text is a portion of what scholars refer to as the Sermon on the Plain, Luke’s equivalent to Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount. The content of the sermon in Luke emphasizes the ethical aspects of following Jesus. Since Matthew’s audience was primarily Jewish, he emphasized the aspects of Jesus’ sermon that built off of Mosiac Law. In contrast, Luke’s audience was primarily Gentile. They did not have the Law as the basis of their society. Instead, Luke’s presentation of Jesus’ sermon continues to press Luke’s emphasis on inverting current, unjust social orders.

Notes:________________________________________________________________________
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II. Background
The context of this lesson is after Jesus had chosen the twelve. Crowds gathered to both hear his powerful words of life and be healed. As Jesus came down the mountain and delivered this sermon, He symbolically created a new Israel. Just like Israel at Sinai had a set of laws that governed their behavior as a people, Jesus gave His disciples a set of “laws” that would govern their behavior. This set of laws is called the Sermon on the Plain, one of the most powerful passages in the entire Bible. In it, Jesus gives an agenda for God’s kingdom, a set of rules and instructions for His people to live by. The first part of these instructions consists of four blessings and four woes. These are followed by more explicit instructions that do not cover every situation but can all be summed up under the Golden Rule: “Do to others as you would like them to do to you” (6:31, NLT).

The Lesson At-A-Glance…
1. God’s People are Called to Live a Distinctive Lifestyle (Luke 6:27–30)
2. Jesus’ Strategy (v. 31)
3. The Total Unselfishness of Love (v. 32-36)

III. In Depth with More Light on the Text
1. God’s People are Called to Live a Distinctive Lifestyle (Luke 6:27-30)
   Just as Moses established a “constitution” for Israel at Sinai (Exodus 20), Christ sets forth the foundation of Christianity as He begins His ministry (Matthew 5-7). An important part of this foundation is the principle, “love your enemies.” The Pharisees thought they knew the full implication of Moses’ Law when they said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy” (Matthew 5:43; cf. Leviticus 19:18). However, Christ showed that true righteousness exceeds what the law demands. When others wrong us, we ought to respond with patience—but more than that, Jesus wants action. He commands us to actively do good to those who hate us.

2. Jesus’ Strategy (v.31)
   Today’s society has several common misconceptions about this verse. One is that to be gracious and loving in the face of hostility is a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it takes a great deal of strength to control the urge to fight back. Someone might also claim that these verses will lead to letting evil take over. However, Jesus is demanding that we fight vigorously against evil. Our battle, however, is to be fought by setting a good example.

3. The Total Unselfishness of Love (vv.32-36)
   Jesus makes it very clear that Christians have no corner on good deeds (v. 32). Good for good is a fair exchange. Good for evil is the mark of a believer. Jesus lays it all out in verse 35. His followers are to completely sacrifice themselves in love, energy, and possessions—even for the enemy. The basis of this is God and the very nature of His character. God is kind to the unthankful and the evil. He is merciful, bestowing His love for those who don’t deserve it. The proof: Christ loved us and died for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:6,7). In that relationship, we show that God is our Father. We show mercy to others because he showed mercy to us. The reward for our obedience is not in the favor of men but the favor of God.
Liberating Lesson & Application for Activation—see Sunday School book...

Vocabulary Words You Should Know...
*Bless* (v. 28) eulogeo (Gk.)—To invoke God’s favor

*Scripture Memory Verse...*
Proverbs 25:21-22  *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.* (KJV)