

11. Why Pray for Our Enemies?

Jesus tells us to love our enemies and to pray for them.

Matthew 5:43-44 (Jesus said) “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Matthew 5:38-40 (Jesus said) “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.”

Matthew 6:14-15 (Jesus said) “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Luke 6:27-29 (Jesus said) “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

Jesus was not saying pray about your enemies (venting to God), but pray FOR them. Pray that good things come to those who persecute you. Pray that God blesses them and fills them with peace and joy.

When we pray for our enemies, it gives the Lord the opportunity to work on our hearts. Sometimes Jesus shows us how our enemies feel and what they are struggling with. Sometimes He shows us how He (Jesus) feels about our enemies.

It doesn't even have to be someone you consider to be an enemy. It can be someone you love, but did something that upset you; or just someone that rubs you the wrong way and irritates you.

I can remember praying for a music leader that I didn't particularly like (and I was pretty sure she didn't like me either). But when I prayed for her, and also admitted to the Lord that I didn't like her, the Lord showed me how much He loved her (and boy did He love her!). I went to the music leader and told her that while I was praying for her, the Lord told me how much He loves her. She was actually brought to tears and said, “I love Him too”. I had never seen her emotional before and I believe she needed to hear that. I needed to hear that too, and I saw her in a different light ever since. My dislike for her just faded away.

Praying for our enemies is good for our soul. It brings us closer to God. It gives us peace and helps us to forgive. And sometimes, the Lord even mends the broken relationship.

Good things happen when we pray for our enemies, so do it. Pray for those who upset your life. Give Jesus the opportunity to heal your heart. You won't be sorry.