

Jenaministries – Part 1 – Bible Study Worksheet

E) Enemies and Neighbors - Worksheet

Read: Part 1 #11) Why Pray for Our Enemies?
Part 1 #13) Can't Love Your Neighbor?

1. Think of your worst enemy or someone you have bad feelings for. Write down a prayer for that person; only pray for blessings and good things. Then actually pray these things to Jesus with you heart.

2. Be still and listen after you pray #1 above. Did the Lord speak anything to your heart? Did you feel anything? Did your feelings about that person change at all (even the slightest bit)?

3. Jesus wants us to love everyone. He didn't say we had to like them, just love all people in general. Is there a certain group of people you have a hard time loving? Is there anyone that if that person was in need, you wouldn't want to help?

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.

13. Can't Love Your Neighbor?

Jesus tells us that we should love our neighbors. He explains that our neighbors are not just those who live next to us, but are all the people around us; no matter where we are at. So He's basically telling us that we should love people in general and care for them.

Luke 10:25-37 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he (Jesus) replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side, But, a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

When I was first saved and read the scripture above, I knew I fell short. Actually, I totally failed at loving my neighbors. I didn't care much for people and had no desire to help them. Afterall, no one ever helped me. All the people in my life that were supposed to love and protect me, failed me. It has always been me against the world. I didn't trust anyone and I didn't feel sorry for them either.

I told the Lord I was sorry my heart was so hard. I just couldn't love like that since my heart was hard as a rock. The Lord gave me a vision of a heart that was limp. It had holes all over it and blood was gushing out of all the holes. It was barely able to beat. The Lord told me that my heart was not hard, it was just wounded. He didn't expect me to be able to love like that, and He released me of any guilt.

It took years for the Lord to heal my heart, but He DID heal it. It surely wasn't an easy road to get where I am now, but now I love and have compassion for my neighbors. I volunteer and donate to places that help people. And I give all the glory to God for that.

If you are unable to love like Jesus wants us to, don't feel bad about yourself; just give it to God. Let Jesus heal your heart so you can love and have compassion for others. Jesus will not fail you. He is always faithful and patient, even with those high maintenance people like me. So let Him heal you and mold you. Let Him make you into someone that He knows you can be.