

## ‘Climbing the Matterhorn’ Matt. 5:43-48

Series title: What does it mean to live a good life?

### I. Don't treat people who've hurt you the way our culture encourages you to.

A. You might find it interesting that nowhere in the OT does it command us to hate our enemies! Lev. 19:18 said to love your neighbor as yourself. By Jesus' time a hatred of foreigners was so institutionalized that the Jews thought they were honoring God by despising anyone who was not Jewish. The Qumran sect out in the desert was typical for they said: *'love the brother, hate the outsider.'*

B. It was inconceivable to them that they should care for anyone else as much as they cared for themselves. And, as it often goes with being self-centered, they became smug. God's definition of a \_\_\_\_\_ as seen in Luke 10 is that a neighbor is anyone in need whom you might come across in your daily living. But to the Jewish leaders, they even looked down on the common people!

Ever known someone like that? Do we love only those who look like us, think like us, vote like us?

### II. Treat people who have wronged you the way Jesus treats them.

A. Love your enemies. The love that God wants us to have is so great it even embraces our enemies! The human tendency is to have a *'love because of'* kind of love. I love you because you're beautiful or because you're nice to me. Or we have a *'love if'* kind of love. I will love you if you do what I say or if you are always 100% faithful to me. This is love with strings attached.

Now, there is nothing wrong with loving someone like this but these kinds of love are insufficient to meet God's standard for how to love. They are also insufficient to build a marriage on. You can build a friendship on these, but not a marriage, that will take something more. That will take a *'no strings attached'* kind of love. It will take God's kind of love, agape, a love that says: *'I love you, period.'*

This is where you make a \_\_\_\_\_ to love that person. It doesn't mean that you will be best friends or will love hanging out with each other, but you've made a choice to love that person by faith.

B. The devil loves to come along and try to convince us to be bitter, upset and angry for what they did. He tries to convince you to get revenge or to sulk forever. That is all a lie. It only ruins you and makes everything worse. Jesus said we're to do *'more'* than what the world does. Is there a *'more'* in our love? Or do we love just like the world does? What can be included in all this?

C. One great way to love your enemy is to forgive them. To truly forgive another you don't deny what they did to you, you recognize it, you don't repress it, rather you fully accept and realize what they did to you and then you choose to forgive them, to let them off the hook. That choice must be made in the \_\_\_\_\_, you choose whether to forgive them or not. The bible says that real love keeps no record of wrongs. Do you do that in your marriage? Or do you have a running list going? And this kind of love, this kind of forgiveness is something you do as long as you live, it's a chosen way of life.

D. Another way to love our enemies is to pray for them. Spurgeon once said: *'Prayer is the forerunner of mercy.'* When we start praying for people it helps our attitude towards them.

### III. Some results of treating mean people this way.

A. You'll show that you are a Christian. Jn. 13:35 Can people in your family say that about you?

B. You will exceed other people's normal ways of behaving and this will cause some to sit up and take notice, when they see you let your light shine in this way, thus it is a good testimony to others.

C. You'll be like your heavenly Father. On earth, we will never be sinlessly perfect, but the idea here is of completeness, maturity. As we walk with God, trusting Him to develop in us these beautiful Christ-like attitudes, we will increasingly be more like our heavenly Father.