

A Loving Heart
Matthew 5:43-48

Study#6 of Life on the Rock

1. Begin with Prayer

2. Read Scripture Together Matthew 5:43-48

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

3. Share Who You Are

- A. Does the Bible ever teach "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy?" Who is Jesus quoting when He says, "You have heard it said...?" How do we misunderstand Scripture? Does Satan ever twist God's words? (Genesis 3:1-5)
- B. How are you doing "Loving your enemies?" How are you doing "Praying for those who persecute you?" Does Jesus command us to pray for them for their good, for ours or both their good and ours? How does praying for our persecutors help us?
- C. What obstacles are in our way to loving our enemies? What do we gain by putting up barriers between ourselves and others? What kind of barriers are sometimes necessary in our relationships? (Matthew 18:15-17) Can we erect those barriers without hate?
- D. What does Jesus mean by saying "You must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect?" Can we be perfect? What happens if we try to depend upon our own perfection? (Galatians 3:21-26)
- E. Do you struggle with evil people receiving good things from God? What can be assured about God's justice? (Psalm 9:7-8)

4. Next Step: Ask the Holy Spirit to show someone in your life who is difficult for you to love. Pray for them daily over the next seven days. Share with your group how the Holy Spirit used this in your life.

5. Pray Together