

## Spiritual Practice: LOVE WHO??

Do you have a person that you would consider an enemy? Someone that is out to get you? They want to see you fail or cause you harm. There are some who immediately have a person come to mind, but for many it may be tougher to identify an actual enemy. What if we were to change the word enemy to competitor. Is there someone who comes to mind now: that person who you feel you are measured against in sports or in life? It could be a competing business, another parent, someone you work alongside or an actual competitor on the field of play.

Does our standard way of thinking fall in line with the thinking Jesus highlights in Matthew 5:43?

*“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbour’ and hate your enemy.”*

Is that the desired response when our enemy comes to mind? That we can love those who are like us, but competitors or enemies aren’t worthy of our love and are in fact people that we can hate.

Jesus proceeds to flip the script in Matthew 5:43-46 and calls those who desire to follow him to assume a posture that disarms the enemy or competitor not through a response of revenge or retribution. Instead we are to assume a position built on loving others.

When we are in a stable place (the Kingdom) with a solid identity (one in whom Christ dwells and delights) we can choose to respond to attack by not attacking back and in doing so we make the choice to love our enemies.

In terms of actual practice, the following are a few tips that I have found helpful:

- **Spend a few minutes each day praying for your enemy or competitor, asking God to bless him or her and the work he or she does.**
- **Hold that person or institution up before God and pray for as many good things to happen as you can think of.**
- **Do this once a day for four or five days this week. See if your heart begins to change toward this person.**

*Adapted from *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ* by James Bryan Smith*

