



THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS ENEMIES

One of the hardest lessons for a Christian to learn is to be kind and forgiving to his enemies. Any person, even a good person, finds it easy to hate his enemies. To learn to love an enemy is a strong lesson. One great evidence of spiritual maturity is the ability to love your enemies.

Jesus himself taught the importance of loving enemies. Read *Matthew 5:43-48*. Jesus said that in past times the Jews had loved their neighbors and hated their enemies. A new age had come. Now Jesus commanded them to also love their enemies. Jesus' followers should bless those who curse them. They should do good things to those that hate them. They should pray for people who abuse them. By doing such things Jesus' followers show that they are true children of God. God does not bless only the good people. God gives sunshine, rain and good harvest to the evil people as well as the good people. Thus God's children should do good to both those that love them and those that hate them. If Jesus' followers only do good to people that love them, their way is no different to the way of evil people. Evil people do good to their own friends. We should try to have God's own way since we are God's own children.

Paul helps us understand the importance of being kind to our enemies. Read *Romans 12:17-21*. Paul says never give evil back to a person who does evil to you. Even with evil people be honest- never lie to any man. Do your best to live in peace with all men. A true Christian will always be ready to forgive and to make peace. The Christian will never be guilty of causing trouble. If an evil man refuses to live in peace with a Christian, it should never be the Christian's fault. The Christian will refuse to take revenge when someone abuses him. The Christian will trust God to punish the evil people. God has promised He will punish the wicked at the proper time. The Christian's work is not to punish the evil, but to try to help save evil people. The Christian should even be willing to feed and give drink to his enemy when his

enemy is in need. By being kind to his enemy, the Christian can make his enemy ashamed. Paul then states a great truth. You can **NEVER** defeat evil by doing evil! You can defeat evil only by doing good.

Jesus did not ask us to do something he would not do. Read *I Peter 2:11-14*. Even as Jesus suffered great pain on the cross, he did not abuse his enemies. His suffering is an example for us. Jesus did not deserve the suffering, abuse or death he received. He never sinned one time. He never lied to people, never deceived anyone. When they cursed him and said wicked things to him as he was dying, he did not curse them. As he suffered and was abused, he did not threaten them. He put everything into God's hands.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the hardest lessons for a Christian to learn?
2. In past times what had the Jews done?
3. How did Jesus say his followers should treat those who curse, hate, or abuse them?
4. Why is our way no different to the way of evil people if we do good only to those who love us?
5. How does doing good to our enemies make us act like God?
6. What did Paul say we should never do?
7. Explain how a Christian will always try to live in peace with all men?
8. Why will a Christian refuse to take revenge?
9. What way will never defeat evil? What way will defeat evil?
10. Tell how Jesus gave us the example of how to treat our enemies.