



[Matthew 5:43-48](#)

(43) "You have heard that it was said, '*You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.*' (44) But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (45) that you may be sons of your Father 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. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? (48) Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.
New King James Version

These verses contain perhaps the most startling, sublime statement Christ made. [Jesus](#) does not mean that we resolve to like everyone, but that we act in goodwill toward those we do not like as well as those we do. This command seems unreasonable and absurd, but only because of our carnality. Christ desires all to be happy. Both the hater and the hated are miserable to some degree, and the misery will not cease until the hatred dissolves. The antidote to hatred is love.

Some have described this [love](#) as an unconquerable goodwill, an invincible benevolence. This love does not merely involve feeling, but also the will. With this love, our concern for another's good overcomes any feelings of offense, resentment, and retaliation. It motivates us to do good rather than react in kind to what caused our negative feelings toward the other. Only those who have the mind of Christ can do this. We must seek it from God.

In this section Christ lists three ways people show their ill-feelings toward others. *Cursing* indicates verbally denigrating others and working to destroy their reputation; gossiping. *Hatred* implies an active, passionate feeling against another. *Spitefully using and persecuting* means continually at war with, harassing, always being on another's case.

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Matthew 5:43-48 (<http://www.theberean.org>)
He also specifies three ways a Christian can combat these actions. We can *bless*, meaning giving good words for bad. We can also *do good* for our enemies, not merely restrain ourselves from retaliation. Lastly, we can *pray* for them and for their welfare, asking [God](#) to change their hearts so a two-way love can exist.

This is a major test for God's children. God wants us to do this so that we may resemble Him—bein His image—because this is the way He is. If a man has this love, he is like God. God shows us His love in this very manner. Despite what we do on His great green earth, the sun still shines, the rain still falls, and He is constantly providing for and working toward our salvation.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Sixth Commandment \(Part One\) \(1997\)](#)

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