

Compassionate  
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Luke 6:27-38

Is it possible to disagree with someone and still love them? What if they are unpleasant, abusive, and downright mean? How timely is THIS text?

This section of Luke 6 gives us some of Jesus' most difficult teaching for mere mortals to embrace much less put into practice. It's radically opposite to every natural human instinct within us when we are confronted with mean, abusive, and unlovable people. Though these verses are commands for followers of Christ, this is not about rules to keep but about imitating our Father in Heaven Who is "*kind to the ungrateful and the evil*" including us. <sup>i</sup>

Big Idea: Jesus commanded His followers to imitate Him by showing compassion and mercy to others; even those who don't deserve it. Obeying this radical teaching is beyond human ability; it requires a heart that's been changed by God.

Let's begin by reading these verses and then unpack what they say, what they mean, and how it should change us this week.

Luke 6:27–38 (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. <sup>31</sup> And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. <sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting

nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.<sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.<sup>37</sup> “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;<sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

- We could summarize the first part of what we read into these main points:

- (1) Love your enemies.
- (2) Do good to those who hate you.
- (3) Bless those who curse you.
- (4) Pray for those who mistreat you.
- (5) Do not retaliate (v. 29a).
- (6) Give freely (vv. 29b–30).
- (7) Treat others the way you want to be treated (v. 31).

This kind of love marks one off as distinctive (vv. 32–34), and as having the same characteristics as the heavenly Father (v. 35).<sup>ii</sup>

- As we said, these commands run counter to human nature and can only be lived out by the supernatural change of heart that comes from trusting Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Let’s begin with loving our enemies. It’s easy to SAY but hard to DO!
- We may kid ourselves by saying, “*Oh yes, I love everyone (in my head!)*”
- Notice, Jesus gave us a TO DO list not a TO THINK list.
- “Do good, bless, and pray” are verbs so we have to ACT on them.
- Darrell Bock writes, “*The love Jesus commands is not an abstract love tucked away in the person’s inner recesses, but a love that demonstrates itself in concrete action. The disciple should do good to those who hate them, bless those who curse them, and pray for those who abuse them. The exhortations expect action, not just a private expression.*”<sup>iii</sup>
- Is Jesus saying I have to hang out and be BFFs with people who are doing everything they can to hurt me? Words are

important in Bible study and the word for love here is *agapaō* or AGAPE love.

- This isn't about brotherly love, affection or even liking the person.
  - It's about desiring the best for them no matter how mean they are to you.
  - The old saying is *"I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy."* Instead of wishing bad things on our enemies we should ask God to bless them.
  - We don't have to like them, but we have to want God's best for them.
  - This is not a "love is blind" approach of turning a "blind eye" to reality.
  - Alistair Begg writes, *"Jesus is not saying...we're able to exercise this love for our enemies...because we're blind to their offenses against us, or because somehow or another love takes over and we don't see them as they really are. He's not saying that at all. He's saying we see them exactly as they are, in all of their ugliness, in all of their spitefulness, in all of their cursing, in all of their hatred, and in all of their unwillingness to pay us what they owe us, and to pay their debts, and to do whatever it is. "Seeing all of that," says Jesus, "I want you to love your enemies."<sup>iv</sup>*
  - But they are really nasty to me! Jesus knows all about that.
- 1 Peter 2:23 (ESV) tells us, <sup>23</sup> When he (Jesus) was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Luke 23:34 (ESV) <sup>34</sup> And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

- Okay, I'll pray for them and I might give 'em a drink if they were lying on my doorstep about to die of thirst but surely that's where we stop right?
- Verse 29 says don't retaliate. When they hit you "turn the other cheek."
- Verse 30 says if they take your stuff let it go. In fact give them more.

- Some commentators believe this refers back to verse 22 regarding being persecuted because of our faith in Christ and our stand for Him.
- Not seeking revenge when we're persecuted for our faith certainly applies but this teaching probably isn't only limited to that.
- Is Jesus saying to let someone physically abuse you or not to defend your home? We have to study scripture by looking at other scripture.
- Other scripture tells us that God has instituted government to deal with crime. That tells me the line is drawn at criminal physical harm or theft.
- Richard Lenski comments, *"Love is to foster no crime in others or to expose our loved ones to disaster or perhaps to death. Coupled with selfless love is the wisdom which applies love. Christ never told me not to restrain the murderer's hand, not to check the thief and robber, not to oppose the tyrant, or to foster shiftlessness, dishonesty and greed..."*<sup>v</sup>
- R.C. Sproul writes, *"Seeking retribution against those who oppress the weak and defenseless is not unloving. Sometimes, the only way we can love our enemies is to put them in a place (such as prison) where they will be hindered from doing more damage and incurring greater consequences for their sins."*<sup>vi</sup>
- John MacArthur writes, *"...[T]his deals only with matters of personal retaliation, not criminal offenses or acts of military aggression. Jesus applied this principle of non-retaliation to affronts against one's dignity (V.29), lawsuits to gain one's personal assets (Matt.5:40), infringements on one's liberty (Matt. 5:41 – "extra mile"), and violations of property rights (Luke 6:30)."*<sup>vii</sup>
- I want to emphasize something important. We've looked at how to interpret reasonable boundaries in applying these verses but those boundaries are NOT LOOPHOLES to avoid doing what Jesus commanded. In most situations we CAN and MUST apply His commands.
- Let's be real, the offenses most of us experience are not physical beatings or loss of property. Our abuses are usually verbal insults, ridicule, shunning, or perhaps discrimination that hurts us economically.

- Though those things definitely “sting” and make us want to seek revenge, Jesus says his followers are to leave vengeance to God. (Rom.12:19)
- Verse 30 says: *“Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.”*
- This applies to people who take our stuff and to lending or giving.
- Does it mean we should give to everyone that asks?
- This can be complicated. We have to ask: What is the loving thing to do?
- Our default response should be generosity, but we have to be wise.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says, *“If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”* Sometimes we’re enabling laziness and a pattern of irresponsibility.
- By now we’re asking, *“How do we obey these commands?”*
- The short answer is to seek the Holy Spirit’s prompting.
- We also need to remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 10:16 (ESV) to *“be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”*
- The real test of what to do is in verse 31 of our text. Jesus said, *“...[A]s you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”* [The “Golden Rule.”]
- If the “shoe were on the other foot”, how would I want to be treated?
- If my mean side were showing I would hope others would show mercy and overlook the offense. On the other hand, if I have a pattern of wrong behavior toward others I would hope a brother or sister would “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) to show me the error of my ways.
- Verse 36 says, *“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”* When I look on the bad behavior of others, am I merciful or merciless in my reaction?
- Where would I be if God had demanded that I clean up my act before He showed me mercy? We must be merciful to others as He has been to us.
- What about verses 37 and 38 and judging and condemning others?
- First, “judge not” isn’t about sweeping sin under the rug.

- Scripture gives us proper ways to confront other believers when it's appropriate (See: Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15–17, and Ephesians 4:15)
- This is about not being hypocritical and judgmental of others while we are just as guilty (i.e. "The speck in their eye and the log in my eye.")
- This is really about reaping what we sow in dealing with others.
- If you judge them harshly get ready for harsh judgment of yourself.
- If you condemn others be ready to be condemned in the same way.
- On the other hand, forgive and you'll be forgiven and give and you will receive more than you can imagine.
- These things will come back to us in proportion to how we treat others.

#### So, What's the Takeaway?

- Jesus gave us a great summary: <sup>35</sup> *...love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.* <sup>36</sup> *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*
- It's easy to love nice people, any pagan can do that and most of them do!
- What's hard is showing love to those who are mean and hurtful.
- Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you, don't retaliate, give freely, show mercy and forgiveness instead of being judgmental and condemning. That's a tall order! Don't try it on your own – you might hurt yourself!
- Living this way requires supernatural heart change that only comes when we trust Christ as Savior and Lord.
- This week, let's ask the Holy Spirit living in us to help us imitate our Heavenly Father by living in this radical manner as Jesus commanded.

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<sup>i</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 6:35). Wheaton, IL:

<sup>ii</sup> Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 220–221). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>iii</sup> Bock, Darrell L.. Luke: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text to Contemporary Life (p. 189). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/the-law-of-love/>

<sup>v</sup> Quoted by Alistair Begg - [https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/the-law-of-love/#back-\[20\]](https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/the-law-of-love/#back-[20])

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/loving-your-enemies/>

<sup>vii</sup> THE MACARTHUR BIBLE COMMENTARY Copyright © 2005 by John MacArthur