



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study: **THE LOVE OF GOD'S CHILDREN FOR THEIR ENEMIES**
Matthew 5:43-47

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” Our character or conduct reveals whose children we are. The New Testament speaks of (1) the children of God (Matthew 5:9; 2 Corinthians 6:17,18; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 5:1-6), (2) the children of the wicked one (Matthew 13:38; 1 John 5:18,19), (3) the children of this world (Luke 16:8), (4) the children of light (John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8), (5) the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2), (6) the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) and (7) the children of the devil (1 John 3:8-10; John 8:44).

By birth, by nature and by practice, we have all been children of disobedience, children of wrath, children of this world, children of the wicked one and children of the devil. Only by conversion, through repentance and faith in Christ, do we become children of God. As children of God, we manifest the character of God. With the Spirit of God living and abiding in us as God's children, we bear the fruit of the Spirit - love in all its gracious expressions. This love is most visible and noticeable in our actions towards our enemies.

SCRIPTURAL PERCEPTION OF GOD'S CHILDREN ON EARTH

Matthew 5:43-45; 2 Corinthians 6:17,18; Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 8:14-17; Romans 9:8,26; John 8:41-44; 1 John 3:8-10; Matthew 5:9; 1 Peter 1:14-16; Ephesians 5:1-6.

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” means that ye may resemble or be like your Father. As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual: character or good works cannot come before the birth of a child. First, the birth, then the behaviour or the character. After a child has been born, then the characteristics will show that he resembles the father. We do not become children of God by loving our enemies but we love our enemies because we have already experienced genuine conversion and real transformation of nature, life and character. People around us, including our enemies, can only see or observe the internal transformation or conversion through our outward actions and character. Seeing or observing our attitude and acts of kindness and love towards our enemies, they conclude that we are children of God indeed. If we find it impossible to love our enemies, we ourselves doubt our profession of being children of God. It is our character that confirms our conversion.

SCRIPTURAL PRAYER OF GOD'S CHILDREN FOR THEIR ENEMIES

Matthew 5:43-45; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:51-60; Psalm 35:11-15; 1 Kings 13:4-10; Luke 6:27,28; Luke 22:47-51; 1 Peter 3:9.

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” These are not imaginary or supposed enemies; these are active enemies. They openly and actively reveal themselves as our enemies by cursing us, speaking evil of us and to us, wishing evil to come on us; showing hatred to us by attitude, action and words; despising, insulting and attempting to hurt us and our interests; persecuting or causing us emotional and physical pain. By their action, they demonstrate plainly and clearly that they are instruments in the hand of the enemy of our soul (Matthew 13:39). What is the reaction of a true child of God to human enemies? ***“Love them, bless them, do good to them, pray for them.”*** The first thing is to forgive them, because without such forgiveness we cannot love them as Christ commanded. Then, we pity them and pray that they might repent, turn from sin and Satan to God and righteousness so as to escape eternal judgement and the condemnation of enemies of righteousness.

SCRIPTURAL PROVISION OF GOD'S CHILDREN FOR THEIR ENEMIES

Matthew 5:43-47; Acts 14:15-17; Romans 2:4; Luke 6:32-36; Deuteronomy 7:3,4; Matthew 7:6; 13:10,11; Matthew 20:20-23; 10:12-16; 2 Samuel 10:1-18.

God's children are to be like their Father Who is in heaven. In what way? God gives sunshine and rain, fruitful seasons, harvest and food to the just and the unjust. We, as children of God, should also give appropriate and good things to our enemies. Yet, we must ***“rightly divide the Word of truth.”*** We cannot give to anyone, friend or foe, that which belongs to God only. Our heart, worship, life, family and children, tithes and talent all belong to God. Also, we cannot give to anyone, brethren or enemies, that which only God, not man, can give.

Only God can give salvation, spiritual gifts, ministry, heaven and eternal rewards. And we cannot give to our enemies what God has commanded specifically to be given to Him, to His Kingdom or to our family and children. What then are we to provide and give to our enemies? ***“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.”*** Love him: forgive and give.

If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.
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