

SHIFT

Shift: Your Hate (Week 5)

LifeNotes

TALK IT OVER

Main Idea

Loving our enemies is a choice born out of obedient surrender.

Key Scriptures

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:43-48

Do not repay anyone evil for evil...On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:17, 20-21

If there is a bad relationship, seize the issue, and make it better through love.

When we SHIFT our hatred to love, we become true representatives of Christ's Kingdom.

When we admit we are incapable of attaining the unattainable, we can accept the grace of the un-earnable.

Start talking.

- Why does it seem so easy to hate?
- We all tend to place people in categories. Those like us, those not like us. How would you define your categories?
- What feelings rise up in you when you think about those that may be "against" you?

Start thinking.

- Why doesn't Jesus address our feelings regarding our enemies?
- What do we need to surrender in order to choose to love?
- Read Matthew 5:43-48. What does sending sun and rain on the good and the bad reveal about God's character toward mankind?
- Read Romans 12:17, 20-21. What are the tangible actions Paul calls out in response to our enemies?
- How has "loving our enemies" been viewed as a Gospel of Passivity? How is it actually and Gospel of Action?
- How would vs. 48 come across to those listening on that original hillside?
- How was Jesus using that statement to reveal the inadequacy of their self-righteousness?

Start sharing.

- What are little (or big) ways you may cling to a sense of your own self-righteousness?
- Why does Jesus expect more from His followers? What more does He expect from you?
- How has Jesus shown love to you?

Start doing.

- What relationship do you need to make better through love? What practical step can you make toward that this week?
- Is there a political/public figure you carry hatred toward? Spend the next five days praying for them. Asking God to bless them and draw them closer to Himself.

Closing prayer.

Jesus, I confess I hold hatred and anger toward my enemies. Forgive me for that. Thank you that you always shower love on me in spite of sin and evil ways. Help me to do the same to others. Help me to love, bless, do good, and pray for those who have hurt me and those I have considered enemies. In all things help me to be your representation of love and compassion to a world desperate for it. Amen.