

God Time Day 1: Return Good for Evil



Jesus had a lot to say in this famous sermon about how God’s people should treat others when they are mistreated. The reason God’s people should act this way is because it is the way God acts towards us.



Read Matthew 5:43-45, 48
⁴³You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



Circle the two things we must do in verse 44.

Underline the first part of verse 45 (“so that...”).



Rewrite verse 44 and the first part of 45 in your own words:

In a world that delights in revenge and stories of payback, God’s way is remarkably different. He doesn’t just send blessings to “the good,” but upon all. If we are to be His children, we must practice this same kind of grace. If others insult and mistreat us for our faith, we can – by God’s power – still respond with words and acts of blessing.

Think of someone who has talked badly about you recently.

Pray right now for God to reveal to you how to show them God’s love and be a blessing to them. Write down two things you can do this week.



1.

2.

God Time Day 2: Praying for a Blessing

Re-read Matthew 5:43-45 from yesterday.



Rewrite Matthew 5:44



Read Romans 12:14, 19-21
¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

¹⁹Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God’s wrath, because it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord. ²⁰But If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head. ²¹Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Draw some comparisons between what Jesus said in Matthew to what Paul wrote in Romans:

Matthew 5:43-45	Romans 12:14, 19-21

Underline the word “bless” both times in Romans 12:14.

Bless is repeated to emphasize the point. God invites us to break the cycle of hate by blessing our enemies.



What is it that is keeping you from responding in this godly way when others mistreat you?

Cross out that excuse and ask God to give you the faith to handle things His way.



When you’ve done it, tell someone about the results of the change you’ve made in your response to mistreatment.

God Time Day 3: Giving Without Expectation



Read Matthew 5:46-47

46For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? Don't even the Gentiles do the same?

The saying "Scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" reflects the way so much of our world works. The last sentence in the passage above makes it clear that doing something good just to get a reward is nothing special – not the kind of unconditional love God's people should show.



What is something loving you can do for someone today without expecting anything in return?

God Time Day 4: When You Want to Give Up



All this week's devotionals are intended to help us love more like God does. All of us know someone who feels deep pain due to a loved one who rejects their love. If we could only understand how much God has endured so we can be reunited with Him, it would help us to never give up hope.



Read Isaiah 40:31

But those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint.

This passage reminds us that only God's power is enough to see us through when we feel like giving up; we can trust Him and have the strength to take one more step.



Ask God to show you how to keep trying. Plan what you will do this week in response:

God Time Day 5: Set Loving Boundaries



Read Matthew 5:38-42

38You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. 39But I tell you, don't resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as well. 41And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42Give to the one who asks you, and don't turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

This passage raises some strong issues about how far Jesus really expects us to go when others mistreat us. Some might understand these verses to mean that we should become literal doormats, enabling evil to act without consequences. Others might simply dismiss Jesus' commands as unrealistic.

A healthy understanding of these verses will mean that we continue to struggle with how far Jesus intends for us to go in not fighting back and blessing others when we are mistreated.

While we learn not to fight back, we also understand that God's love does not mean enabling bad choices or acting as if being mistreated is okay. Part of loving people is the willingness to set appropriate boundaries.



How have you struggled with Jesus' teaching on this subject?

What do you need to do this week to apply His teaching to your life?



Share that plan with a trusted friend.

