

# *How to Really Love Your Enemies*

**Appetizer:** The real test of love does not come in how we relate to the kind and loveable but how we relate to the cruel and despicable.

Discussion: A friend keeps borrowing things from you but either fails to return them or returns them damaged. Confrontation has done no good. Do you (a) make the friend pay for anything lost or damaged, (b) refuse to loan anything else to your friend or (c) continue to loan anything he or she asks for? Explain.

**Main Course:** Read Matthew 5:38-48.

1. What do you find most difficult about Jesus' instructions in these verses?
2. Jesus' quotation of "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" comes from Exodus 21:24. How would this instruction to Israel's judges clarify the meaning of justice?
3. The Pharisees evidently extended this principle from the law courts (where it belonged) to the realm of personal relationships (where it did not belong). What consequences might have resulted?
4. Looking at verses 39-42, how would you contrast our natural responses in such situations with the responses Jesus expects of us?
5. What is accomplished by turning the other cheek or going a second mile?
6. In what situations might Christ's commands apply today?
7. According to Jesus, how are we to treat our enemies and why (vv. 44-45)?
8. In what ways is Jesus' command extraordinary (vv. 46-48)?
9. Does all this mean that Christians are to be doormats for the world to walk on? Explain.
10. How was Jesus himself an example of the principles "Do not resist an evil person" and "Love your enemies"?

**Dessert:** How might you reflect your Father's character when you are mistreated?