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## Redefining Love

### Matthew 5:43-48

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#### Series Summary

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We all want our lives to matter. But how do we know if we're doing the right thing? In a world where nothing is guaranteed, nothing is certain, you can build a life that can last. In the Bible, we can find practical guidance for everyday life as learn build a life that will last as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

#### Main Text

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**Matthew 5:43-48** (ESV) – <sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Big Idea – Forgiveness Does Not Change the Past but It Does Transform the Future**

#### Three Commands of Redefining Love

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##### Command #1 – Love the Unlovable: Major in Mercy and Minor in Malice

**Matthew 5:43-44**<sup>a</sup> (ESV) – <sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies...

##### Command #2 – Pray for Your Persecutors: Stand Out by Standing in the Gap

**Matthew 5:44**<sup>b</sup>-<sup>47</sup> (ESV) – <sup>44b</sup>...And pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45a</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

## Command #3 – Achieve the Incredible: Follow in the Footsteps of the Savior

**Matthew 5:46-48** (ESV) – <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

### Memory Verse

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**Matthew 5:44** (ESV) – But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

### Challenge:

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You are called to consistently apply the divine principles and truths found in the Word of God. Take the next step in your study by (1) Discussing and applying the sermon with your small group, (2) Participating in a Sunday School class, or (3) Answering the questions that follow.

- What are practical ways that as Christian you can “Love your enemy?”
  
- What practical advice would you give to a fellow Christian to help them learn to pray for those who persecute them?
  
- How can you do a better job following in the footsteps of Jesus this week in the areas of love and forgiveness?