

RED LETTER LIVING OUTLINE: "One Radical Command"

I. The command of Jesus regarding how to deal with people who make us crazy, and/or who are our enemies: Matthew 5:43-48

A. "I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."

1. A trait of the people of the kingdom of God; we become more whole and integrated as people as we learn, with the Holy Spirit's help, to do this.
2. Included in this command are the people who make us crazy; an enemy is someone who....
3. People who make us crazy are not necessarily enemies, but they are much more common than enemies, and very hard to love.

B. To love our enemies or people who make us crazy is not...

1. It is to treat them kindly, to extend grace to them, forgive them, and particularly, to pray for them....

II. How do we begin to grow in obeying this radical command of Jesus?

A. We begin by acknowledging that we can't do it on our own.

B. We ask for the supernatural, transforming help of the Holy Spirit to love our enemies and those who drive us nuts.

1. Then amazing things start to happen in our inner core.
2. The Holy Spirit imparts to us, degree by degree, the same love Jesus had for his enemies....
3. Our part is to cooperate with the Spirit's promptings within us.

C. The kinds of things the Spirit whispers to us... examples

III. Then the Spirit moves us to pray for those who are so difficult in our lives.

A. We pray that God reveal himself to them and begin to change their hearts; the accounts are many of God doing this....

B. Praying for them changes our whole attitude toward them.

C. Can you now see how heeding this radical command will eventually make us more whole and rid us of bitterness?

IV. Time of praying for our enemies and those who make us crazy.

RED LETTER LIVING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are your initial responses/reactions to these verses?
2. What does love mean with regard to one's enemies? What does it mean we do?
3. Can you think of a better way to deal with an enemy or with people who make you crazy? How do you typically deal with them now?
4. What benefit comes from realizing that you probably make somebody crazy as well?
5. What are the spiritual qualities needed to live out these verses? How do we progressively take on these qualities in our everyday living?

What do I hear God saying to me?

What is God calling me to do?