

Love Your Enemies


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Abstract

“Love your enemies” is the commandment of Jesus. But to “love your enemies” is never easy. In this article, I would like to share 3 ideas to know how to love enemies, which are: First, to love your enemies is to portray the love of God Second, to love your enemies is to forgive them. Third, to love your enemies is to pray for them.

Keywords: Love, enemy, forgive, love your enemies

Introduction

Life experience shows that we cannot hate a person and at the same time want them to be happy, nor can we pray for someone whose heart is full of hatred towards that person. So, for our enemies to be happy and peaceful, we need to love them. That is the condition for us to become children of God. But how do you love your enemies? In this article, I would like to share two ideas: to love your enemies is to forgive them and pray for them.

Actions of love

First, to love your enemies is to forgive them: because of the love of man, God wants man to live. When teaching his disciples: “*Love your enemies*”, Jesus wanted to uphold the principle: Only love and forgiveness can free people from hatred, and only love can bring life to people.

Jesus himself did it on the cross by praying for those who crucified him: “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*” (Lk 23,34). This prayer is the pattern of “*loving your enemies.*” In turn, the deacon Stephen, the Church's first martyr, prayed for those who stoned him: “*Lord, do not hold them accountable for this sin*” (Acts 7,60). St. Stephen's frank and merciful attitude towards those who harm him is “love of his enemies,” according to the words of Jesus. And today, we, too, have an excellent example of forgiveness that is Saint John Paul II. After he was healed from the assassination attack, he was shot in St. Peter's Square. One of the first things he did was visit the man who had assassinated him in prison and grant him pardon things and harmony.

Thus, love for the enemy must be verified by forgiving one another. Genuine forgiveness is the first duty of those who live Christian charity. This obligation has been incorporated into "Our Father." If we want our prayers for forgiveness to be sure to be accepted by God, we must also be willing to forgive one another (cf. Mt 6,12-15). Saint Paul has warned us: "*The Lord has forgiven you. You must also forgive others*" (Col 3,13; Eph 4,32). Loving the enemy is the noblest proof of the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness; It is a sign that we are being conformed to Christ.

Second, to love your enemies is to pray for them: Jesus' invitation: "Love your enemies" and "pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5,44) are closely linked, illuminating each other. It can be said that "love your enemies" is "pray for those who persecute you," and conversely, "pray for those who persecute you" is "love your enemies." Speak like A.W. Tozer: "*we can't pray in love and live in hate and still think we are worshiping God*"¹. Jesus invites his disciples to love generously to depict the mercy and forgiveness of the heavenly Father.

Indeed, prayer is a sure sign of forgiveness. So to show forgiveness to those who are our enemies, we must pray for them, wishing them well. Experience shows that when we love someone, we often remember them and pray for them, such as parents, siblings, and even ourselves. Praying for our enemies shows that we love them. This means that: Christian charity requires that we not only be at peace with our enemies but also pray for them, walk with them, love them, help them and do them favors.². The obligation to pray for those who persecute you always transcends all boundaries, all the boundaries of the art of behavior or communication.

Therefore, to love one's enemies is to love those who harm, despise, speak ill of, and slander oneself, not seeking revenge, not repaying evil with evil, but repaying favor with kindness, always praying and wishing for them to have good luck. As was the case with David, hated by King Saul, hunted to kill, but David still did not harm the God-anointed man when he could do so (cf. 1 Sam 26:7-9) In my eyes David acted foolishly, missing a "rare" opportunity, to eliminate his enemies, but David chose God, not choosing his interests but harming others.

Conclusion

In short, "loving one's enemies" is never easy, but it is a condition, a sign of whether a person is a child of God or not (Mt 5,45). And we are only true children of God when we forgive those who make mistakes and pray for them. As a Christian, each person has to bear witness to God's love in the world, not only loving our benefactors but also our enemies. The role model for Christians is Jesus. In addition, Christians are obligated to perform that act of love as Jesus himself did and commanded: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15,12).

¹x. <https://busyblessedwomen.com/how-to-love-your-enemies/>, Truy cập ngày 29/7/2022.

² x. Gerard H. Luttenberger, *Dẫn Vào Kitô Học*, tr. 212.

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Biodata

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