



THE DEMONIZATION OF OUR ENEMIES

There are no two ways about it, this discussion is a tough one. First and foremost, can we even approach the topic with a clear and open mind to hear what Jesus said? The idea of “loving” our enemies stops most of us in our tracks. “How can I love them? They hurt my family?” “How can I love them? They’re evil and kill innocent people?” “Do you really think Jesus loved the ones who battered and crucified him?” Good and relevant questions; what Jesus said is right. How do we get to where he is in our hearts and minds and make loving all people the very core of who we are?

When you are faced with something that makes your emotions rise and your temper flare, how do you calm down so you can listen and process?

Why does putting a label on people hinder our ability to love and care about them?

TALK ABOUT IT

[Read Matthew 5:43-48.](#)

What reasons does Jesus give for loving people who oppose us?

What does it mean that God shows kindness to both the righteous and the unrighteous?

How can language escalate a conflict?

What’s the difference between demonizing someone and dehumanizing them?

Why is dehumanization especially dangerous?

How can we love people we strongly disagree with without compromising truth?

APPLY IT

How does understanding “perfect” as “complete or mature” change your expectations of how you can love all people?

Please don't name any names here! Try to be as general as possible.

Who is someone you find difficult to love? What makes it difficult?

When you think about that person, what assumptions do you tend to make about them?

What would it take to treat that person with dignity, even if you disagree with them?

How might praying for someone change your attitude toward them?

If Jesus' command is to become "complete in love," what is one thing you need to address now that is keeping you from obeying him?

PRAY TOGETHER

These are tough discussions. We have to deal with the world we live in and be honest in how it negatively affects us. The best way to become "perfect and complete" is to ask for God's help. Do that together now.