



practicing the way

# forgiveness

## Based on last week's Practice

1. What applications from last week's study were you able to put into practice?
2. What stories from this past week would you like to encourage the group with?
3. What did you find most challenging from last week's study?

## Overview

As we start our next Practice of the Way we must remember that to follow Jesus as his disciple, or apprentice, means to orient your life around three goals:

Be with Jesus

Become like Jesus

Do what Jesus did

Today we begin looking at Jesus' teaching on the practice of forgiveness in the face of conflict. As an apprentice of Jesus we are called to be the Light of the World in contrast to the darkness around us, One of the ways we are called to be light is not to be a people of hate, but of love. And the way we are to accomplish this is to love our enemies. But loving our enemies is not in us. Our instinct is not to love, but to seek revenge and retaliation. It is not in our power to love our enemies, but Jesus is going to show us how with His help we can.

Jesus shows us that God loves his enemies, that the heart of God is for us to love our enemies. Then he shows us how we love our enemies, how our hearts can change. And finally, why does it matter that we love our enemies? Because there is no greater way to display God to the world than to love our enemy, When we were the enemy of God He loved us! How can we not respond to God for loving us and on behalf of those who are against us.

## Scripture

Matthew 5:38-45

## Discussion

1. In our scripture reading, how is Jesus showing the difference between what has been taught, and what God is actually like?
2. What does loving our enemies look like for us in daily life?
3. What does it look like for us to be obedient to this word from Jesus?

4. How do you get to a place where you can love your enemy?
5. How does prayer change your heart toward your enemy?
6. How does doing good cause a change of heart that turns into action?
7. If prayer changes our heart, how does kindness change the heart of our enemy.
8. Why does it matter that we love our enemies?
9. Dean made the statement that there is no greater way to display God to the world than to love your enemy. How should this look in our Community and in our lives?
10. What do you find most encouraging and most challenging about this practice?

## Application

Over the next 6 days there will be scripture readings and application questions for you to meditate on and pray through to help you Practice the Way of Forgiveness

1. Day 1: Read Matthew 5:14-16. Matthew 5:43.
  - Is there anyone who hates me that I have not forgiven? What action steps will I take to be the light in their world?
2. Day 2: Read Matthew 5:44.
  - Who do I need to pray for? Spend time in prayer for them and for a personal heart change.
3. Day 3: Read Luke 6:27.
  - Who do I need to do good things for? What good things will I do?
4. Day 4: Read Luke 6:28
  - For whom do I need to pray that God will bless? In what ways will I respond to anger with kindness?
5. Day 5: Read John 13:35
  - If Practicing the Way means exhibiting the Gospel through my love, who is Jesus calling me to love and how am I going to express that love?
6. Day 6: Read Romans 5:8-9
  - Spend time today meditating and praying on what my response to God should be for loving me when I was still His enemy and on behalf of those who are against me.