

A Focus Study: Living with and loving hard-to-love people

From the Gospel of John 12:4-11 (NKJV)

⁴ But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. ⁸ For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

⁹ Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

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²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. – Matthew 5:23-26

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

- ³ “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed *are* the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.
- ⁹ Blessed *are* the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. - Matthew 5:1-10

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¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:17-21

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. – Gal 6:7-10

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³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father 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. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. – Matthew 5:38-48

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