

**Love your enemies**

**Luke 6:27-36 – Leader's version**

**Check in** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

**What does the passage say and mean?**

30 minutes

1. **SHOUT-OUT** What does it mean to love someone?

*Brainstorm onto the flip-chart. Then look up 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a and add anything that's not already on the flip-chart.*

2. Read Luke 6:27-36 What is your immediate reaction to Jesus' teaching?

3. Why do you think Jesus begins, 'But to you who are listening, I say...'

*('But I tell you who hear me', NIV1984) He's saying that only those who are really listening will take his teaching on board and apply it. Jesus has just made a comparison between those who are blessed and those who are not in v20-26. As the conversation continues, he seems to be linking those who listen with those in v20-22 who are blessed – make this link with your group if they have recently studied Luke 6:17-26. Challenge your group to consider whether they are merely hearers of Jesus or genuine listeners.*

4. How does Jesus say we should treat our enemies in v27-28? Why is this so difficult and why do you think Jesus asks it of us?

*Love, do good, bless, pray for. Jesus asks this of us because it is the way God treats his enemies and, as disciples of Christ, we are becoming more like Him.*

5. Read v29-31. What do you think Jesus means?

*(Gk v29 - a punch in the jaw, not a slap – the intensity of the insult has been lost in translation).*

*The world tells us 'do to others as they do to us'. Jesus tells us 'do to others as we would have them do us'. Here he's telling us to forgive our enemy. If you turn the other cheek, you don't defend yourself but you forgive the first punch, if you give away all your layers of clothing you make yourself defenceless and forgive*

*the first insult. (This doesn't mean we should let others take advantage – there are times when we have to say no, e.g. when being bullied). Jesus is telling us to deny our rights and put His honour before our own. It isn't easy!*

**6. Read v32-36. What point is Jesus making?**

*He's saying that we should love others whether we get any return from it or not, because our love comes from our renewed nature in Christ, not from any thought of reward. The world loves those who love them back. We are to be different from the world by showing the love of Christ which does not look for reward. It's worth pointing out that by definition we don't like our enemies, but we are called to love them and work for their good. This may develop into liking them.*

**7. What does 'mercy' mean, v36? What does it mean to show mercy?**

*Mercy = not giving someone the punishment they deserve. (Grace = to love them).*

**8. How can we be equipped to love our enemies in this way?**

*Only through Jesus. Consider with the group how much God has loved them and forgiven them. Consider Jesus' love for all he met, whoever they were and whatever they had done. Loving our enemies is simply doing for other people what God has done for us. But it's not the way the human heart works and we may have years of bad habits and broken relationship patterns to overcome. We need to pray for God's help as we seek to live in a way that brings honour and glory to Him, not self.*

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What would loving your enemies look like in your daily life?

*Spend some time thinking about how things would change in attitudes, conversations, relationships, actions etc. if people really lived v27-28.*

*Remember that this can be hard to do in or out of prison without significant opposition from other people.*

*NB Avoid naming any enemies / groups who are felt to be enemies.*

**Check out** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

**Love your enemies**

**Luke 6:27-36**

1. What does it mean to love someone?
2. Read Luke 6:27-36. What is your immediate reaction to Jesus' teaching?
3. Why do you think Jesus begins, 'But to you who are listening, I say...'
4. How does Jesus say we should treat our enemies in v27-28? Why is this so difficult and why do you think Jesus asks it of us?
5. Read v29-31. What do you think Jesus means?
6. Read v32-36. What point is Jesus making?
7. What does 'mercy' mean, v36? What does it mean to show mercy?
8. How can we be equipped to love our enemies in this way?

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What would loving your enemies look like in your daily life?