

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?



8-WEEK STUDY

on the challenging teachings of Jesus
in the Sermon on the Mount

WEEK 5

Discussion Guide

**If Jesus was serious,
then we must love our enemies.**

Matthew 5:43-48

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?



WEEKLY READING

Primary text from this week: Matthew 5:43-48

Secondary texts from this week: Luke 10:25-37

GETTING STARTED

Goals for this session: To better understand Jesus' teaching on loving our enemies in Matthew 5

Missed the sermon? Watch it at www.youtube.com/venturamissionary

Break the Ice: Name one person that you struggled to get along with when you were in school. What was the source of the conflict between you and the other person?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On Sunday, we explored a section of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus commands His followers to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Why is this such a difficult command for us to obey?
2. We probably don't have many people in our lives that we would consider *enemies*; however, there are probably groups of people or types of people (and maybe even some individuals) that annoy us, irritate us, frustrate us, or upset us. Who are some of those people for you?
3. Have one person in the group read **Romans 5:6-10** and another person read **Ephesians 2:1-5**. How do these two passages connect with what Pastor Doug talked about on Sunday about loving our enemies? (**Hint:** What do these passages tell us about how *God loved His enemies*?)
4. On Sunday, Pastor Doug used four words to describe our path towards loving people who aren't like us:

Attention - learning to listen and pay attention to people who are not like us

Proximity - spending time with people who are not like us

Humility - Admitting that we can learn from others who are different than we are

Sacrifice - Serving people who are different than us

Which of those is most difficult for you? Why?

5. Read the following passages and discuss what they tell us about how to love others like Jesus:

Romans 12:14-18, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 John 4:7-12, Luke 10:25-37

A detail from Michelangelo's 'The Creation of Adam' fresco, showing Jesus Christ with a beard and long hair, wearing a red robe, pointing upwards with his right hand. He is surrounded by other figures, including a man with a beard and a man with white hair.

PRAYER

Pray for each other: Have the group pray for each other God would continue to transform each of us into the kind of people who love our enemies and pray for the people who irritate and annoy us.

Pray for yourself: Pray and ask God to continue to transform you into the kind of person who loves your enemies and prays for the people who irritate and annoy you.

Pray for your four: Identify four people who don't know Jesus (friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers/classmates), and commit to pray for them consistently. Pray that **(1)** God would reveal Jesus to them, **(2)** that God would turn their hearts towards Him, **(3)** that God would put Christians in their path to represent Christ, and **(4)** that God would give you an opportunity to share what Christ has done in your life.

ACTION STEPS

Do the following this week: Identify someone in your life that annoys you, irritates you, frustrates you, or is different than you. Commit to praying God's blessing over them every day this week.

NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.