

## “Expectations of a Christian”

October 20, 2019

Luke 6:27-38

### I. Introduction

Jesus began His sermon to His disciples, including the newly chosen Twelve, by describing how they should view themselves. He declared blessed those who are spiritually poor, recognizing that in themselves they have no way to obtain eternal salvation; who are hungry, longing for the righteousness that only God can give; who mourn, sorrowing and grieving over their sin; and who are persecuted yet respond in joy because the hatred, exclusion, insults and rejection is for their loyalty to Jesus Christ. Jesus wasn't teaching that poverty, hunger, tears, and persecution were a blessing in themselves. He was describing the inner attitudes one must have if he is going to experience the blessedness of the Christian life.

In this next section of His sermon, Jesus continued to address His genuine disciples—those who truly “hear” Him, i.e., those who understand and obey God’s word. The unbelievers may have heard His words, but they wouldn’t understand them. [1 Corinthians 2:14](#) says, “The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.”

Jesus knew that anyone who lived for eternal heavenly values would get into trouble in this world. As He said in [Matthew 5:13-16](#), Christians are the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” and sometimes the salt stings and the light exposes sin. Sinners show their animosity by hating us, excluding us, insulting us, and even physically abusing us. This is something we must expect—in [John 15:20](#) Jesus said, “Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”

*So how should a Christian respond to all this?* Jesus answered this question in today’s Scripture. He began by giving four commands as He described the Expectations of a Christian.

### II. Four Commands

**A. First, Love your enemies.** This is the supernatural love, the sacrificial love, the agape love, that is to be the basic characteristic of a genuine believer—turn to Matthew 22:34-40. Along with loving God and fellow believers, Christians are also to love unbelievers—contrary to the old nature, this includes one’s enemies. Instead of seeking revenge, Proverbs 25:21 says, “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.” Leviticus 19:18 summarizes the Old Testament teaching on how to view one’s enemies: “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”

**B. Do good to those who hate you.** Instead of seeking revenge—getting even, Christ’s disciples are to “do good to those who hate you.” This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> command. This refers to doing things that will benefit one’s enemies. Exodus 23:4-5 explains it this way, “If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it.” When they love like that, believers will, as Paul wrote in Romans 12:21, “overcome evil with good.”

**C. Bless those that curse you.** Christians must not only show love for their enemies by what they do, but also by what they say. Instead of responding in kind, true disciples of Jesus Christ are to “bless those who curse” them, i.e., they are to say good things in response to their evil words. Like their Master, many of those listening to Jesus were going to be insulted, rejected, and cursed as they obeyed His teachings, some would even be excommunicated from the synagogue, many were going to be killed but His disciples must bless them that curse them—1 Peter 3:9 says, “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”

This didn’t mean that unbelievers weren’t to be warned of the consequences of their sin. In Matthew 23:13-36, Jesus warned the Pharisees that they were hypocrites and blind guides; for example, in Matthew 23:27 He said, “You are whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean.” Unbelievers must be warned that apart from repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are doomed to an eternity in hell. But when

Christ's followers confront sinners, they must have an attitude of deep concern and love for them—turn to Romans 9:1-3 to see such an attitude. This is blessing those that curse you.

**D. Pray for those who mistreat you.** Finally, Jesus commanded His followers to “pray for those who mistreat you.” In particular, we are to pray for their salvation. In Acts 7:60, as Stephen was being stoned to death, “he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’”

### III. These are hard concepts, so Jesus gave some Illustrations of How to Respond in Love

**A. First, if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other.** Jesus wasn't forbidding Christians to defend themselves if they are dangerously attacked. In Luke 22:36 He told the Apostles to buy a sword for protection if they didn't have one. Governments are in place to protect their citizens with swords and to prevent wrong and anarchy (Romans 13:3-4). In Luke 3:14 John the Baptist didn't forbid men to be soldiers but told them not to abuse their authority.

In John 18:22-23, Jesus demonstrated the proper response to being struck unjustly during His trial before Annas, the high priest. When Jesus was struck by one of the officials, He didn't turn His head and ask to be struck again. But He didn't lash out in anger and revenge at such mistreatment either. Instead, He pointed out the injustice of the act. To turn the other cheek is, like Jesus did, to accept hostility and ill treatment without hatred or retaliation, but to show love in return. We must have wisdom to know when to claim our rights—turn to Acts 16:35-40. Even Christian love must exercise discernment—Paul prayed in Philippians 1:9-10, “That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.”

**B. Then Jesus said, “If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.”** Jesus' point isn't to stand on a street corner and allow oneself to be robbed, rather Christ's disciples are not to retaliate but to continue to lovingly minister to those who persecute them—even if that means losing their shirt (their inner garment) as well. The goal—the Prime Directive—is to win others to Christ.

**C. Thirdly, be willing to give to everyone who asks you.** Since the Bible condemns laziness and those who won't work ([2 Thessalonians 3:10](#)), this assumes that the person asking has a legitimate need. That the person may not repay the loan should not keep the believer from graciously, lovingly meeting the need.

**D. Finally, if someone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.** Even in the case of outright theft, Christians are not to descend to retaliation, but to continue showing love. If there is a need, they are not to demand the stolen item back.

#### **IV. Life Principle: Do to others as you would have them do to you.**

Jesus then summed it up and gave the life principle, what we have come to call the Golden Rule: *Do to others as you would have them do to you.* Jesus called for selfless love, love that focuses on the well-being of its object. The love He commands seeks to treat others the way it would want to be treated by them—even if they do not love that way in return. This is how God loves. This supernatural love, this agape love is impossible on the human level. Only Christians are able to love this way because as [Romans 5:5](#) says, “**God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**”

#### **V. Worldly Love verses Christian Love**

Because this supernatural, self-sacrificing love was so different from the love sinners show to one another, Jesus contrasted Worldly love with Christian love.

**A. Worldly love** 1) *Worldly love loves those who love them.* Jesus said, “**Even sinners**”—including tax collectors, the dregs of Jewish society ([Matthew 5:46](#))—“**love those who love them.**” 2) *It does “good to those who are good to” them.* On the flipside, such an attitude justifies seeking vengeance on those who fail to do good to them. 3) *It “lends to those from whom you they expect repayment.”* Jesus’ point is that lending to people to create an obligation, such as expecting that they will in turn lend to you, is another example of the self-serving love of sinners.

**B. Jesus then contrasted Christian love.** 1) *Christian love loves their enemies,* not only those who love them. 2) *Christian love does good to all,* not only to those who do good to them. 3) *Christian love lends with no strings attached, “without expecting to get anything back.”*

Jesus said that when one shows Christian love, agape love, “then your reward will be great.” This reward is not only a heavenly reward, but, also, one in this world. When Christians love with the unconditional, sacrificial, supernatural love God puts in their hearts, sinners will be astounded, and they will recognize that such a person is a “son(s) of the Most High,” i.e., he is a Christian. He has been transformed by the Holy Spirit. A Christian can be a testimony for God when “he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked;” when he is “merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” When believers love like God does, demonstrating kindness and mercy, they give evidence to the watching world that He is their Father. They are also often rewarded with having the privilege of sharing the Gospel with those they are dealing with.

## VI. Christian Attitudes

**A. Do not judge & you will not be judged.** As this section came to a close, Jesus gave 4 more commands, the first was “Do not judge & you will not be judged.” 1 Timothy 5:20 says, “Those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning.” 2 Timothy 4:2 says, “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction.” James 5:20 says, “Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” In Matthew 10:16, Jesus told His disciples to be discerning, to be “shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.” When Jesus said, “Do not judge,” He was commanding His disciples not to condemn their enemies with a harsh, critical, compassionless, vengeful attitude—they are to judge BUT with a loving attitude, caring for the welfare of the person.

**B. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> command, “Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned,” is like the first just with more finality to it—the judge has now become the executioner. In both cases, the Christian needs to remember that apart from God’s grace, he is no different—turn to Titus 3:3-7.

**C. Forgive and you will be forgiven.** Instead of judging and condemning others, Christians are called to “forgive and you will be forgiven.” There is no room in the kingdom of love for holding grudges or being

bitter. Like Jesus ([Luke 23:34](#)) and Stephen, believers are to forgive their enemies no matter how hostile they may be. Without agape love—Christian love—this is impossible.

**D. Give and it will be given you.** Finally, Jesus commanded, “Give, and it will be given to you.” This calls for generosity. And Jesus said, if one is generous, “A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

The picture of the good measure pressed down draws on what happened in the ancient marketplace, where a seller placed grain in a container. Then he shook the container to get the grain to level out so that he could put more grain in the measure. That is how God measures for the generous and those who give. In fact, he gives so much that the cup runs over. God honors a compassionate spirit. If we live to give, God will see to it that we receive; but if we live only to get, God will see to it that we lose. This principle applies not only to our giving of money, but also to the giving of ourselves in ministry to God and others.

## VII. Conclusion

In [John 13:1-17](#), we find the record of Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet. As you may remember, Jesus and His disciples were in the upper room preparing to celebrate Passover hours before Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion. The disciples hadn’t discerned what was happening—they were too busy fighting about who was going to be the greatest in the Messiah’s kingdom. So, Jesus demonstrated love and service by washing each man’s feet—including Judas’ feet whom Jesus knew was going to betray Him in less than an hour. This is loving your enemy. The love of God for us is also pictured in [John 3:16](#), “For God so loved the world (the world full of sinners) that he gave (by choice, He gave) His one and only Son...” This is amazing love and grace.

[1 Peter 2:21](#) says, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God incarnate, showed us how to love as He loved us even to dying on the cross for us. As you think of His love for you, what is your response? Isn’t the rational response to love Him back and to desire to do all that He asks of us as a token of our love for Him? Jesus’ commands in this part of His sermon should not be detestable or revolting—they should be a

way for us to show Him and others around us, how much we love God; that we are His children. If these commands are odious, then I would challenge you to look at your heart, is Jesus truly you Lord and Savior?