

* but forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

Trust in God, Love your enemies

Trust in God, -that is the easy part

Love your enemies, -that is an interesting subject to ponder, not something we usually give a lot of thought to *

Supposedly when you pray for those you dislike or who dislike you, God opens your heart to seeing people the way he sees them.

Loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you is hard but when we hate our enemy we become the very thing we hate.

It was 1998, Paul was in Ontario attending his father's funeral.

I was coming home from my first week at a new job.

Driving up the road past our property I noticed the hill was black.

Turning the corner into our driveway - the gravel was straw.

Amidst the numerous phone messages inside was a short one -

"sorry about the fire"

I had missed the fire trucks, police and media that afternoon in my yard, but all I was concerned about was how close the flames had come towards the house.

After the neighbor replaced some of our trees because their garbage fire got out of control, they stopped speaking to us.

So, love thy neighbor, love your enemies, be merciful.
seems to come as a package.

Automatically general psychological characteristics, feelings and behavioral traits of human kind regarded as shared by all humans kicks in, this is called human nature.

Why are we supposed to love our enemies.

Loving our enemies is a very unnatural thing to do but:

There are 10 tips for life's greatest challenge - to love thy enemy

1. Stop, breathe, detach yourself
2. put yourself in their shoes
3. seek to understand
4. seek to accept
5. forgive and let the past go
6. find something to love
7. see them as yourself or a loved one
8. find common ground
9. open your heart
10. reach out to them

Whether you are a Christian or not, there is something in the teachings of Jesus that is worth contemplation for anyone who seeks to be a better person.

His urging that we love our enemies, not just love thy neighbor which in itself can be a difficult thing.

But love your enemies, that's a powerful message and it turns out to be one of the greatest challenges in life.

The hatred we might feel for other people causes destructive actions we are not proud of or make us happy.

To love your enemy is to find it in your heart to put aside any wrongs and to love them as a fellow human being.

It is not easy but if possible express it through words or by doing something nice or with a smile.

Reasons why you should love your enemy -

- you will be happier
- you could change that person's life
- you could make a friend
- you set a better example for others
- it is better for society
- it is a test for you as a person

There is a very ancient story that tells of two friends walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they have an argument and one friend slapped the other in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt but without saying anything, wrote in the sand, "today my best friend slapped me in the face."

They kept on walking until they found an oasis where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning but the other friend saved him.

After the friend recovered from the near drowning he wrote on a stone "today my best friend saved my life." The friend who had slapped and then saved his best friend asked him, "after I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now you write on a stone, why?"

The other friend replied, "when someone hurts us we should write it down in the sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But when someone does something good for us we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

Learn to write your hurts in sand and to carve your benefits in stone.

Some of the most important teachings in scripture are about loving our enemies:

If your enemy is hungry, give him food as we read in Proverbs

When Stephen was being stoned to death, his final words spoke forgiveness to those who identified him as their enemy, saying Lord do not hold this sin against them.

When Jesus was on the cross, he said of his tormentors, father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.

The widow of Darcy Haugan, coach of the Humboldt Broncos says she has forgiven the semi-truck driver who has pleaded guilty for the deadly crash that killed her husband and 15 other people last April.

Christina Haugan said she needed to forgive the driver because she didn't want her kids to be living in anger and that her late husband would expect and want that from his family.

What an inspiration when I heard that.

Maybe I was selected for a reason to think about this topic.

It has given me the opportunity to consider how forgiveness fits in my life.

Nelson Mandela said "as I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I would still be in prison."

Bitterness and hate, we all possess these qualities but you can choose how to use them.

We can't change the whole world but we can change our world. AM