

HOW TO LOVE SOMEONE
YOU HATE



SMALL GROUP
DISCUSSION SERIES

MIKE MAZZALONGO

STUDENT WORKBOOK

bibleTalk^{TV}



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How to Love Someone You Hate

Mike Mazzalongo

This small group series and title are based on a book by Milton Jones that explores the biblical strategy we can use to obey Jesus' difficult command to love our enemies.



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1. PERSONAL INVENTORY

In this first session, Mike lays out the basic objectives of the class and leads the class in listing the people or organizations we can't stand.

WHAT WE WILL LEARN

How to deal with the people you can't stand.

How to deal with the negative feelings that these people may have caused.

How to react and think differently in the future when this happens.

How to share your burden with others.

PERSONAL INVENTORY:

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____



BEARING BURDENS

Galatians 6:2

HOMEWORK - ROMANS 12:14-21

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In this first session I only wanted to break the ice and show that everyone has someone or something that they cannot stand. We have also begun to develop a basic relationship of trust with our fellow group members. Let us keep our discussions about these things among ourselves in order to maintain a level of privacy.

2. GOD'S STRATEGY

In this session, Mike lays out God's practical and doable approach to loving those we can't stand.

- Ephesians 6:12

- Romans 3:23

- Romans 12:14-21

GOD'S STRATEGY: AGGRESSIVE GOOD

Fight / Flight

1. Good is more _____

- I John 4:4 _____

2. Our objective is to _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What strategy do you normally use with those you cannot stand - fight or flight? Explain.

2. How is "overcoming evil with good" an aggressive action rather than a passive action?

Open discussion

3. Describe a situation in the world or the church where overcoming evil with good could be applied to solve a conflict.

Open discussion

4. Describe a situation in your life where this has been (or should be done) to resolve a conflict.

Each person reply

3. BLESSING NOT CURSING

The first step in putting God's strategy to work requires a change in what we think and say about the person we hate.

- Romans 12:14 _____

- II Timothy 3:12 _____

CURSING

1. Vulgar language _____

2. Bad things about God _____

3. Bad things others _____

4. Treats, angry words _____

BLESSING

1. Say good things about _____

2. Say good things about _____

3. Say something good to _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what places have you most often been wronged or received persecutions? (Each discuss)

2. When you curse, which of the four ways does it usually manifest itself?
(vulgarity, God, gossip, the person) - Open discussion

3. Why does "blessing" your enemy seem so foolish to the world? - Open discussion

4. What obstacles stop you from blessing the one you hate?

4. WALK A MILE

Mike talks about the role that empathy plays in the process of loving our enemies.

- Romans 12:15-16

1. Rejoice with those _____

2. Mourn with those _____

3. Live in harmony _____

4. Do not be holier _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When something goes wrong in your life, do you seek first to understand or be understood? Where is your focus? Give an example. Open discussion

2. Have you ever had an "opposite" emotion (i.e. the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son)? What caused it? Open discussion

3. How can you better understand where someone is coming from? Open discussion

4. Consider a person you cannot stand. What, in your opinion, are some of the emotions, thoughts and positions that may be causing their annoying or hurtful behavior? (Each discuss)

5. NEVER MEANS NEVER

In this lesson, Mike reviews the reasons why we should never take revenge when dealing with our enemies.

NEVER TAKE REVENGE

- Romans 12:17a, 19 _____

Vengeance _____

WHY LET GOD JUDGE?

1. Vengeance is not _____

2. The person _____

3. You will be _____



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your own personal conflicts, why do you want revenge? Open discussion.

2. Have you ever taken revenge? What happened? How did you feel? What results? Open discussion.

3. What are some ways that we take revenge in church? Open discussion.

4. Have you ever had a "Saul" in your life? If so, how could you have been more like David when attacked? Open discussion.

6. DO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

In this session, Mike lays out the type of action that convinces our enemies of our goodwill towards them.

- Romans 12:17b _____

PLAN AHEAD TO DO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR YOUR ENEMY IN THE SIGHT OF ALL.

- James 1:19 _____

- I Thessalonians 5:15 _____

Do something beautiful is the second part.

Do it in the sight of all men is the third part of this admonition.

EXAMPLES



HOMEWORK

Think up a strategy of something you could do for your enemy that could be beautiful. Do not do it, just think of what you could do if circumstances and your heart would permit it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe some of the changes in your thinking since the beginning of the course. Each discuss.

2. When you are wronged, how do you usually respond emotionally? Open discussion.

3. What is your typical reaction when you see the person next time? Open discussion.

4. What are some of the "beautiful things" that could be done for the person you are at odds with?

7. WIN THE PEACE

Mike discusses the working out of aggressive good in actively seeking peace with our enemy.

- Romans 12:18

DO NOT SIMPLY TRY TO WIN THE WAR, WIN THE PEACE

- Matthew 5:9

CONDITIONS IN SEEKING PEACE

A. If it is possible

- I Corinthians 7:15

B. As far as it depends on you

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give an example in your own life where your goal was to win the war and not win the peace.

2. Why is it not always possible to win the peace with everyone?

Provide personal examples if possible.

3. What kinds of things do you think may be blocking the peace you seek with the person you are at odds with?

4. Select a person to lead a prayer for God to remove the roadblocks to peace in your situation.

8. MAKE ROOM FOR GOD

In this second to last session, the group will discuss how bringing God into the equation will affect the people in conflict with one another.

- Romans 12:19 _____

1. God Judges _____

2. God Cares _____

3. God Heals _____

Before healing the relationship, God must first heal you, and He can.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Summarize your feelings about your enemy in one word only, then elaborate on that one word. Each share in turn.

2. If you were permitted to judge your antagonist, what would the judgement and punishment be?

3. How has God dealt with a specific failure in your life? Open discussion.

4. What form will "making room for God" take in your situation? Open Discussion.

9. LOVE BOMBS

The final class describes the most challenging step in loving our enemy, love bombing.

- Romans 12:20

1. Find a _____

2. Look at your _____

3. Heap on the _____

SUMMARY

1. There will always be _____

2. These principles are _____

3. Sometimes you are _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What resources do you personally have to offer people who have wronged you? Open question.

2. Have you ever reached a point of forgiveness with an enemy? If you have, share that experience with your group.

3. On a scale of 1-10 how successful have you been in learning to love the person you came into the class hating? What is still needed for you to reach your goal?

4. What has been the most beneficial thing you have learned from this class? What would the first piece of advice that you would give someone who is struggling with this problem (trying to love someone they cannot stand)?



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