

Case Study Part 3 - "People"

3.5 Love Our Enemies

Matthew 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy." **44** But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** that you may be children of your Father in heaven..." (NIV)

1 John 4:16 "... God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them **18** There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear ... **19** We love because He first loved us. **20** Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen." (NIV)

Case Study

Who are our enemies in business? Our competitors? Those who are strong in market share and pricing power, oppressing us by accepting low-margin prices? Or those with powerful political connections, winning big and profitable projects while leaving us with only crumbs on the table? Or those who have strong-armed us into selling at low prices and never paid us on time? Or those who have betrayed us?

We all resent these unfair and unjust players and practices. We probably hate them. How can we ever love our enemies? Yet, that is exactly what Jesus commanded us to do.

Doing good to those who wrong us is counterintuitive and contrary to human nature. However, we are called to be the shining light in the dark world of business. We are called to be different and set apart. We are Christ's ambassadors - His royal priests.

Discussion

Discuss practical ways in which we can love our oppressors in business.

Heaping Burning Coals on our Enemies' Heads

Proverbs 25:21 “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. **22** In doing so, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.” (NIV)

The above proverbs mean to cause someone to feel remorse by returning good for evil.

The MacArthur Bible on Romans 12:20c (“You will heap coals of fire on his head”) states: “Refers to an ancient Egyptian custom in which a person who wanted to show public contrition carried a pan of burning coals on his head.”

In 2 Kings chapter 6, the story is told of the king of Aram’s repeated attacks on Israel, which were frustrated by Elisha the prophet, who forewarned the king of Israel. The king of Aram was infuriated and ordered that Elisha be captured. He sent a strong army and surrounded Dothan by night, the city where Elisha was. Elisha’s servant was frightened.

Elisha said in 2 Kings 6:16 “Don’t be afraid ... those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

Then the servant’s eyes were opened, and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. Then the Lord struck the approaching Aramean army with blindness. In their blindness, Elisha led them to Samaria, the capital of Israel.

The king of Israel asked Elisha in 2 Kings 6:21 “Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?”

Elisha replied no.

Then Elisha said to the king of Israel in 2 Kings 6:22 “... Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink. **23** So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master.” 2 Kings 6:23 “...So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel’s territory”.