

DAILY READING PLAN



Week of March 26, 2023

Reframe: If you love those who love you,
what reward will you get?

Matthew 5:43-49



Day One: Read Matthew 5:43-45 | *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.*

You've heard that it was said... But I say to you..." Jesus was constantly helping people reframe their understanding of everything. The way of Jesus is often called "the Third Way." There is this way and that way, and then there is the Jesus way. So take a few moments and meditate on how Jesus has caused reframing in your life. How does following Jesus cause you to do things differently?

Day Two: Read Matthew 5:44 | *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*

Traditionally, the season of Lent has invited us into a reframing process called "Repentance." Jesus continually challenged his followers to rethink, reframe their lives, to go in a new direction by renewing their minds—exchanging their minds with the mind of the Spirit. That's what repentance is: reframing everything in a healthy new direction. So, in what areas of your life do you need rethinking and reframing?

Day Three: Read Matthew 5:46 | *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*

Jesus asked his followers this question: "If you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" The word "reward" often seems transactional. That is not the case here; we don't love people to get a reward. But there is a gift. What is the gift or blessing in loving those who do not love you? Consider the list of challenging people in your life and pray for each person. Pray that God would soften your heart toward them. Ask God to open a space in your heart to be open to them; ask God to help you find just one thing you could love about them too.

Day Four: Read Matthew 5:46-47 | *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*

When dealing with difficult people and reframing those relationships, it's important to remember that reframing begins with us. Would you agree or disagree? What part of this is challenging for you? So try this: the next time you find yourself in a difficult situation with someone, shift your focus away from what you want the other person to do and focus on what you might be able to do differently.

Day Five: Read Matthew 5:48 | *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

What comes to mind when you read the word "perfect" in verse 48? I know, right? Let's reframe this phrase. The phrase "be perfect" could be translated as 'be complete' or 'be fulfilled.' Eugene Peterson in the Message Bible translates this verse: "In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you." How would living generously with others impact your relationship with difficult people?