

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



**If you love those who love you,
what reward will you get?**

March 25 & 26, 2023

We've all experienced the challenge of dealing with difficult people. In the Sermon on the Mount, we tap into the ancient wisdom of navigating others who frustrate us, and gain some timely insight into how to make sure we're not "that person" for someone else.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: MATTHEW 5:43-48

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

We could probably call the Sermon on the Mount "The Great Reframing." At least a half dozen times, Jesus says, *You've heard it said, 'You shall not do this, that, or those other things.'* The challenge to reframe comes in the next breath when Jesus says, *"But I say to you..."* Jesus wanted His followers to go in an entirely new direction and He had a strategy for helping them do just that – he asked questions. In the last of several questions in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asks this: *"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?"* That's a question that's as relevant today as it was on the day Jesus first asked it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share a story about an encounter you've had with one or more of the following types of annoying people: the "Know-It-All," the "Interrupter," or "the Whiner." Now share a story about a time YOU were one of those annoying people.
- As a group, brainstorm other types of annoying people. When have you encountered or been those people?
- From Pastor Paul's sermon: *The rethinking that we're called to do begins with each of us asking ourselves what we can do to move toward healing, experience more compassion, and bring more life to every relationship.* Share about a relationship in your life that needs healing. What is one concrete first step you can take?
- Pastor Paul challenges us to remember that *difficult people are created and loved by God.* How might trying to see one of the difficult people in your life the way God sees them make a difference? Have you ever tried this? What was the result? Has anybody ever shown you this kind of unconditional love and compassion? What was that like?

CHALLENGE: Because difficult people are also created by God, God is at work in them, even now. So spend some time this week praying about that. In your prayers, wish them all kinds of goodness. Ask God to help you find just one thing that you could love about them, and let God's Spirit take it from there.