

Upside Down: Treat Others the Way Jesus Treats You.

DAY 1

LOVE YOUR ENEMY

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you" (Matthew 5:43-44 NIV).

When you talk to God, do you ever think to pray for those who HURT you?

That's what Jesus said we should do. But guess what? Most of us don't ever think to pray for those who hurt us. In fact, the opposite is most likely true. When someone hurts us, we want them to hurt too. The last thing we want is for God to help them.

Loving your enemy is really hard. But a good way to start being kind is to pray for them. Ask God to change your heart towards them. Ask Him to help you forgive them for the wrong things they've done. Ask Him to help you choose to respond in kindness.

Think about someone who hurt you this week. Talk to God about the situation and ask Him to help you love like Jesus even when it's hard.

DAY 2

NO PAYBACKS

"Don't pay back evil with evil. Don't pay back unkind words with unkind words. Instead, pay back evil with kind words. This is what you have been chosen to do. You will receive a blessing by doing this" (1 Peter 3:9 NIV).

When someone hurts you, do you ever want to hurt them back? Do you ever spout off an unkind word just because you want them to hurt too? It's easy to pay back wrong for wrong. But there is a better way. When you know and follow Jesus, the way He lives through you should show up in how you treat others. And guess what? When you love like Jesus, there's a blessing waiting for you too.

In the space below, write down some ways you could respond kindly to unkind things people say.

DAY 3

ENEMY TO FRIEND

"But love your enemies. Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then you will receive a lot in return. And you will be children of the Most High God. He is kind to people who are evil and are not thankful" (Luke 6:35 NIV).

Enemy is a strong word. If you were asked, "Who are your enemies?" it might be hard to come up with an answer. But there may be people in your world who are difficult to get along with. The kid who drives you crazy? Remember, God loves him just as much as God loves you. And maybe the kindness you show could point him towards God's love.

Write the word "enemy" in large block letters horizontally on a piece of paper. Think about how God can help you turn that "enemy" into a friend by the way you treat them.

Using either of the "E's or the "N" from "ENEMY", write the word "FRIEND" in large block letters vertically down the page. Then color your picture completely so that the word "enemy" is gone and only "FRIEND" remains.

DAY 4

DO OVER

"Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive one another, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done" (Ephesians 4:32 NIV).

- "But he broke it!"
- "You messed up everything I just built!"
- "What do you mean you forgot to bring your ball? We can't play without it?"
- "But he said something mean first!"

It's not always easy to show love to others. Especially when they hurt you. But just because it's hard doesn't give us a pass to be mean. We love others "because of what CHRIST has done." Jesus died on the cross, taking on the punishment that we deserved ourselves so that we could be forgiven. And because of that amazing act, we are challenged to be kind and loving to each other.

Think about a time this week when someone wasn't kind to you. Now think about how you responded. After reading this verse, if you could go back in time, would you change the way you responded? Why or why not?

*Love like Jesus
even when it's hard.*