

How to Know We Are God's Child

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.** But I say unto you, **Love your enemies,** bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:** for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Mat 5:43-45). Jesus taught that we must love our enemies “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” Of course the converse is also true—those that don’t love their enemies, aren’t children of God.

Paul spoke of his former life before Christ, “for what I would, that **do I not**” (Rom 7:15) “**how to perform** that which is good I find not” (v. 18), “For the good that I would **I do not**” (v. 19). God’s commandment “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Lev 19:18), isn’t the friends and family plan! It includes our enemies. Paul decried his hopeless state of being unable to perform the good of loving his enemies. It’s not that it was just hard for him to do, but that he couldn’t do it.

He went on to teach in the next chapter, “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not **subject [hypotasso 5239] to** the law of God, **neither indeed can be**” (8:7). The Greek *hypotasso* means “to subject one’s self” or “to submit” as he used it later, “have not **submitted themselves [hypotasso 5239] unto** the righteousness of God” (10:3), “Let every soul **be subject [hypotasso 5239] unto** the higher powers” (13:1). It doesn’t subject itself to God’s law of loving its enemies and “neither indeed can be,” “nor is it able to do so” (NET), “nor can it do so” (NIV). Paul said the same to the Galatians, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal 5:14), “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit [*breath*], and the Spirit [*breath*] against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye **cannot do the things that ye would**” (5:17). Without God’s breath in our hearts, we cannot sincerely love our enemies as ourselves. We can put on a fake smile around them but we can’t pray earnestly for them as we would our own family, “pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Again, Paul went on to say in Romans, “The Spirit [*breath*] itself beareth witness with our spirit [*breath*], **that we are the children of God**” (8:16). Being able to wholeheartedly love our enemies bears witness that we have God’s breath and that

we are His children. The love Paul was unable to show without God’s breath, he showed profoundly with, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, **my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost [*breath*]**, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that **myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren,** my kinsmen according to the flesh.” (9:1-3). He loved his antagonistic Jewish brethren to such an extent that if he could somehow trade places with them so that they would be saved and he would perish, he would!

He went on to say, “Therefore **if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:** for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but **overcome evil with good.**” (12:20-21), “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (13:9). The good we couldn’t do before, we now overcome evil with.

Without argument, David was the greatest example of love in the Old Testament. He wasn’t impressive looking as his older brothers, “man looketh on the outward appearance, but **the LORD looketh on the heart**” (1Sa 16:7), “I have found David the *son* of Jesse, **a man after mine own heart**” (Act 13:22). His father-in-law Saul tried repeatedly to kill him, but David never recompensed anything in return even when he had opportunity. And his own son Absalom tried to usurp his throne yet David loved him so much that he would have died in his place if he could have, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! **would God I had died for thee,** O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2Sa 18:33). He loved his enemies to such a degree that he was accused of loving them more than his friends, “Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; In that **thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends**” (2Sa 19:5-6).

Of course our greatest example of love is Christ Himself. He didn’t just wash the feet of 11 but all 12, “After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to **wash the disciples’ feet**” (Jhn 13:5). And they had no idea who it was that would betray Him, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that **one of you shall betray me** ... He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, **Lord, who is it?**” (Jhn 13:21,25), indicating He had never treated Judas any differently the entire time they walked with Him. Finally, on the cross He prayed for His enemies, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luk 23:34). The Son of God sincerely loved His enemies. To be God’s sons and daughters, we must also love our enemies.