GET USED TO DIFFERENT: A NEW WAY TO LIVE



Perfect Love

Get Used To Different | Week 17 | Matthew 5:43-47

INTRODUCTION

In today's message, we are going to learn that perfect love loves everyone perfectly, even the most unlovable. If you are to love others the way God loves others (and the way God loves you), you are going to have to take some very radical steps.

KEY POINTS

1. Embrace Your Foes

Jesus tells us how we're to love our enemies: *"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* (Matthew 5:44).

You don't just tolerate them, you don't just ignore them, you don't just leave them alone, or do them no harm. Jesus says you are to actually be praying for those who persecute you. You are to bless them when they curse you. You're to do good to them when they hate you. Sounds like a tall order, doesn't it?

Let me clarify one thing. There's a big difference between liking people and loving them. Jesus never commanded that we like our enemies. Liking somebody is an emotional response. But love is not just an emotion. Love is an action. I may not like everybody, but I'm commanded to love everybody, whether I like them or not, and you're certainly not going to like an enemy, but Jesus says you should still love them. That's what perfect love does.

2. Emulate Your Father

Jesus said that when you love your enemies, you're acting just like your Father, and after all, you are his son and daughter. But just to be clear, Jesus was not saying that loving others is what gets you into the family of God.

In that day, when people would speak about other people, they would rarely use adjectives like we use today. For example, instead of saying, "He is a peaceful man," a Jew would say, "He's a son of peace." Instead of saying, "She is a kind woman," a Jew would say, "She's a daughter of kindness."

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Perfect Love

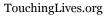
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So Jesus was saying that when you love those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you, you are a child of your Father. You are emulating your Father in heaven.	NOTES
3. Elevate Your Faith You will find it almost impossible to go through this life without encountering enemies. Maybe it's the boss at work who mistreats you, somebody who spreads vicious lies about you, a family member who abused you or belittled you, or maybe someone who just simply opposes you because you're a follower of Jesus.	
We cannot control who our enemies are or how they treat us. But, by the power of the One who died for us and all of our enemies, we can always respond with perfect love the way a child of the Father should. And in doing so, our faith in Jesus will only grow stronger and deeper.	

Perfect Love

Get Used To Different | Week 17 | Matthew 5:43-47

- 1. What is a practical way you can love someone you don't like?
- 2. Why is it important that, as followers of Jesus, we emulate our Heavenly Father?
- 3. When was a time you saw your faith grow as a result of loving your enemies?



Prayer 101

Get Used To Different | Week 18 | Matthew 6:5-8

INTRODUCTION

In this message, we're going to take a class called Prayer 101 where we are going to learn the basics of prayer from Jesus Himself. We'll see that prayer is not something we do to get what we want from God but to get what God wants for us. To put it simply - wrong prayer is a waste of time, but right prayer is worth the time. With this in mind, let's dive in and see what Jesus wants to teach us in Prayer 101.

KEY POINTS

1. Be Secretive Where You Pray

Amazingly, Jesus does not begin with telling us what to pray, but where to pray and why to pray. He wants to make sure we're praying in the proper place for the proper reason. You can pray anywhere, anytime. But Jesus says there's a special place where you can pray and connect with God unlike any other place, where you can hear God better than anywhere else, and that is when you pray alone, in secret. When you get alone with God, you can experience fellowship with Him in a very unique and meaningful way.

2. Be Sincere When You Pray

You show God when you take the time to go to that secret place and get alone with Him that you are sincere about what you're doing. Just as you want His full attention, you want to give Him your full attention. When you're in that secret place, there's no applause, nobody's clapping for your great praying, there's no acclaim, and nobody's telling you what a great Christian you are. There are no awards. You don't get a plaque or a gold watch when you are praying. When you are in the secret place, it's just you and God, and that's what God wants more than anything else. Just you and Him.

Prayer 101

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3. Be Specific In What You Pray

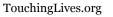
You may be thinking, "If God already knows everything I need, why bother asking to begin with?" If that's you, then don't miss the true point of talking to God in prayer. God is not concerned as much with the length of your prayers as He is with the depth of your prayers. God is saying, "You don't need to dwell on your shopping list. It's okay to tell me what it is, but I already know what's on it. What I want is your heart, your love, your affection, your praise, your fellowship, and your undivided attention.

In other words, prayer is not primarily about getting things from God, it's about spending time with God. Is not about how long you can pray, but how deep you can go in your prayers. Depth, not length, is the winning formula for praying.

Prayer 101

Get Used To Different | Week 18 | Matthew 6:5-8

- 1. Where is your secret place you go to pray and spend time with the Lord?
- 2. What does it mean to have depth to your prayers?
- 3. What's something you've yet to talk to God about that's been on your heart? What's keeping you from praying to Him about it?



Prayer 201

Get Used To Different | Week 19 | Matthew 6:9-10

INTRODUCTION

As we continue our three-week series on prayer, we're going to find that the key to effective prayer is found in four words: focus on the Father. In today's message, we'll discuss the two steps we need to take to pray this kind of Father-focused prayer.

KEY POINTS

1. Show The Father Worship

Jesus teaches us that when we start our prayers, we are to begin with addressing God and acknowledging His goodness and Lordship. The reason why this is so important is that the more time you spend recognizing who you're talking to, where He is, and what He wants, the less concerned you'll be about who you are, where you are, and what you want. Real prayer begins with putting God in His proper place and you in yours. He is the Father. We are His children.

2. Focus On The Father's Will

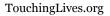
If we're being honest, focusing on God's will is often the hardest part of prayer. There will be times when it is the most difficult and the least favorite part. Yet, this part of the prayer is the real point of prayer. The number one priority of prayer is not to get God to do what you want but to ask God to do what He wants.

The reason why this is so hard is because it is difficult to sign a blank contract. But if you're going to pray the right way, you've got to say to God upfront, "I am taking all of my plans, my ambitions, my goals, my agendas, and my desires, and I am surrendering all of them to you." You won't be able to go any further with God in any prayer you pray until you get that issue settled. Before you get to your wants, your desires, and your agenda, you've got to go to God with that contract already signed with no fine print.

Prayer 201

Get Used To Different | Week 19 | Matthew 6:9-10

- 1. How do you usually start your prayers?
- 2. What is scary for you personally about praying for God's will over your own?
- 3. What is one area of your life where you can start praying for God's will to happen instead of your will?



Prayer 301

Get Used To Different | Week 20 | Matthew 6:11-15

INTRODUCTION

As we've seen in the last two messages in this series on prayer, the first part of prayer focuses on God and His glory. Today, we're going to see how the second part of prayer focuses on us and our good. We're told specifically that we ought to ask God for three things when we pray, and those three things deal with the three biggest needs in our lives. The first deals with our physical needs, the second deals with our emotional needs, and the last deals with our spiritual needs. The first thing we ask for deals with our present. The second thing we ask for deals with our past, and the third thing we ask for deals with our future. Let's dive into what this looks like practically in our own prayers.

KEY POINTS

1. We Should Pray For God To Provide Our Needs

When it comes to asking for God to provide, we are to ask God for our daily bread, not our daily cake. He has promised to meet our needs. He's never promised to meet our greeds. God has promised to give us what we need, but not always what we want. We may want cake, but what we need is bread.

Again, Jesus knew exactly what He was doing as He taught this aspect of prayer because one of the things that this part of the prayer teaches us is to live one day at a time. God does not provide for today's needs tomorrow, and God does not provide for tomorrow's needs today. He is never early. He gives you what you need at the exact moment you really need it and not a moment earlier or a moment later.

2. We Should Pray For God To Pardon Our Sins

If prayer is going to be effective, you have to make sure you're on speaking terms with the God that you're praying to. If you are going to be on speaking terms with God, two things have to be true of you. First of all, you have to be forgiven, and second, you have to be forgiving.

Prayer 301

Get Used To Different | Week 20 | Matthew 6:11-15

Now, once again, Jesus shows just how brilliant He is and why He is the expert on prayer because if your relationship with God is wrong, then internally, you're going to be eaten up with guilt. If your relationship with others is wrong, then internally, you're going to be eaten up with bitterness. And guilt and bitterness are two huge barriers when it comes to having a healthy prayer life. Therefore, we must consistently be asking for forgiveness and repenting of our own sins while also consistently forgiving others when they sin against us.

3. We Should Pray For God To Protect Our Purity

The key to overcoming temptation in your life is to be fully surrendered to the will of God before you are ever tempted. One of two things will be true every time you're faced with a temptation. You will either surrender to that temptation and sin, or you will surrender to the Lord, who can help you to overcome that temptation, so you won't sin. That's why the key words of this section of the Lord's Prayer are "lead us not." If somebody is leading, that means you have to be following. If you follow the Lord on a moment-by-moment basis and you are surrendered to His will before you ever walk into any situation, He will never lead you into a situation that you cannot handle.

NOTES

Prayer 301

Get Used To Different | Week 20 | Matthew 6:11-15

- 1. What are some examples of needs and wants in your life? How are they different?
- 2. How have you seen bitterness and guilt affect your prayer life?
- 3. When was a time you were faced with a temptation, but the Lord gave you a way out?