



WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS

DIGGING DEEPER

LOVE IN ACTION

NOVEMBER 5

If Jesus was serious, then His followers are defined by radical countercultural love.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever chosen to do something good for someone who has mistreated you? What happened as a result?

2. Read **Matthew 5:38-48**.

Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say?):

- What do you notice and what are you curious about?

Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean?)

- What do you learn about God?
- What do you learn about humanity?

Now make some applications (what's my response?)

- How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
- What should be our response to this passage?

3. Read **Romans 12:14-21**.

- What similarities do you see between Jesus' words and Paul's exhortation here in Romans 12?
- We are not meant to confuse non-retaliation (turning the other cheek) as being passive. How do we see in both Jesus and Paul's words that the call is, in fact, active? What are we to actively do instead of retaliating?

4. Who would you consider your "enemies"? What is your heart posture toward them? Do you actively pray for them and if not, what holds you back?

5. What is one way you can actively move toward your enemies in love?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:38-48 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Romans 12:14-21 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

PRAYER

Spend time putting Jesus’ words into action. Pray for your enemies and your own heart toward them. Ask God to help you see them the way He does and pray for their good.

TAKE A NEXT STEP

1. Consider thoughtfully reading or listening through the whole Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) weekly throughout the series.
2. Keep a prayer journal where you document prayers for your enemies. After several weeks, check in to see how God has answered your prayers, especially in the area of transforming your own heart.
3. For further study on the topic of loving your enemies, check out this sermon by Dr. Tim Mackie: <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/matthew-p9-love-your-enemies/>


FOR THE PARENTS

Hey, families! Here’s a look at what we’re covering with your kids so you can help them continue to grow at home during the week.

THIS WEEK

All month long we are going to be talking about how Joseph had big dreams but God’s plans for him were even bigger!

THE BIBLE: Genesis 50:20 “You attended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Genesis 50:20)



THE MESSAGE: Joseph had many dreams about his life. He was his father's favorite and got some special attention, and then all of a sudden his life was turned upside down. Joseph could have given up and become bitter. Instead, he trusted and followed God's purpose. What others meant for evil, God used for good. God continued to help Joseph prosper throughout his life, and we will learn more about that this month. Sometimes, things in our lives may change for the worse. Our friends or family members may hurt our feelings or even harm us. If we continue to love, honor, and follow God no matter what, He will take care of us because He sees the big picture.

THE BIG IDEA: God sees the big picture!

ASK THIS

Because sometimes you and your kid need a conversation-starter that isn't, "So . . . how was church?"

- ***How did God show up for Joseph when he was rejected and beaten by his brothers? How has God shown up for you when you were having a hard time?***

REMEMBER THIS

No matter what is happening, God sees the big picture for each of our lives. He has a plan for us. Just like He did for Joseph. This month, we will see how Joseph's story gets worse and worse - and yet, through it all, God was with him. As we read the Bible and allow God's Word to change us, we will understand that during difficult times, we can take a stand with the help of God, because his dreams for us are bigger than we can ever imagine.

NEXT WEEK

Next week, we will learn the story of Joseph in Egypt and how God can work out anything for our good!

