

THE WAY FORWARD: ENEMY LOVE

Life Group Questions | Sunday, November 1, 2020

How do you define or determine who an enemy is?

Read Matthew 5:43-48. Imagine Jesus in this scene, talking to his followers about life in God's Kingdom. How might Jesus have been feeling? What might Jesus have been thinking?

What stands out to you from Jesus' description of enemy love?

Loving people who are like us/who are people we like and hating those who aren't like us/who we don't like is as natural as breathing. Jesus is saying something radical about God's Kingdom. How does this radical call land with you?

Discuss the following quote from David Fitch's book *Us vs. Them*:

*We cannot help but make enemies in the way we do church in North America. As Christians, we have become blind to the antagonisms at work in our lives, both within the church and without . . . The word "enemies" speaks to the way of the world that "others" the person(s) we disagree with. This is what defines an antagonism: **the making of an enemy by turning someone into an "other."** The world runs on antagonisms—what I call the "enemy-making machine." It's a social dynamic in which we are always forced to take sides.*

In what ways do you see this enemy-making machine at work in you? How do you know when you are caught up in it?

Discuss the following definition of love from theologian Scot McKnight:

Love is rugged commitment to be with other people, to be for other people, and to grow together in Christ-likeness.

Imagine together: What if followers of Jesus, what if those of us at New Hope church, were not known by who we were against but by who we were for? What if we not only loved people who look like us, think like us and act like us, but we loved everyone, even our enemies?

Our **practice** for this week is to pray for our enemies. Choose one enemy this week. This could be a very real enemy—someone who is actually against you—or this could be someone we have made into an enemy: someone who doesn't look like you, think like you or act like you. Will you commit to praying for that person every day this week? Pay attention to what that experience is like this week and report back at your next group gathering.

Pray together. Close by reading Colossians 3:12-14.