

Sermon Title: Love God by Loving People

Sermon Text: Matthew 5:21-48

Date: October 20, 2024

1. Do you think expectations help or hinder relationships? What experiences have led you to feel this way?
2. When you think about God's expectations for your life, do you feel a sense of purpose or pressure? Why?
3. How do Jesus' six teachings challenge our cultural norms and social expectations? What makes Jesus' way better?
4. Last week, we heard that Jesus did not come to destroy God's Law but to deepen our understanding of it. As a group, pick one of the six teachings that you find challenging and discuss what Jesus is revealing about its true meaning.
5. The Greek word **τέλειος** (*teleios* // teh-LAY-os) is often translated *perfect* and means *to fulfill one's purpose or achieve an intended goal*; unlike our English connotation of flawlessness and unattainable standards, the biblical definition focuses on *maturity* and *completeness*. In light of this, what is Jesus saying in Matthew 5:48?

6. Read Matthew 5:43-48. How are we like God when we love our enemies? How does loving others demonstrate our love for God?

### Jesus' Six Teachings in Matthew 5:21-48

Do not murder (Ex. 20:13)	→	Do not hate		Keep short accounts
Do not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14)	→	Do not lust		Killing sexual sin, people are not sexual toys
Give certificates of Divorce (Deut. 24:1)	→	Do not divorce		Living out my marriage vows
Do not break oaths (Num. 30:2)	→	Do not make oaths		Saying what I mean. meaning what I say
Eye for an eye... (Lev. 24:19-20)	→	Turn the other cheek		Absorbing insults not retaliating
Love your neighbor, hate your enemy <sup>1</sup>	→	Love your enemy		Praying for my persecutors

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<sup>1</sup> This is likely a reference to the teachings of the Qumran community, a Jewish sect that lived in isolation near the Dead Sea from the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD. They were known for their strict religious practices, communal lifestyle, and anticipation of the end times. Their Community Rule says: "They are to love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God's plan, and to hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God's vengeance" (Qumran Community Rule 1:9-11).