

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48

I. A Higher Love

A. **The Precept**

1. Lev. 19:18 - "Love your neighbor as yourself"

B. **The Problem**

1. Narrow definition of "neighbor"
  - a) Lev. 19:33-34; Luke 10:29
2. Omission of "as yourself"
  - a) Love of self is supposed to guide our love
3. Addition of "hate your enemy"

C. **The Principle**

1. Understanding
  - a) Seeking what is best and doing what is best
  - b) Not unemotional (1 Cor 13)
  - c) Unmerited (Rom. 5:8)
  - d) Unconditional (Rom. 8:38-39)
  - e) Unselfish (Eph. 5:2)
  - f) Unrelenting (Phil. 2:7-8)

D. **The Practice**

1. Exercised in Prayer
  - a) Prayer changes both parties
2. Exercised Impartially
  - a) Just as God bestows sun and rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous, we are to show love to our friends and our enemies
3. Exceeds the World's
  - a) "Returning evil for good is devilish, returning good for good is human, returning good for evil is divine."