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Daily Devotional - Thursday, August 16, 2018 - Blessing Our Enemies

AUGUST 16TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Luke 6:27-28

As stories of the persecuted church reach us, we learn about Christians who respond to imprisonment, beatings, and harassment with unimaginable grace and dignity. These saints have learned to obey Christ's command to "love your enemies" (Luke 6:27), even in the harshest of circumstances.

We may never face physical persecution for our faith, but we will run across people who hate and mistreat us. The most natural response is to dislike them in return, but harboring ill will and bitterness chokes our witness and poisons our souls. Instead, Jesus instructs us to love our adversaries and treat them well.

The Greek word for this kind of love is *agape*—this is not a feeling based on the other person's likability or favor toward us but, rather, an action of the will that does what is best for the other person. It's the type of love God has and, therefore, is not something we can muster within ourselves. But as the Holy Spirit produces His fruit in us, *agape* love will flow through us, even to our enemies.

When someone wrongs or hurts us, it's an opportunity to be a witness for Christ. Rather than harboring animosity or seeking revenge, we are told to pray for our adversary. Instead of

begging the Father to defeat our enemy, we can ask Him for the strength to express genuine Christlike love in the face of opposition. That's the kind of prayer God is delighted to answer. And when we are privileged to meet the need of one who despises us, we might just see an amazing change in his life.

LAST UPDATED ON AUGUST 16TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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