LOVE YOUR ENEMIES??

Text: Matthew 5:44 - "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Exodus 23:4 - "If you meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again."

Proverbs 24:17 - "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth."

Romans 12:20 - "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."

(See: Prov. 25:21 & 22)

Better translated in Farrar Fenton's (1903) translation as: "a fire beside for his needs".

Back in the Bible days many carried pots & brazier (containers) on their heads. If a neighbor was a generous person, he/she would heap the brazier full of coals, to help feed others. The only fire the people often had back in those days was kept in a brazier. This brazier was used for cooking and for keeping warm in the cold weather. It was a symbol of kind generosity if a neighbor would give their coals to another person who needed the warmth or coals to make a fire to cook their food.

We often get confused in the Western world by these type of sayings in the Bible. We are not used to carrying containers on our heads, or even today, using a brazen container with coals to cook with. We have stoves and microwaves to cook with. We also have furnaces to keep us warm!

Luke 6:35 - "But love your enemies and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children
of the Highest, for He is kind unto the unthankful and
to the evil."

I Thessalonians 5:15 - "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

Romans 12:17 - "...recompence to no man evil for evil."

Romans 12:21 - "...overcome evil with good."

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BIBLE EXAMPLES OF RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL

1) Joseph (Gen. 45:4-7;15) (Joseph & his brothers)
2) Moses (Num. 12:13) (Moses interceding for his sister, Miriam)
3) David (I Sam. 24:17) (Saul recognizes David's forgiveness)
4) Elisha (II K. 6:22) (Elisha feeds his enemies)
5) Jesus (Lu. 22:50 & 51) (Jesus heals Malchus EARS)  
   (John 18:10)
6) Stephen (Acts 7:60) (Stephen prayed a prayer of forgiveness)

   "Lay not this sin to their charge." Stephen was literally being stoned to death as he said these kind and loving words to God in behalf of those who were killing him.

How can we love our enemies? We have to love God so much that we will do anything to obey and please God. ANYTHING! We must obey the Word at all costs to our flesh nature. Our flesh nature doesn't want to always do what's right, or love those who persecute and hurt us. Jesus though, did that very thing. Even on the cross, in his final moments, before his death. (Luke 23:34 - "...Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do.")

THINK ABOUT IT. IF YOUR "ENEMY" (anyone who mistreats you and seems to take pleasure in it or
maybe seems oblivious to your hurt feelings),
REALLY KNEW WHAT YOU KNEW (in the Word),
AND LOVED GOD (like you love God), THEY, TOO,
WOULD NOT ACT SO UGLY TO YOU. MAYBE
THEY’VE NEVER SEEN THE REAL LOVE OF GOD
IN ACTION BY ANYONE. EVEN THOUGH satan
MEANS IT ALL FOR HARM. JUST MAYBE GOD IS
USING IT SO THE "ENEMY" (by the way our real
'enemy' isn't a person, actually, it's the devil), WILL
SEE GOD'S LOVE IN Y - O - U toward them. No
matter what they've done. It all has to be forgiven.
It has to be. If you don't forgive them - God won't
forgive you! (see: Matthew 6:14 & 15) Remember
Jesus words, "...they know not what they do."
Maybe these negative folks don't really understand
what they are doing to a born-again believer, like you.
The people (back then) sure didn't understand
the depths of what they were doing to Jesus that
day on the cross, when He said those words.

You can ignore this message, or you can apply
it daily in your life. The choice is up to you.

God is not asking you to "hang out" (as friends)
with these people who have hurt you. He is asking
us (by His Word), to forgive, bless, and pray for
those who hurt, lie and try to upset our lives.

DON'T LET ANYONE STEAL YOUR JOY. God's
Word is greater than a person out to destroy your
reputation. God's Word can conquer any battle
you face. (See: Ex. 14:14)

Trust God today with His plan. What IS His plan?
Applying the above principles of His Word to your
life and watching how God can turn things around.
If the "enemies" don't change, you will still be a
happy person on the inside (and out), knowing you
are doing the right thing - loving those who mis-
treat you. Always love. Always forgive. It's for
your benefit and blessing that you do.

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