

Putting into practice the Bible's directives isn't easy. For example, it's hard to pray sincerely for .. our enemies and those who humiliate and belittle us. Yet God's Word is crystal-clear: "Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

As we lift our eyes to the Lord in prayer, we can be Spirit-enabled to put into practice His most difficult directives. Think of someone toward whom you have harboured a bitter spirit. Ransack your memory if necessary. As you consider that your feelings for that person, pray: "Lord, flood my heart with compassion, and purge away my unforgiving spirit. Help me to 'live peaceably with all men'" (Romans 12:18).

If multitudes of Christians did that, what a transforming difference it would make in our marriages, our homes, and our churches. We could have a big influence on our hate-filled world.

**Ground that is filled with roots of bitterness needs to be ploughed by the grace of God.**



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## Central Mountains Baptist Church

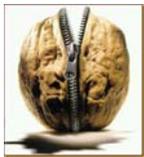
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### Grace To Pray

Love your enemies, . . . and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. —Matthew 5:44

It is difficult to understand how the Lord Jesus could pray for His brutal executioners .. (Luke 23:34). We often try to excuse our hard hearts by arguing that He was God, whereas we are sinful creatures. But Jesus calls us to follow His divine example.





# Romans: Truth in a Nutshell

(unzipped for you)  
Loving People

Romans 12:14-15 explains how love reacts to 3 different groups of difficult people:

## 1. When people are nasty, love \_\_\_\_\_, verse 14

**(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)** "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; {5} does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; {6} does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. {8} Love never fails. ..."

**(1 Peter 2:21-23)** "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: {22} "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; {23} who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;"

**(1 Corinthians 4:12-13)** "... Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; {13} being defamed, we entreat. ..."

**(Matthew 5:10-12)** "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. {12} "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

**(Matthew 5:43-48)** ""You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' {44} "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, {45} "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. {46} "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? {47} "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? {48} "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

**(Romans 12:19-20)** Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. {20} Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them



something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." [paraphrase]

## 2. When people are blessed, love \_\_\_\_\_, verse 15a

**(Exodus 20:17)** ""You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.""

**(1 Corinthians 12:26)** "... if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

**(Psalms 73:2-3)** "But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. {3} For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

**(Psalms 73:5)** "They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men."

**(Psalms 73:7)** "Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish."

**(Psalms 73:16-17)** "When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me; {17} Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end."

**(Psalms 73:25-26)** "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. {26} My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."



Ira Sankey

## 3. When people are hurting love \_\_\_\_\_, verse 15b

**(John 11:35)** "Jesus wept."

**(Galatians 6:2)** "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

**(Hosea 11:8)** ""How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? ... My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred."

**(Hebrews 4:15)** "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

**(Job 2:11-13)** "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place... For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. {12} And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. {13} So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great."

**(Job 13:4-5)** "But you forgers of lies, You are all worthless physicians. {5} Oh, that you would be silent, And it would be your wisdom!"

**(Job 42:7)** "And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

