

Who Is Your Enemy?

In Luke 10:25ff, a *certain lawyer* asked Jesus, “*Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*” Jesus turned the question back to him by replying, “*What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?*” After the lawyer had correctly answered from Deut.6:5 and Lev.19:18, Jesus simply said, “*You have answered correctly; do this and live.*” Now specifically note v.29, which says, “*But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘Who is my neighbor?’*” Now, two questions: 1) Why did the lawyer feel the need to “*justify himself*”? and, 2) How did he attempt to do so? Answers: 1) Though he may have *loved God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind*, he did not love his neighbor as himself, else he would thus have felt no compunction for *justification*; and, 2) He asked, “*Who is my neighbor?*” implying that the presumed ambiguity in the Law created a loophole through which his lack of application of it was *justified*. This is important relative to our title question, “Who is your enemy?” for the exact same reasons:

- 1) The Bible tells us a good deal about how *feel* about and *treat* our enemies:
 - Matt.5:38-48, “*do not resist him who is evil... turn the other cheek...give him you coat also...go with him two (miles)...love your enemies...pray for those who persecute you...*”
 - Rom.12:17-21, “*Never pay back evil for evil...respect what is right in the sight of all men...so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men...Never take your own revenge...leave room for the wrath of God...if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink...do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*”
 - But if we *haven't*, or *don't want to* feel these ways and do these things, we can always “justify” ourselves (at least in our own minds) by asking...
- 2) “Who is my enemy?” just like the *lawyer* in Luke 10:29. Who is *your enemy* that you think allows such? Is it:
 - The *opposition* political party?
 - BLM (Black or Blue Lives Matter), ANTIFA, or Government (local, state, national)?
 - Pro-Choicers, or Pro-Lifers?
 - Eco-Terrorists, Green Peace, Save the Planet, or Timber, Mining, Petro-Chemical Companies and Corporations?
 - Vegetarians, Vegans or Farmers and Meat-Eating Carnivores?
 - Socialists, Marxists, Communists, or Democracies, Republics, Lobby/Business-Driven Representative Democracies?
 - PETA or Beef, Poultry, and Pork Producers and Industries?
 - LGTBQ or Hetersexuals

Or is “Your Enemy” Your:

- Neighbor(s) or Anyone you don’t know/like personally?
- Fellow Commuters or some “Idiot” on the roadway?
- Co-Worker, Boss, or Employer?
- Family Member(s), Spouse, Parent(s), Child(ren)?
- Brother or Sister in the Pew?

Does classifying someone as an “enemy” somehow free us passages such as:

- [Eph.4:29-32?](#)
- [Eph.5:1-17?](#)
- [Col.4:5-6?](#)

But wait a minute, there are still those pesky “rules” about how we’re supposed to *feel* and *treat* our enemies in [Matt.5:38-48](#) and [Rom.12:17-21](#)! Even if they **are my enemy**, I still have to *love* them and treat them in ways that:

- 1) Manifest that I truly *want* and will *pray* and *work for* (*other cheek, extra mile, coat also*) “the best” for them *physically* and *spiritually*, [Matt.5:44](#);
- 2) Reflect the *light* and *love* of Jesus Christ, [Matt.5:14-16](#); [Rom.5:8](#).

Applications:

We may be vehemently opposed to “bullying,” and would be tremendously upset if our child(ren) instigated or participated in it. But if so, where did they *learn* it?

We seem to think nothing of name-calling, vile insults, hurtful caricatures, and all sorts of unchristian attitudes and activities if they are directed to someone we’ve deemed or classified as an “enemy”- especially, it seems, the political ones; and sadly, even if they happen to also be brethren.

We may even try to *justify ourselves* (remember [Luke 10:29](#)) with “But they are evil enemies of truth and righteousness!” That may well be, but how did Jesus feel and treat His enemies? Even those who *betrayed, beat, and crucified* Him? And we feel “justified” mistreating someone who disagrees with us politically, or cuts us off on the roadway?

“Who is my enemy?” It is an important question. Even if we answer it correctly, there are obligations involved that cannot be ignored or diminished... at least not without becoming an “*enemy*” of God, [Jas.4:4](#).

If you had been lied to, just didn’t understand God’s will, or had made a wrong judgment or done a wrong thing in spite of knowing better, how would **you** want to be treated? The way you’ve treated others in similar situations? Would you want to be ridiculed, rudely and mercilessly caricatured and criticized, or as [Matt.7:12](#) requires?