

## THE WAY TO THE HEART

TEXT: (Proverbs 25:21-22, NIV)

<sup>21</sup> If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

<sup>22</sup> In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

## INTRODUCTION

## A. Do the Unexpected

1. “Do not kill them,’ he answered. ‘Would you kill those you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master.’ So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel’s territory” (II Kings 6:22-23, NIV).

## I. KIND BEHAVIORS—THE WAY TO THE HEART

1. “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:44-45, NIV).

## A. The Law Did Not Promote Hatred

1. “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18, NIV).
2. “If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it” (Exodus 23:4-5, NIV).
3. “When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget” (Deuteronomy 25:19, NIV)!
4. “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you” (Proverbs 25:21-22, NIV).
5. “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:39-42, NIV).

## B. Proceeds from a Heart filled with the Goodness of God

1. "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit" (Matthew 7:18, NIV).
2. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Galatians 5:22, NIV).
3. "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8-10, NIV).

## C. Be Perfect—Like Your Heavenly Father

1. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48, NIV).

## II. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

## A. Example for Our Lives

1. "But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (I Peter 2:20-21).
2. "'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (I Peter 2:22-23, NIV).
3. "went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil" (Acts 10:38, NIV).

## B. Becoming an Example of Christ

1. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (II Corinthians 5:17-20, NIV).
2. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

## C. Becoming an Example of His Burden and Compassion

1. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36, NIV).
2. "Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him" (Matthew 20:34, NIV).
3. "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man" (Mark 1:41, NIV).
4. "When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry'" (Luke 7:13-14).

## III. LOVE—REVEALING GOD TO THE WORLD

## A. As Christ Loved

1. "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2, NIV).
2. "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:44, NIV).

**B. We Should "So" Love**

1. "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (I John 4:20, NIV).
2. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (I John 3:16, NIV).
3. "We love because he first loved us" (I John 4:19, NIV).
4. "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (I John 4:10-11, NIV).

**C. We Should Love without Fear**

1. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love " (I John 4:18, NIV).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. "Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred" (Proverbs 15:17, NIV).