



I Would Walk a Second Mile for You

Adapted from "Demands of Discipleship" series by Dennis Marquardt.

Our culture has redefined the term "love." Today, this term refers to a feeling. In our earlier history, the word love was more than a feeling. It was an act of commitment. As a commitment, there are certain dynamics that will be present even when our emotions are not aligned to that commitment. But, as a feeling the bond that love should have can easily break as the emotion or feeling is gone. Tragically, the power of love disappears when it diminishes to an emotional level rather than a principle level.

Read this powerful story about a commitment to love:

Chris Carrier of Coral Gables, Florida, was abducted when he was 10 years old. His kidnapper, angry with the boy's family, burned him with cigarettes, stabbed him numerous times with an ice pick, then shot him in the head and left him to die in the everglades. Remarkably, the boy survived, though he lost sight in one eye. No one was ever arrested. Recently, a man confessed to the crime. Carrier, now a youth minister at Granada Presbyterian Church, went to see him. He found David McAllister, a 77-year-old ex-convict, frail and blind. He was living in a North Miami Beach nursing home. Carrier began visiting often, reading to McAllister from the Bible and praying with him. His ministry opened the door for McAllister to make a profession of faith.

No arrest is forthcoming; after 22 years, the statute of limitations on the crime is long past. In *Christian Reader* (Jan/Feb 98), Carrier says, "while many people can't understand how I could forgive David McAllister, from my point of view I couldn't not forgive him. If I'd chosen to hate him all these years, or spent my life looking for revenge, then I wouldn't be the man I am today, the man my wife and children love, the man God has helped me to be."¹

The call of discipleship goes way beyond the expectation the world would have. Discipleship calls us to even love our enemies, not just tolerate them, but to actually love them. This kind of love is not an emotion; it is a real commitment that acts out in real ways whether the emotional element of love is there or not.

¹ Merv Budd, "Forgiving Others," *Leadership Journal* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1998), 73.

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COURAGE

C1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 5:38–48 (ESV) “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is 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. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Jesus came to change the Old Law into a New Law. What do verses 43-44 mean to you?
- Jesus changed fear and punishment by bringing love into the equation and not just for our friends but our enemies as well. Have you ever felt like an enemy of God's? Have you ever done something out of fear or punishment? How did that make you feel?
- Accepting Jesus' work on the cross for our sins, how has that love changed you?
- What kind of courage do you need in order to love others, even our enemies, as Christ loved us from the cross?

C2: Answer the following.

- What is your definition of “getting even”?
- Have you ever done something evil to someone because they did something evil to you? How did it feel to “get even”?
- Write down a time when you got even with someone and how that made you feel.
- How can you put love into action when dealing with those who do you harm?
- Over the course of the next thirty days, make a plan of action to put the love of Christ into action with those who you may have difficulty loving by their actions.

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 5:38–48 (ESV)

- What does verse 46 mean to you?

- The Old Testament Law was an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. Have you ever lived or still live that way?

- Jesus came to change the Old Law and bring a New Law of Love. Do you see love as an emotion or an action? If love is an emotion, then how do we show that emotion? Understanding that love is more than a feeling but an act of commitment is important. How does loving our dog differ from loving our wives?

S2: Answer or discuss this following.

- On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being a lot and 4 being not very much, rate yourself on how much strength does it take to:
 - a. Love your enemies
 - b. Pray for those who persecute you
 - c. Not hit back when hit first, whether in word or action

Write out a plan to improve in each of these areas.

- Have you ever loved to get love back? Why?

- Your fleshly nature tells you to strike back but your spirit tells you to love those who strike you. How does the Holy Spirit help you love those who strike out at you? For the next thirty days, write down the times you have loved your enemies with the love of Christ. What were your thoughts?

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 5:38–48 (ESV)

- It is difficult to love your enemies in your fleshly nature. With this in mind, do you seek the Holy Spirit's empowerment to do so? If yes, how does this help you? If no, why are you not seeking Holy Spirit empowerment?

- If your love is motivated so you can get love back, how does that relate to Christ's Love shown to you by going to the Cross?

- "Walking a second mile" is taking love past the emotional stage and putting it into action by an act of commitment not only for those who love you but for your enemies as well. Rate on a scale of 1-4, 1 being the highest and 4 being the lowest, your "walking a second mile" to the following:
 - a. Loving my wife
 - b. Loving those who have cut me off while driving
 - c. Loving the guy at work who looks to cause nothing but trouble
 - d. Answering the guy who persecutes me because I pray over my meal in public
 - e. Sharing the "things" I have been blessed with, material and financial

E2: Answer the following questions:

- If a total stranger asked you for your shirt, what would you do? Why?
- If a man from your church asked you to hold him accountable, how far would you go in holding him accountable? Why?
- If a neighbor fell on hard times, how far would you be willing to go to help them? Why?
- If the Holy Spirit asked you to share Christ with a total stranger, right in the middle of the store, what would you do? Why?