# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

June 23, 2024

#### SUMMER ON THE MOUNT Love Your Enemies Matthew 5:43-48 Pastor Jonathan Groce Jonathan.Groce@crossroadsabc.com



## NOTES

Pastor Jon talked about how we are to be like our Father who loves and cares for all people—even those who are hostile toward us.

### **MY STORY**

What would a person have to say or do to become an enemy to you?

### WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO HEAR?

"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. (Matt. 5:43-46)

What groups are considered to be enemies of the church—or perhaps individual Christians?

What does it mean to care about those who are hostile toward you?

Tax collectors were essentially traitors who profited from aiding the Roman Empire in its oppression of the Jews. They were an example of an enemy that everyone in the audience of that day could relate to.

What contrast is Jesus setting up by referring to tax collectors? Who would be considered a modern-day "tax collector" today?

What does it mean to love people who will never reciprocate your good will? How does God demonstrate this type of love Himself? How does God want us to pray for people who don't care?

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard for the first time, stuck with you, challenged or confused you?

What is the one important thing you will take away from this weekend's message or our community group discussion? Is there any challenge, difficulty or praise that you would like to share with the group for prayer?



Watch on Demand c<u>rossroadsabc.com/</u> <u>messages</u> What does God want us to hear? Based on the passage and the questions above, what "takeaways" do you think God has revealed to you?

### WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Jesus was calling his people to a higher standard, one that points to the Father and that he himself embodied.

What, then, does it mean to be perfect like God is perfect?

Do you think that perfection is something you can achieve on your own—or even at all? Explain.

What are some healthy, God-honoring ways to respond to legitimate spiritual persecution? What would be the end-goal of these responses?

What does God want us to do? Flowing out of our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit's leading, call us to?

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

Identify the people or groups in your life you would consider to be enemies. What would it mean to pray for spiritual healing in their lives? What actions might you be called upon to increase their receptivity to that type of healing? What should you do if you can't do this safely?

Make a commitment to pray for your enemies at the same time every day for a week.

What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step God is calling you, personally, toward?

