

**Cultivating  
a Christian Character**

***Studies in  
The Sermon on the Mount  
Matthew chapters 5-7***

***A Better Way to Live  
Matthew 5.38-48***

## Two difficulties

- **What does it mean? vs 38-42**  
- **a list of extraordinary commands**
- **How can we do it? vs 43-48**

### 1. Why Jesus calls for such radical reactions, v45-48

- **We're to bear the family likeness v45**  
- **"be sons of your Father in heaven"**  
**God's love is indiscriminate v45; Lk 6.35**
- **God's passion is for our perfection v48**  
- **an all-embracing love like his Ps 145.9,17**  
**we're to take our cue from him,**  
**not from those around us vs 46-47**  
**our love must be more than theirs**  
- **we must love those who don't love us**  
**11.19; 9.10-12**

## 2. What all-embracing love looks like, v38-44

### ➤ *Don't insist on recompense*

*when you are wronged vs38-39a*

*- the Law set an upper limit to compensation*

*it wasn't a licence for revenge*

*Ex 21.24-27; Lev 19.18*

*- don't insist on getting damages*

*be merciful, like God Lk 6.36-37*

### ➤ *Don't resort to retaliation*

*when you're insulted v39b*

*- don't trade insults*

*it wasn't Jesus' way 26.67*

*and it mustn't be ours*

*1 Pet 2.21,23; 3.9; Rom 12.17-21*

## 2. What all-embracing love looks like, v38-44

- ***Don't resent losing your possessions  
when they are taken from you v40***
  - ***don't worry about them 6.25,28-30,32-33***  
***God knows you need clothes! 6.19-21,25***
- ***Don't resent going the extra mile for people  
when they need your help v41***
  - ***set your heart on serving others 27.32***

## **2. What all-embracing love looks like, v38-44**

***it shapes our attitudes to our rights, emotions, possessions, time and energy***

- ***Be ready to share what you have with others when they are in need v42***  
***- miserly people end up miserable***  
***be generous, like God Lk 6.30-31,34-35***
- ***Be diligent in praying***  
***for those who don't like you, vs43-44***  
***as an expression of your love for them***  
***show kindness to your enemies Ex 23.4-5***  
***overcome evil with goodness Rom 12.21***

***This was God's way of saving us sinners***  
***Rom 5.8,10***