

GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 13

Question 1

- a) Once again the law had been twisted by the religious leaders of the day. It is true that the Old Testament does say 'love your neighbour' (Lev 19:18; 'neighbours referring to fellow Jews). But nowhere does it add 'hate your enemy'. In fact passages such as **Exodus 23:4-5** suggest the opposite!
- b) It is true that they should separate themselves from those who worshipped other gods; but that was not the same as hating them.
- c) It was perhaps this misrepresentation that prompted Jesus' telling of the story of The Good Samaritan in Luke 10.
- d) The enemies that Jesus focuses on here are those who persecute His disciples.
- e) Loving and praying for them goes against the grain.

Question 2

- a) Sons would imitate their fathers. For us the cross is our guide. The Father so loved those who did not love Him that He sent His Son (John 3:16).
- b) If that were not enough we see in Romans 5:10 that God reached out to us "*while we were enemies...*"
- c) Jesus prayed for forgiveness for his enemies on the cross (Luke 23:34).
- d) If we are His sons, we are to have His character (**Ephesians 5:1-2**).

Question 3

- a) Wayne Grudem: *“Common grace is the grace of God by which He gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation” (James 1:17).*
- b) It is ‘common’ because its benefits are intended for the whole human race without distinction. It is ‘grace’ because it is undeserved.
- c) This includes such things as life and breath and food etc. (Acts 17:24-25). It also holds back the judgement of God, in that mankind is able to continue to exist and enjoy God’s providence.
- d) Loius Berkhof writes that common grace *“curbs the destructive power of sin, maintains in a measure the moral order of the universe, thus making an orderly life possible, distributes in varying degrees gifts and talents among men, promotes the development of science and art, and showers untold blessings upon the children of men.”*
- e) Saving grace is that which extends only to those whom God has chosen to redeem from their sins.

Question 4

- a) Tax Collectors had a bad reputation; the lowest of the low. They not only worked for the occupying army but were corrupt;
- b) Jesus’ listeners would not want to be compared with these people; rather they would want to be contrasted with them
- c) ‘Gentile’ was often the term used for pagans or outsiders; those who were not spiritual or living to please God. They were often seen as the undesirables.
- d) A follower of Jesus would want to be seen to differ from such people.

- e) Notice that these verses are linked to the statement in verse 45 about being *“sons of your Father who is in heaven”*. We pattern ourselves on Him.
- f) We are to stand out in the world and what a witness that is!

Question 5

- a) Here the bar is set! This statement is consistent with our imitating the character of God as His sons.
- b) If we are His sons then our aim is His holiness.
- c) Perfection here refers to holiness; and the Old Testament command to mirror God’s holiness is something else Jesus’ listeners would have ‘heard said’ (**Leviticus 19:2**)!
- d) The Sermon on the Mount shows us how far short of the standard we fall. It is therefore God’s righteousness we need; the very point a very religious Saul of Tarsus had to reach (**Philippians 3:3-11**).

Question 6

Allow time for group members to share their thoughts and to deal with any concerns that arise from things that Jesus says we should do.