

LOVING THE UNLOVELY

2^{ème} partie-- A practical manual

How to Love the Unlovely-- by Rachel Lee. I tried not to let it bother me, but the truth is, it did. It was recently brought to my attention that some not-so-nice things were being said about my family, on top of it by someone I once called a friend. I tried to brush it off, pretending that I did not care, but I could not so I turned to the Lord.



Nothing comes *remotely* close to the suffering that He endured. However, scripture does tell us: *“Since He Himself has gone through suffering and testing, He is able to help us when we are being tested.”* (Hebrews 2:18)

He knows how I feel, because He has been there and has successfully responded to suffering and testing, with nothing less than love and grace. If anyone could help me to do the same, it was Him.

Chances are, you too have experienced the deep hurt that comes from being treated poorly, lied and gossiped about, and treated with disdain by others, sometimes those closest to you. As I turned to the Lord in my desperate time of need, I gently heard him whisper, *“Rachel, I have called you to love. Love does not discriminate. Love is all-inclusive. That INCLUDES unlovely people in your life, even your enemies.”* Ouch!

As I considered further the command to love our enemies and the unlovely people around us, I turned to the Word of God for instruction. There, in the 6th chapter of the book of Luke, I discovered that God has given us a practical manual on how to love our enemies. Perhaps you will find it helpful too! Here is what it says :

1. Do Good. *“But to you who are willing to listen, I say love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.”* (Luke 6:27)

Why would anyone *want* to do good to someone who has treated them unfairly? Well, simply put- because we are told to. Our feelings don't always have to match our actions- so long as we are obedient. I have found that God often changes *my* heart in the process.

2. Pray for Them. *“Bless those who curse you and pray for those who hurt you.”* (Luke 6:28)

Praying for those who have hurt us may be difficult at first, but when we continue in this practice- *even if through gritted teeth initially*– our prayers will eventually become sincere.

3. Go Above and Beyond. *“If someone slaps you on the cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt too.”* (Luke 6:29)

Going above and beyond the norm does not come naturally to us. We have to **choose** to be the difference we want to see. If we return evil with evil, rest assured the cycle of vengeance will continue. A harsh word begets a harsh word. The best way to put out a fire, is to stop feeding it. Go the extra mile. Repay evil with love.

4. Without Expectation. *“Lend to them without expecting to be repaid.” (Luke 6:30)*

To give without expectation of receiving something in return is an act of sacrificial love in its purest form. It says I am going to show you love even if you don't deserve it. Even if you won't return the favor.

Simple acts of love can go a long way. A smile, an thoughtful act, an unexpected compliment. Pray about how you might be able to show love to those who are unkind, without the expectation of reciprocation, even if it is awkward and uncomfortable at first.

5. Be Compassionate. *“Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.” (Luke 6:36)*

Sometimes it helps to view our enemies as broken human, hurting people, in need of healing. Compassion goes beyond just feeling sorry for someone. Compassion is a strong desire to alleviate their pain. To remove the burden. To bring an end to the suffering.

God calls us to love one another. even the ones who are unlovely. Love others as God loves us.

You can choose to love the unlovely.

It is not our job to judge, it is not our job to condemn nor condone, but simply to love unconditionally.

Are we really capable of walking in unconditional love ? Each of us can do something, no matter how small. Each of us can love unconditionally, can forgive, can give another chance to someone who has disappointed them, someone who is difficult to love. As believers in a God of love, let's share His light with this world.