

# Growing Together

## “Teach Us To Love”

Week 1 – May 5, 2024

Scripture: Luke 6:27-36

*Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!*

**Share:** Who do you know that likes a good argument? Do you pursue or avoid this person?

**Read the scripture noted above together:** Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

### Discuss the following context:

This Growing Together series will take us through the sermon on the mount in Luke chapter 6 exploring Jesus's teaching about what causes division among people: judgment, identifying people as our enemies while only loving people who are like us, pointing our fingers at the faults of others rather than allowing the Spirit to lead our self-examination that brings us to repentance, building our faith and life on sinking sand rather than the solid cornerstone of Jesus, and how the words we speak matter and can give us greater insight about the condition of our hearts.

The sermon on the mount is foundational to what we believe as followers of Jesus. There are many areas we can disagree on theologically, socially, politically, but still find unity with one another when we come back to the basic teachings of Jesus. We become one as a community when we follow the way of Jesus together.

Please note: One who hates you, mistreats you, curses you, takes from you, exploits you – this is describing abuse. God's heart is not that we would stay in an abusive relationship and tolerate it, but that we would be liberated from it. Kensington is a safe place for anyone healing from or escaping abuse to find refuge and support. If you need support, please reach out.

### Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Who do we identify as our enemies? Enemy is a strong word we might use to identify people who think, believe, or behave differently than us in a way that threatens our own belief systems. Can you think of someone you've placed in the enemy category who doesn't belong there? Who?
2. Jesus way of treating enemies has no strings attached. Where we might expect them to change and come over to our side, or we prefer to act in retaliation, Jesus had a way of peacefully reinforcing the humanity and equality of both parties. Reread **Luke 6:27-36** and discuss the following ways to give without expecting anything in return.
  - a. Give an ear to listen without expecting to be heard
  - b. Give patience when it's not returned
  - c. Give forgiveness when wrongs are still held against you
  - d. Give generously when it hasn't been earned
3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Christian love draws no distinction between one enemy and another, except that the more bitter our enemy's hatred, the greater his need of love. Be his enmity political or religious, he has nothing to expect from a follower of Jesus but unqualified love." How could this move you to actively love and do good to those who hurt, betray or oppose you?

**Pray together:** Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that we can have differences in our theology, our politics, our traditions, various preferences, yet still find unity with one another when we come back to and build our lives upon the teachings of Jesus. Praise God that no matter how long we've followed him we still have room to grow as his followers, and that His Kingdom is love without limits!