

BIG IDEA

If we can learn to hate, we can learn to love...again.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

How would you define the word “incivility”? What is the difference between hatred and incivility?

Dictionary definitions:

- Hatred: intense dislike or ill will
- Incivility: rude or unsociable speech or behavior.

Read Luke 9:51-56. What justifications might the disciples have had for their attitude toward the Samaritan village?

The Samaritans had treated Jesus poorly. There was also a deep animosity between Jews and Samaritans based on religious and ethnic differences. It was uncommon for Jews and Samaritans to associate with one another, and when they did—it seems it wasn’t often pretty. Check out [this article](#) for more information.

Read Matthew 5:38-48. Based on your understanding of this passage, why might Jesus have rebuked his disciples?

It is clear in the teachings of Jesus that his followers are to love their enemies. Although it wasn’t culturally accepted, or even logical, Jesus taught (and modeled) a life of enemy-love and non-retaliation. When the disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven onto their enemies, the Samaritans, they may have been justified by the world’s standards. They were not, however, justified by the standard of love given to us by God.

What do you think Jesus’ response would be to our justifications for wishing pain and violence on those we see as enemies?

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

Where do you feel the impact of hatred in your life?

Why do you think it is so difficult to see hatred in ourselves, but easy to identify it in others?

Read 1 Peter 2:17. Do you show proper respect to *everyone*, or only those who think and believe the way you do? How do you know?



WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

Read John 13:34-35. If you could never tell people that you followed Jesus, would they know you follow him based on the way you treat others? The way you speak about others?

Make a list of people, or people groups, that you have a hard time respecting based on their actions, beliefs, or lifestyles. How is God calling you to show them respect?

Have your group members reflect and answer this question silently, first. Then ask everyone to pair up and share. It will be easier for your group members to respond honestly if they don't have to do so with the entire group.

Do you need to ask God for forgiveness for harboring hatred in your heart? Do you need to ask anyone in your life for forgiveness for dealing with them in an uncivil manner?

You might consider praying [Psalm 51](#) aloud at the close of your group time. It is a beautiful prayer of forgiveness that believers have been praying for centuries.

How could God use you to be a person of unity?

