

# The Sermon on the Mount (Part 2)

## The New People of God

### Study 7 – Children of the Father

#### Introduction

One of the greatest privileges that every Christian enjoys is the privilege of being a child of God. In Christ and because of what Christ has done for us, God the Father has become our Heavenly Father and we, by adoption and grace, have become sons and daughters of God. This privileged position of being a child of God brings many benefits with it, some of which Jesus lists in the Sermon on the Mount. For example, in Matthew 6:9, Jesus tells us that we can pray to God as our Heavenly Father trusting that He hears us and will answer our prayers. Again, in Matthew 6:32, the Lord Jesus tells us that our Heavenly Father knows our needs and that we can trust Him to provide what we need. As a result we can break free from the ‘rat race’ of materialism and be liberated from the worry that materialism breeds.

Of course the privilege of being a child of God brings responsibility. Jesus made this clear in the Beatitudes when he reminded His disciples that those who want to be known as children of God must, like their Father, be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). And it is this responsibility as children of God which is the focus of Matthew 5:43-48, our passage for this study.

In brief, in Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus teaches us that as God’s children we are called to imitate our Heavenly Father especially when it comes to the way in which we treat those who stand against us. The motto of the world is “love those who love you” (5:46). The motto of the Pharisee, quoted by Jesus, is “love your neighbour, but you are free to hate your enemy” (5:43). Jesus’ standard however is quite different. God’s children, says Jesus, are to love not only their neighbour but also their enemy (5:44). In this way we imitate the perfect or *complete* love of their Father.



#### Investigate and Think



**Read Matthew 5:43-48 and Leviticus 19:17-18**





7. What does Jesus mean therefore when he tells his disciples to be 'perfect'?



## **Apply**

1. How does Jesus' teaching challenge the prevailing attitude in our society?

2. In what way has this passage challenged or encouraged you?

3. How would you use this passage to commend Christianity to someone?