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## Overview

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**Biblical Passage** Luke 6:27-36

**Supporting Passages** Matthew 5:43-47

**Memory Verse** Luke 6:27-28

**Biblical Truth** Our response to those with whom we have conflict should be to love them.

**Context** This lesson comes from Luke's account of the Teachings of the Kingdom, better known as the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus reintroduced the teachings of God that had been taught from the Law but had become cluttered by the interpretations of religious leaders and theologians down through the ages. Jesus' words must have fallen fresh on the ears of His disciples as He gave them things to think about that were either culturally unacceptable at that time or that they simply had not considered before.

**Learning Goals**

- **Explore:** Your students will understand that in order to deal with people who are hard to love, their way of thinking has to change.
- **Transform:** Your students will apply ways that they may share their love instead of their hatred and animosity in an effort to have their minds changed.

**Prayer Suggestions**

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will understand the importance of showing kindness to those who aren't very lovable.
- Pray that your students will overcome the natural human tendency to be vengeful toward their enemies.
- Pray that your students will actively seek to love those who oppose them by becoming an example of Christ for them.

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## Biblical Commentary

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### Investigation

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**Luke** was most likely a Gentile physician from Antioch in Syria who wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Luke did not claim to be an eyewitness of the life and work of Christ, but he indicated that he possessed firsthand sources of information about Jesus' life. He must have been a disciple of the apostles, who provided him with much of his material. The early Church likely possessed the Gospels of Mark and Matthew when Luke set out to write a more detailed account of the life of Jesus than had been written up to that point. Luke wrote his Gospel at a time in which the early Church had become primarily Gentile in composition. Luke aimed his Gospel at a **Gentile** audience in Rome that he wanted to convince that the accounts of Jesus' life were historically reliable. Luke accompanied the apostle Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, on several of his missionary journeys.

In this passage, Jesus and His companions had traveled from Capernaum, which lay next to the **Sea of Galilee**, and headed up a gentle slope until they reached the top of the rise. There Jesus chose His 12 disciples and then preached His most famous sermon ever recorded. Most Bible students refer to it as the Sermon on the Mount. In Jesus' sermon He set forth ethical principles that He intended His followers to put into practice. The sermon is not for the world primarily but for those who would commit to be His disciples. Nevertheless, all people are under obligation to live according to Jesus' principles.

### Importance

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This passage teaches the Essential Truth that [People are God's Treasure]. We live in a culture similar to that of the first century in the sense that self-centered behavior is the norm. When people think only of their own welfare, they tend to bless those who bless them and curse those who curse them. They will only love those who love them and show contempt for their enemies. If insulted, they will respond in kind as opposed to with kindness. They will not give freely and generously to others but will only seek to get what they can for themselves. Selfish persons expect others to treat them well, but they do not necessarily treat others with respect. This is the way of the world, but such behavior does not reflect the ethic and practice of Jesus or that of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus called His followers to selfless behavior. He commanded His disciples to do things that could not be done except through the spiritual power that only He would provide. Jesus commanded His followers to bless those who cursed them and pray for those who mistreated them. He called upon believers to love those who were unlovely. He instructed His children not to insult those who have insulted them. Jesus taught believers to give freely to those in need. Jesus made it clear that if we call ourselves His followers, then we must treat others as we would want to be treated. Think about what a delightful world we would live in if each person ordered his or her life according to Jesus' ethical standards.

## Interpretation

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**Luke 6:27** In verses 20–26, Jesus provided the characteristics of those who are members of His Kingdom. From verses 27–36, Jesus announced the principles that members of His Kingdom must keep in their relationships with other human beings. His first principle with regard to our relationship with others is that we should love even those who stand in opposition to us. Love is not a passive sentiment. We should actively seek their good and not try to do them harm. Devout Jews in Jesus’ day regarded only fellow Jews as their neighbors and did not see the need to care for others outside their own virtuous circle. Jesus rejected this false limitation and commanded that even enemies should be treated with kindness. Of course, this runs against conventional wisdom, but Jesus’ teachings typically fly in the face of the accepted world order.

**Luke 6:28–30** In these three verses, Jesus gave practical examples of how His followers should behave toward enemies. Christians must **bless** those who curse and insult them. Even if such people have treated believers unjustly by stealing from them or have even committed an act of violence against them, revenge is not the appropriate response. Hatred repaid with hatred merely reaps more hatred. Jesus’ culture, not unlike ours, was a culture of violence. Vengeance was the order of the day. Jesus sought to end this destructive cycle by calling upon His followers to respond to hatred with **love**. The examples of turning the other cheek and giving the shirt to the one who has already taken the coat are not to be understood as passive responses of weak persons. When we respond to hatred with unselfish love, we are not adopting a position of weakness but of strength. Loving actions ultimately allow the offending party to recognize that a person of superior moral character stands in his or her presence. A response of genuine love to acts of insult and abuse may even bring the guilty person to repentance. Love conquers evil when we perform good deeds on behalf of the unloving. We will never change the world if we imitate the world’s standards. Loving actions are also an acknowledgement that God will judge the actions of the wicked. Taking matters into our own hands by engaging in vengeful behavior not only damages us personally and harms our Christian witness—but it also demonstrates a lack of trust that God will ultimately establish justice. Surprisingly, Jesus even classified beggars as enemies, but He did so because they often fell outside the circles of friendship. Jesus insisted that we should treat them as part of the family by giving freely to them. If we ignore the needy, then we are treating them as an enemy.

**Luke 6:31** Jesus was not the first teacher to pronounce the so-called Golden Rule. This teaching can be found in Jewish and Greek literature prior to the time of Christ. Even the Chinese teacher Confucius recited the rule. Yet earlier teachers either stated the rule negatively—“Do not do unto others what you do not want done unto you”—or they taught that one should treat others well in order to be treated well. Jesus, however, stated the rule positively—“Do to others as you would have them do to you”—and taught that His followers should treat others lovingly without expecting reciprocation. We should love others not because we expect to be loved but because it is the right thing to do.

**Luke 6:32–34** In these verses Jesus explained why Christians should demonstrate love even toward enemies. Real love is selfless. Humans are naturally selfish, but the Lord calls us to forget self-interest. A believer can show selflessness in a concrete way by loving enemies because the believer has nothing to gain by treating enemies well. We stand to gain something by demonstrating benevolence to those who are kind and generous to us. When we are kind to enemies, we in no way expect them to show kindness to us. Even those who are outside the Christian community can show kindness to those who are kind to them. Anyone can lend to those who lend to them. We need no special skill or aptitude to love those who love us. Anyone can do that. Our behavior toward

others should never be determined by what we might expect from other people or how they have treated us.

**Luke 6:35-36** In these verses Jesus basically summarized the message in verses 27-34. He repeated the admonition that in order to be acceptable to God we must love enemies by showing love, doing good, and giving freely without calculation or expectation of reciprocation or a reward. Jesus was not teaching salvation by works. He was simply setting forth the truth that He taught on another occasion and that is recorded in John 13:35—"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." We reflect God's character when we love our enemies because that is how God acts. Paul stated in Romans 5:10, "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" The Lord Jesus gave His life for us on the cross not because we were kind, loving, compassionate persons. He gave His life for a humanity that stood in opposition to Him and His purposes. If God shows **mercy** to His enemies, then His children should do the same. No human being has the power or right to condemn others, but we are required to have pity on them. Only God knows and understands persons and all their circumstances. Only He has the right to judge and condemn. Yet even as the Lord administers justice to wrongdoers, He will be merciful toward them. In the end, even though we are to be kind to the wicked without expecting a reward, the Lord has indicated that our reward will be great.

## Implications

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We've all heard the expression that says, "Actions speak louder than words." The statement is particularly true in this case. We could preach a sermon all day long about treating others as we want to be treated, but when we actually do it, it commands the attention and respect of everyone involved. Our sin nature defaults to wanting to resort to vengeance or telling someone else off after we've been offended. But Jesus expressed to His followers that living in the Kingdom of God was living in contrast to what we know in this world. So how do we impart this understanding to our students?

Students need to hear more than just our words. They need to see Jesus' life lived out through our lives as an example for them. The thing that fortified Jesus' words for His disciples was that they actually got to see Him live what He taught. Our students need to see our compassion for people who would not necessarily rank high on our list of favorites. Maybe when they see how we treat the "unlovely," they will realize that this principle of life really works and say in their own hearts, "I want to be like that."

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## Teaching Plan

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### Connect Activity

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#### Drama: The Point

*(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will watch a drama about a girl who shows kindness to a seemingly unlovable girl.*

*(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist four students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.*

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, ask: **What was it that made Tyra able to deal with a difficult person like Lizbeth? What would you have said and done if you had been Tyra?** Allow students to respond. Then say: **Jesus taught His disciples that we have to change our way of thinking from what is normal for us to what is normal with God.**

#### Media Option: Know the Word: Love Your Enemies

*(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)*

*Students will watch a video about the power of the Word to help someone love his or her enemies.*

*(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)*

*If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the “Know The Word: Love Your Enemies” video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the “Media” tab.)*

Play the “Know the Word: Love Your Enemies” video for your students. When the video is over, ask students for their reactions. Then ask students if they have ever encountered a situation similar to the character in the video. Say: **Most of us can relate to this situation.** Ask: **But how many of us can say that we handled it in this manner? Explain that today’s lesson will go deeper into the idea of how we should act toward our enemies.**

### Explore Activity

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## Master Teacher Key Study: Loving the Unlovable

*(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will study Luke 6:27-36 to understand Jesus' instructions on living counter to prevailing culture.*

*(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.*

**Learning Goal:** Your students will understand that in order to deal with people who are hard to love, their way of thinking has to change.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Luke 6:27-36.

## Transform Activity

### Deeper Discussion

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will discuss the advantages and risks to reaching out to people in love.*

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

**Learning Goal:** Your students will apply ways that they may share their love instead of their hatred and animosity in an effort to have their minds changed.

Use the following questions to begin a discussion concerning how we treat those who are difficult to love.

- **How long does it take to change a bad habit or form a good habit?**
- **What begins to happen the more we submit ourselves to God by imitating His ways and living in obedience to Him?**
- **Why do you suppose that it will be difficult to change the habit of looking down on those people whom we consider to be our enemies?**
- **What are the advantages of reaching out to such people in love?**
- **What are the risks involved in reaching out to such people in love?**

### Creative Prayer

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will pray for God's help in responding appropriately when confronted by difficult people.*

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

Create and post five posters. Label each poster with one of the following prompts: “When I’m being bullied . . .” “When someone is angry with me . . .” “When that person annoys me . . .” “When I feel anger instead of love” . . . “When another person causes me heartache . . .” Also provide a CD/digital music player and worshipful music.

**Learning Goal:** Your students will apply ways that they may share their love instead of their hatred and animosity in an effort to have their minds changed.

Prompt students to walk from one poster to another and complete each sentence with a prayer that asks God to equip them to respond appropriately. Play the worshipful music as students move from one end of the room to the other. Afterward, offer a prayer over your students as they move out into the world this week to offer love instead of hatred.

### Reverb Student Book Option: How Does Love Look?

(10 minutes, *Reverb* student book required)

If your church has purchased the *Reverb* student book, preview the activity on page 301. If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.

**Learning Goal:** Your students will apply ways that they may share their love instead of their hatred and animosity in an effort to have their minds changed.

As students work through pages 296-301 in the *Reverb* student book this week, challenge them to take about 10-15 minutes and read through the activity on page 301. Ask: **What does love—real love—look like? Is it just shared with people whom I think are easy to love?** Explain that love doesn’t look like this at all. Say: **It goes much further than that. It extends to those people we don’t like or wouldn’t choose to hang out with.**

Squeeze 4, "Loving the Unlovable"  
Drama

what the book's about than we do.

## The Point

### Characters:

CHELSEA  
TYRA  
LIZBETH  
2 LIZBETH CRONIES

**Props:** purses or backpacks or books

**Costumes:** Lizbeth should be the best dressed. Tyra should be the worst dressed. The others should be wearing regular school clothes.

**Creative Note:** Have Lizbeth be a really over-the-top mean girl.

*(Two friends, CHELSEA and TYRA, are hanging out, having a conversation about school.)*

CHELSEA: So, what did you answer for number twelve?

TYRA: Which one was that one again?

CHELSEA: You know, it was asking about what motivated the character to defy all . . .

*(TYRA remembers the question and joins in.)*

BOTH: . . . her social norms for a chance at what she fathomed as love.

TYRA: Could it get any wordier?

CHELSEA: I know. But what did you say?

TYRA: I didn't know. The book never really says. So I wrote something about her being an exception to the tragic heroine archetype.

CHELSEA: I bet you get an A, too.

TYRA: It's not my fault if I can make a guess sound good.

CHELSEA: It's also not your fault if Mrs. Jenkins has less of a clue about

TYRA: That is true as well.

*(LIZBETH enters. She is clearly in charge wherever she goes. She's pretty and popular. She's followed by two of her CRONIES who don't really say anything but hang on her every word. She approaches CHELSEA and TYRA and clears her throat to get their attention.)*

CHELSEA: Oh, hi, Lizbeth.

*(LIZBETH just looks at CHELSEA in disgust and then turns her attention to TYRA. She is full of attitude.)*

LIZBETH: Tyra, did you get those flyers made?

TYRA: Yes, and I'm passing them out this afternoon.

LIZBETH: This afternoon? Why didn't you do it this morning?

TYRA: I had an English test this morning.

LIZBETH: What-ev-er. What about the band?

TYRA: They're scheduled to start setting up right after school on Friday.

LIZBETH: Are they any good?

TYRA: Yeah. They're pretty good. Chelsea's boyfriend is the drummer.

LIZBETH: Who's Chelsea?

CHELSEA: Um, me. I'm Chelsea. We've been in the same classes since second grade.

LIZBETH: *(barely acknowledging Chelsea)* Huh, if you say so. *(back to Tyra)* And you've got the decorations taken care of?

TYRA: Yes. We can't get in until around

lunch, but we should have plenty of time to get it all done.

LIZBETH: You mean "you" should have plenty of time.

TYRA: Yes. I've got a lot of volunteers to help.

LIZBETH: Good. A lot of people are really expecting me to make this benefit great. So don't mess it up.

TYRA: I won't.

*(LIZBETH turns to leave, then remembers something.)*

LIZBETH: Oh, and Tyra, put a little effort into your look, please. We're supposed to help the homeless, not look like them.

TYRA: *(forcing a grin)* Sure thing, Lizbeth. Thanks. Let me know if I can help you in any other way.

*(LIZBETH turns to leave without another word.)*

CHELSEA: Bye!

*(LIZBETH casually dismisses them with a wave of her hand and then exits with her CRONIES close on her heels.)*

CHELSEA: I don't know how you do it.

TYRA: Do what?

CHELSEA: Put up with her.

TYRA: It's for a good cause.

CHELSEA: It better be. I mean, I don't know that anything is worth that.

TYRA: Oh, come on. She's not that bad.

*(CHELSEA just looks at TYRA.)*

TYRA: Okay. She is that bad, but that's not the point.

CHELSEA: Well, what is the point?

TYRA: The point is that she doesn't know how to be any other way. I mean, if people rejected me because of all of my faults, where would I be? So who am I to do that to her?

CHELSEA: So you just let her push you around because you want to be nice to her.

TYRA: I don't let her push me around. She may not treat me in the best way, but that doesn't mean I'm not going to help her. How else will she know that I genuinely care?

CHELSEA: I don't know, but you're a better girl than me.

TYRA: Oh, I know.

CHELSEA: Right. *(in her best impression of Lizbeth)* What-ev-er.

*(CHELSEA turns just like LIZBETH and begins walking off like her.)*

TYRA: Real nice, Chelsea. Way to get my point. Wait up.

*(They exit together.)*

*(The End)*

# REVERB::SQUEEZE::lesson four

## LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

biblical passage: Luke 6:27–36

memory verse: Luke 6:27–28 “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

### LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

1. Jesus introduced a new way of \_\_\_\_\_ into a culture of reinforced \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 6:27–28).
2. Jesus taught that our \_\_\_\_\_ might cause others to \_\_\_\_\_ their actions (Luke 6:29–34).
3. Jesus taught that when we act in \_\_\_\_\_, we show others who \_\_\_\_\_ is (Luke 6:35–36).

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How long does it take to change a bad habit or form a good habit?
- What begins to happen the more we submit ourselves to God by imitating His ways and living in obedience to Him?
- Why do you suppose that it will be difficult to change the habit of looking down on those people whom we consider to be our enemies?
- What are the advantages of reaching out to such people in love?
- What are the risks involved in reaching out to such people in love?

## Master Teacher Key Study LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

**Intro:** Why is it so important that we learn to express love to those people who are difficult and unlovable?

**Description:** It's really not our nature to respond lovingly to people who are so hateful. In fact, it is so much a part of our nature to treat others as rudely as they treat us that this sort of behavior is reinforced in the world.

**Illustration:** In the 2004 movie *Mean Girls*, Cady Heron, played by Lindsay Lohan, returns to the U.S. after having been raised in Africa only to discover what it's like to live out her true nature—to act in spite and vengeance in order to get ahead and get what she wants. In the end she discovers who her true friends are, but not before she has learned that hatefulness in this world is what is accepted and reinforced.

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### 1. Jesus introduced a new way of thinking into a culture of reinforced hatred (Luke 6:27–28).

**Description:** Hatred ran rampant in Palestine during Jesus' day. Israel was ruled by the tyrannical forces of Rome, and the only thing that most Jews could think about was the day when they would run those pagan Gentiles from their homeland. But Jesus introduced a whole new way of thinking—from another world. His thinking was of the culture of the Kingdom of God. It involved love, not hatred.

**Illustration:** Missionary organizations like the International Mission Board, Campus Crusade for Christ, Navigators, Wycliffe Bible Translators, New Tribes, etc., have extensive orientation and cross-cultural training programs and facilities. The idea is that when people have joined their team to serve cross-culturally, the leadership of these organizations knows that these Americans face many challenges that they have to begin to realize and work on before they ever set foot out of their home culture into a new culture. That means that new ways of thinking have to be introduced to these missionary candidates so that they can begin processing and internalizing just what these new things will look like. That way, when they arrive in their new country and culture, they aren't blown away by every new way of thinking and every new way of living all at once.

**Application:** Jesus wanted His followers to know that the Kingdom in which God lives does not involve hatred but love. For us that means that if we're going to live and act as Kingdom citizens, we have to begin to live and act as God does.

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### 2. Jesus taught that our actions might cause others to rethink their actions (Luke 6:29–34).

**Description:** Words and reactions can often be inflammatory, creating an even bigger conflict. But God enables His people to counter other people's attacks and abuses with loving acts in such a way that they must think before striking again. In this way, they are confronted with a power much bigger than their hate-driven forces. They may be left wondering why we are so different from the world that they know. This might lead them to ultimately discover God.

**Illustration:** Several years ago, experts in the field of emergency services developed a slogan that said, “Stop, Drop, and Roll.” This became a quick and easy way to teach people what to do if they should happen to catch on fire. You see, it’s not our first response to “Stop, Drop, and Roll.” Instead, our natural tendency is to want to run. This only feeds the fire with the oxygen that it needs to spread and burn hotter and faster. But if people would learn not to feed the fire but immediately diffuse it, then they might keep the injury to a minimum and survive.

**Application:** Words and responsive actions of love may diffuse a confrontation and seemingly extinguish the fire in the offender. They may walk away with the realization that they have just encountered a force much stronger than their own hatred. That means that we have to “Stop, Pray, and Love.”

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### **3. Jesus taught that when we act in love, we show others who God is (Luke 6:35–36).**

**Description:** Living the Christian life as citizens of the Kingdom of God means that we shed more and more of our own character and take on more of His character. When we do this, people begin to see that we are not really of this world but that we belong to God as His children.

**Illustration:** When you see pictures of celebrities such as the Jonas Brothers, Hilary and Haylie Duff, Brittny and Jamie Lynn Spears, or Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, it’s not hard to see that they are related. There is too much of a resemblance—especially in the Olsen twins. We can often look at people and immediately make the connection.

**Application:** People may not have ever seen God with their eyes, but when they see people who resemble Him in character, they may be confronted with His reality. When we act like Christ, people see the resemblance. Jesus said they would identify us as “Sons of the Most High.”

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**Conclusion:** It is important that we learn to express love to the unlovable, because that is who God is and what He does. After all, **People are God’s Treasure**.

**Description:** These verses identify just some of the characteristics and principles that Jesus introduced about living in the Kingdom of God. It’s cross-cultural living. In other words, it’s not something that we’re accustomed to living out in the world.

**Application:** If we want to be identified with God as His children—people that others can see God working in and through—then we must learn to live as Kingdom-minded citizens. Jesus taught that this is displayed through our acts of love under the most pressing situations.