

HARD TO SWALLOW

THINGS WE WISH JESUS DIDN'T SAY

“Be Perfect” Matthew 5:43-48 Small Group Discussion Guide

1. Michael Ore was a young man who grew up in poverty. As a student in high school, he was given the opportunity to attend a private school and was eventually adopted by a very wealthy. As the owner of a fast food restaurant, Michael's adopted father assured him that he never had to worry about food again. In spite of this, Michael continued to take drastic measures to hide and store up food—to the extent of hiding cheeseburgers in his pockets. As children of God, in what kinds of ways do we continue to stuff cheeseburgers in our pockets? What kinds of examples of this are provided for us in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
2. How does this principle apply specifically to our tendency to love our friends and hate our enemies?
3. How does **the principle of reciprocity** (“get what you give”) flesh out in our society today? Take a few minutes to share areas of your life where you expect reciprocity. Are there areas of life that this is appropriate? How does this principle affect our relationships? Do you feel like anyone owes you anything? Do you feel like you owe anything to other people? Are you feeling like any of these relationships are unbalanced?
4. The Greek implications of the phrase, “Be perfect,” are based on the idea of “doing what you were made to do.” It carries the idea of intended function. Andrew Barber's example was of a screwdriver effectively driving a screw. What kind of implications does this have on the fact that Jesus followers are told to be perfect?
6. What does Jesus mean when he follows his command with the words “...so that you will be children of your Father in heaven?”
7. Do you think it's possible for anyone to do something fully unselfish, expecting absolutely nothing in return? How does the gospel play into this?

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor¹ and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:43-48

