Would you choose to help someone who had mistreated you?

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8, NASB

God reached out to us while we were His enemies. What an amazing example of sacrificial love!
This study looks at how we can express God’s love in various relationships.

Relating to God

► KNOW God

“Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and know me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23-24, ESV

❖ Circle three things we should not “boast” in.
❖ Underline three things that the Lord “practices” (or does).

Knowing God enables us see our blessings and our hardships from His perspective. This brings meaning and fulfillment to life.

► LOVE God

“This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:3, NIV

❖ Circle how we show our “love for God.”
❖ Underline what God’s commands are not.

God’s commands are not a burden when we realize they were designed for our protection and provision.

► SERVE God

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” Matthew 6:24, ESV

❖ Underline two examples of what happens when we try to “serve two masters.”

When you KNOW God, you will LOVE Him.
And when you LOVE Him, you will want to SERVE Him.

If you don’t want to Serve God, maybe it is because you don’t really Love Him.
And if you don’t Love God, maybe it is because you don’t really Know Him.
Relating to Authorities

▶ Parents

“...A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”
Proverbs 10:1, ESV

- Underline what makes a “glad father.”
  We please our parents by obeying them, making wise choices, etc.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise),
that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”
Ephesians 6:1-3, ESV

- Circle why children should obey their parents.
  Obedience to parents and other authorities is always right—unless they ask you
to disobey God. (Acts 5:28-29)
- Underline two rewards for honoring your parents.
  These blessings make it worth the effort to honor your parents.

▶ Officials

“For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good.
But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason.
They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”
Romans 13:4, NIV

- Underline two times that “God’s servants” are mentioned.
  God established all of our authorities, which is why He calls them His servants.
  ♦ When we do what is right, we do not need to be afraid of God’s Servants.
  ♦ For example, you only get a speeding ticket if you exceed the speed limit!

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks,
be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority;
that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”
1 Timothy 2:1-2, KJV

- Circle four things we should do for our authorities.
  Instead of complaining about your authorities, try praying for them.

▶ Employers

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for human masters,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”
Colossians 3:23-24, NIV

- Underline how we are to do our work.
- Circle who we are really “working for” and “serving.”

Working with all your heart means doing your best even if your boss is not watching.
Your goal is to please Christ—who sees everything!

“Your best resume is not what you write, but how you live.”
~ Unknown

“When I submit to the leaders God places over me, I do so not in trust of them,
but in trust of God who placed them.

- My trust is not that they will always make the right decisions, but rather,
that God is able to work in their hearts and in my life even in their mistakes.

- The bottom line of submission on every level is not ‘Can I trust this leader,’
but ‘Can I trust God to work in, through, and in spite of this leader?’”
~ Eddie Rasnake

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities,
for there is no authority except that which God has established.
The authorities that exist have been established by God.”
Romans 13:1, NIV

“Opportunity is missed by most people because
it is dressed in overalls and looks like WORK.”
~ Thomas Edison

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Relating to Christians

- Coals burn hotter and longer when they are piled together. When one coal is separated from the other coals, it soon becomes cold.
- In the same way, Christians who join together in spiritual fellowship will stoke one another’s faith in God, and inflame each other’s love for Him!

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV

- Underline two things we should do for “one another.”
  We often find it easier to criticize, shame, or judge another person who does not measure up to our standards. But God asks us to encourage those who are struggling.

- Circle what we should not neglect.
  It is important to regularly attend a church that teaches God’s Word.

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Galatians 6:10, NIV

- Circle the people for whom we should especially “do good.”
  God wants us to make it a priority to help other Christians.

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

Romans 12:15, NKJV

What if your friend got a promotion or special recognition and you didn’t?

Congratulate your friend and thank God for all the blessings He has given you.

What are some ways to encourage your Christian friends?

- “It is the mark of a hypocrite to be a Christian everywhere but home.”
  ~ Robert Murray McCheyne

How can you become more involved in your local church?

- “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”
  Luke 6:31, NIV

What if your friend got a promotion or special recognition and you didn’t?

Congratulate your friend and thank God for all the blessings He has given you.

- “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”
  Colossians 3:13, NIV

Write what these verses say to do for “one another.” (ESV version)

- John 15:12 “This is My commandment, that you ________ one another as I have loved you.”

- Ephesians 4:32 “Be ________ to one another, tenderhearted [compassionate], ________ one another as God in Christ forgave you.”

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 “Therefore ________ one another and ________ one another up just as you are doing.”

- 1 Thessalonians 5:15 “See that no one repays anyone evil for evil but always seek to ________ ________ to one another and to everyone.”

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**Friends**

“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways and set a snare [trap] for your soul.”
Proverbs 22:24-25, NKJV

- **Circle two** types of people we should **not** choose for friends.
- **Underline** what may happen after spending time with angry people.

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”
Proverbs 13:20, NKJV

- **Circle** what happens when you walk with wise people.
- **Underline** what happens to a “companions of fools.”

These verses from Proverbs show the importance of choosing friends wisely.

“Do not be misled: bad company corrupts [destroys] good character.”
1 Corinthians 15:33, NIV

- **Circle** what we should **not** be.
  - “Misled” means to be led astray from the truth. Scripture frequently warns about the dangers of going our own way—instead of God’s way.
- **Underline** what “bad company” does to “good character.”

“You will be the same **five years** from now as you are today except for **two things**,
  - the books you read, and
  - the friends you make.”

**Enemies**

“But I [Jesus] say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

- **Underline four** ways Jesus said to respond to those who mistreat us.
  - These are not natural or easy responses. But if we ask, God will give us the ability.
  - This lesson began with Jesus’ example of loving His enemies enough to die for them.

Corrie ten Boom (a Holocaust survivor) said:

“When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives along with the command, the love itself.”

- Several years after Corrie’s release from Ravensbruck concentration camp, one of the cruelest Ravensbruck guards asked her to forgive him.
- With God’s help, Corrie was able to forgive her former prison guard.

**APPLICATION**

List ways you can show God’s love to someone who did not treat you well.

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“Associate yourself with people of good quality, for it is better to be ALONE than in bad company.”
~ Booker T. Washington

“A friend loves at all times...”
Proverbs 17:17, NKJV

? **What** are specific ways that unwise friends **corrupt** good character?

“Bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.”
~ Unknown

“Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my **friends**?”
~ Abraham Lincoln

**PRAYER**

Father, I am grateful You love me and provided an example of how to love others. Enable me to relate to those around me as You would. Amen.