



**Living in Relational Wholeness**

**Coalesce Podcast**

**Episode 025 - Integration of the Negative**

**Note, terms, scripture, practice**



“You can show your love to others by *not* wishing that they should be better Christians.” —Francis of Assisi

“We must bear patiently *not* being good . . . and *not* being thought good.” —Francis of Assisi

[Acts 17:6](#)

[John 9:39-41](#)

God is like “a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.” —Bonaventure (1217-1274)

*“If you are willing to bear serenely the trial of being displeasing to yourself, then you will be a pleasant place of shelter for Jesus.”* —St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

[Matthew 20:16](#)

[Luke 13:30](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:10](#)

[Ephesians 4:13](#)

[Luke 12:14](#)

[John 15:6](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:9-10](#)

[Matthew 5:3](#)

## **Practice: Loving Your Enemy**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun to rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust” ([Matthew 5:43-45](#)).

Your enemy always carries the dark side of your own self, the things you don’t like about yourself. You will never face your own dark side until you embrace those who threaten you (as Francis embraced the leper in his own conversion experience). The people who turn you off usually do so because they carry your own faults in a different form.

Jesus goes on to say, “If you love those who love you, what’s so great about that?” ([Matthew 5:46](#)). It’s simply magnified self-love. Love the stranger at the gate, the one outside of your comfort zone. Until you can enter into love with the not-me and the non-self, Jesus is saying, you really have not loved at all.

And what’s Jesus’ motivation for doing this? Some translations say, it’s to “be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” ([Matthew 5:48](#)). A more useful and accurate understanding of the word translated as “perfect” is “whole.” Jesus met a God who is One, who is whole, who is all-inclusive. Be all-inclusive as your heavenly Father is all-inclusive and all merciful. This is the heart of the Gospel. Jesus’ goal was imitation of a loving, forgiving God.

Think of one of your enemies, someone for whom you feel anger, resentment, or hurt. What about this person most offends or disturbs you? Is it possible this same characteristic is in you, perhaps hidden and unrecognized? When you are able to recognize your own darkness, bring it into God’s loving presence through prayer. As the sense of God’s compassion and acceptance for you grows in your heart and body, extend that warmth to your enemy, embracing them with the same grace you are receiving.