



God Is Love!

Matthew 5:43-47

- God is love.



- The world doesn't know what love is.
 - World is the way of thinking, and acting, that is opposed to God (taught by Satan and society).
 - Satan deceives... twists what God has given that is good into something evil, different.
 - Just like Eve: what is wrong is turned into something powerful, or wise, good, or delightful or desirable.



- The world has utterly changed what love is.
 - Romance and emotion and feelings
 - hearts and flowers and diamonds
 - Sex
 - Mushy, weak, indulgent
- The love of the world is often demonstrated to those who are their friends, family.
 - Nice to those who are nice to them.



- So it's not a surprise that the world misunderstands what "God is love" means.
- The S&P's made this mistake also, interpreting God's love by their own ideas and interpretations.

Exceeding Righteousness

The Law
(as given to Moses) → **“You shall not hate your brother in your heart ... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself”**

Leviticus 19:17, 18

- Leviticus 19:17-18: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.
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Exceeding Righteousness

The Law
(as given to Moses)

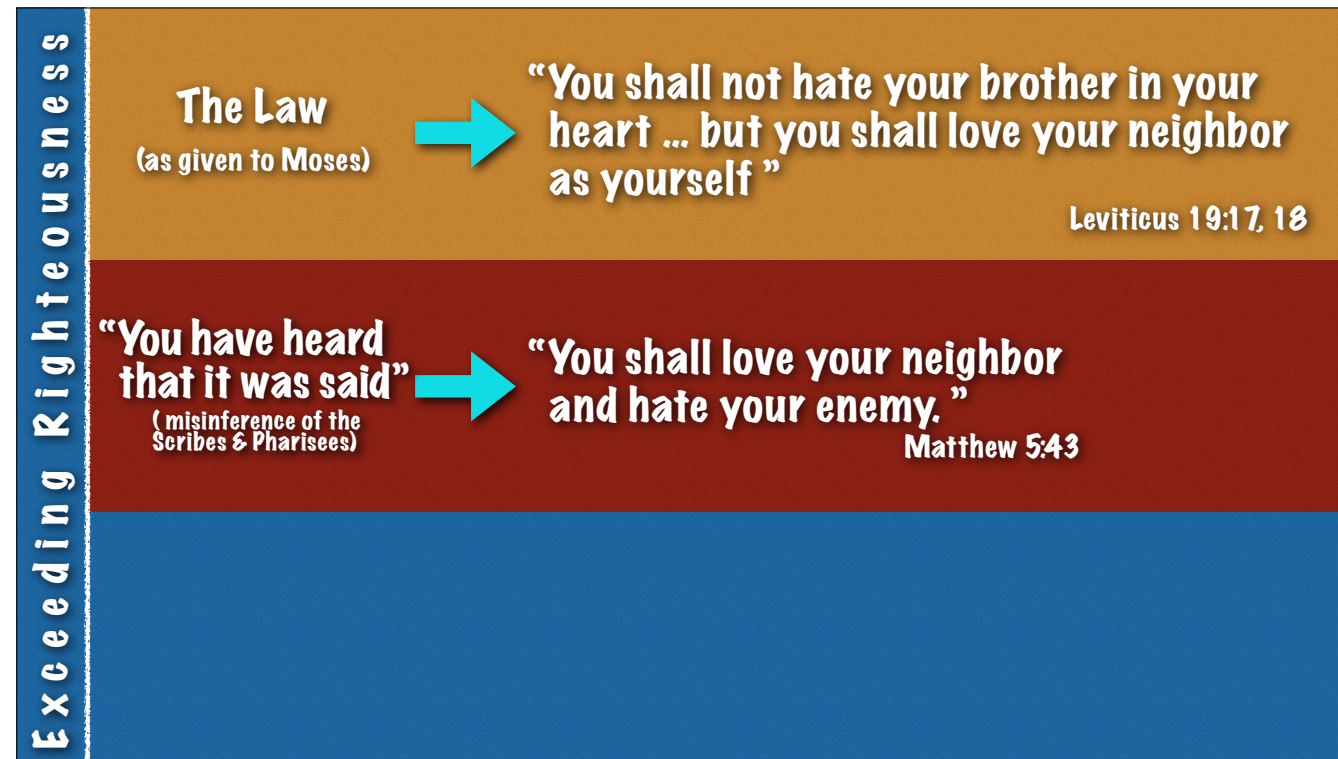
→ **"You shall not hate your brother in your heart ... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself"**

Leviticus 19:17, 18

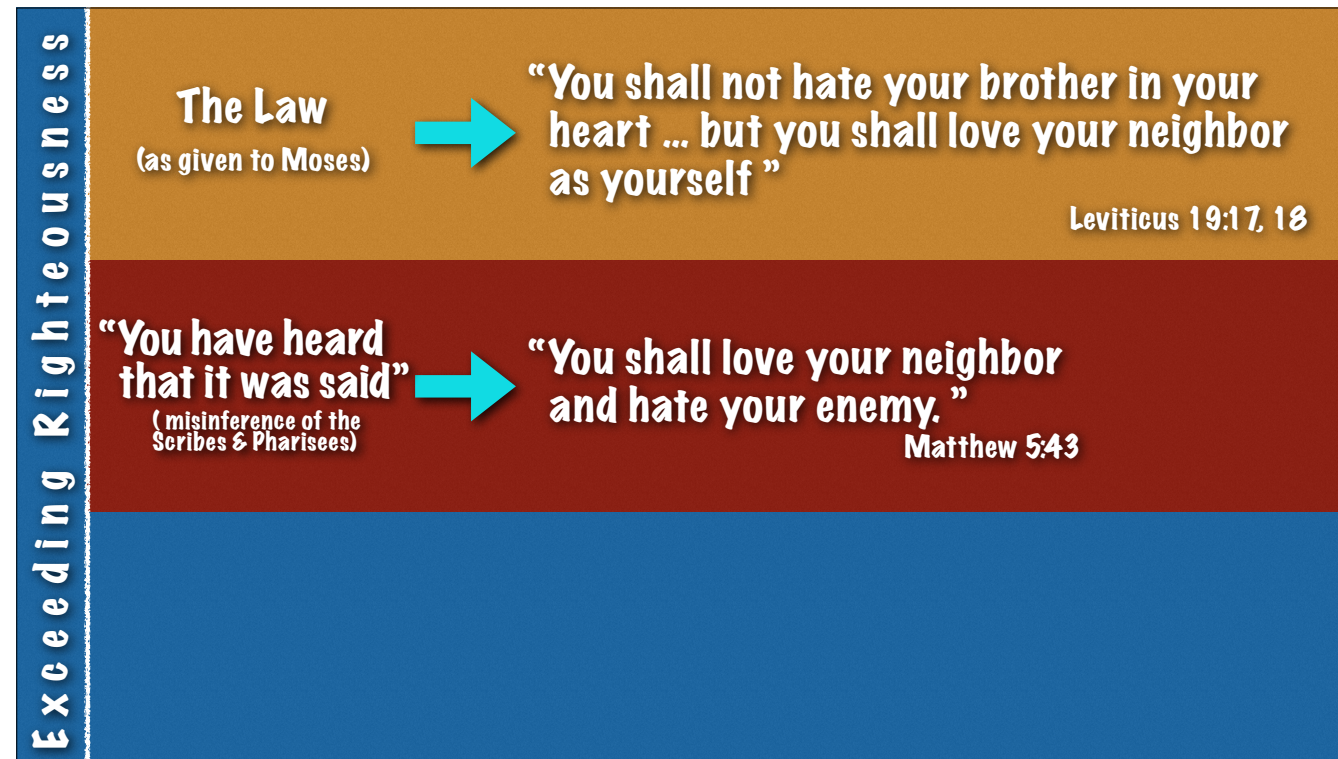
- Exodus 23:4-5 (ESV) 4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. 5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.



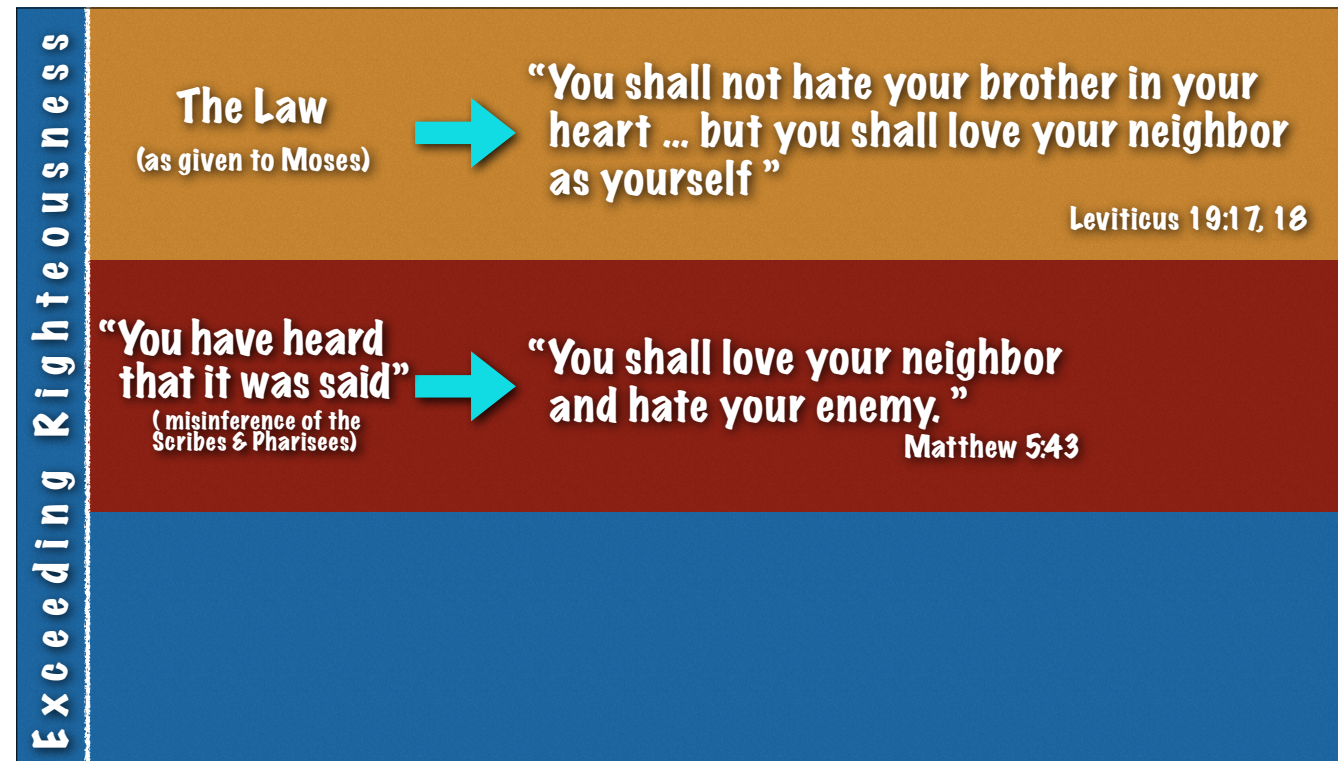
- Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."
- Knowing God and Bible, most of us struggle with how the Israelites ever came to this conclusion.
- When did God ever approve of hate?
- Attitudes when conquering Canaan



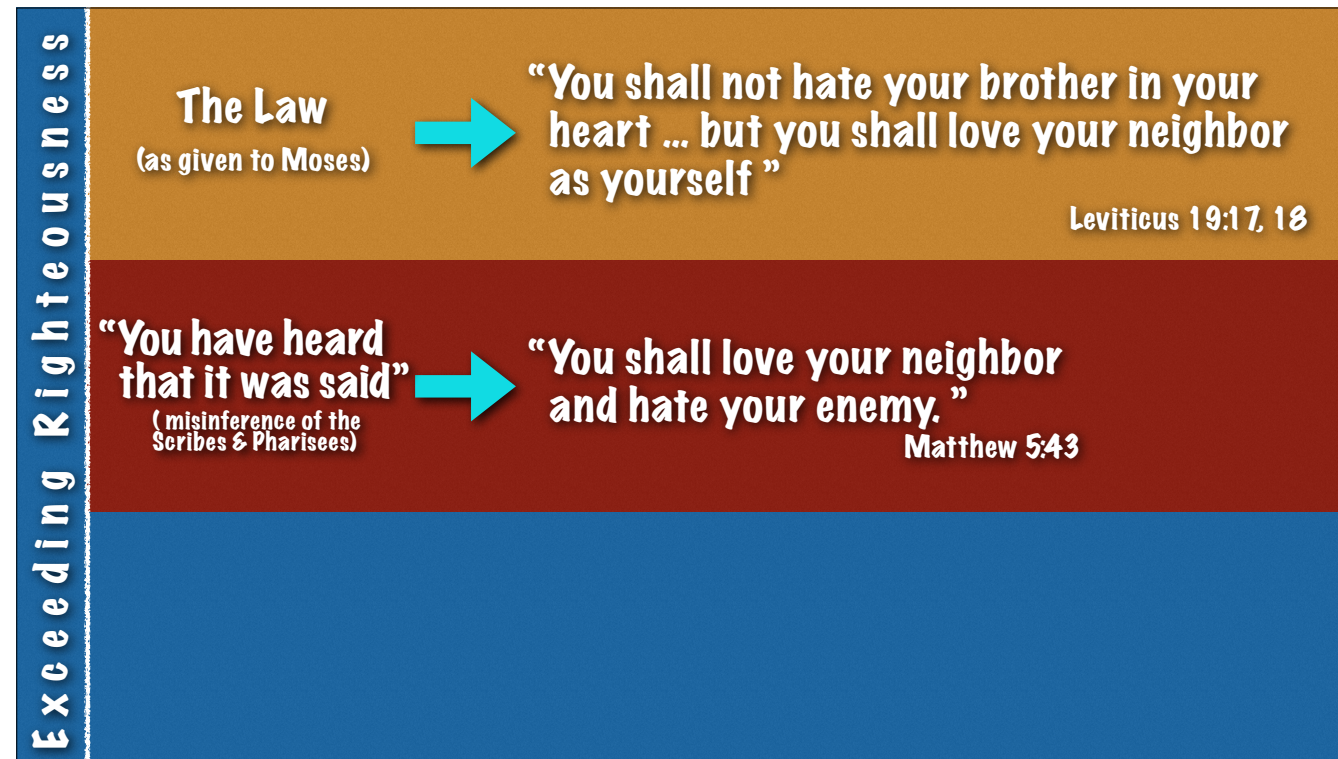
- Deuteronomy 7:1-2 (ESV) 1 "When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, 2 and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.



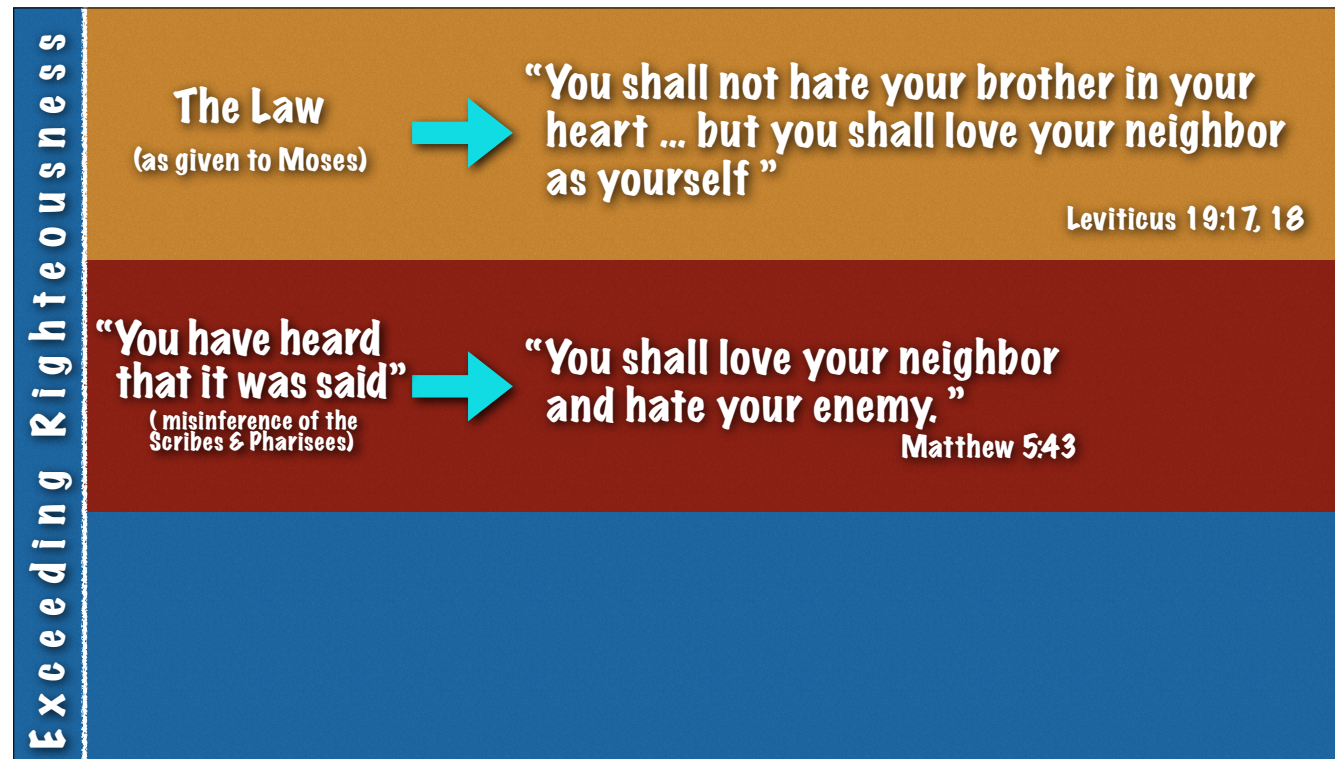
- Deuteronomy 7:16 (ESV) 16 And you shall consume all the peoples that the Lord your God will give over to you. Your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.



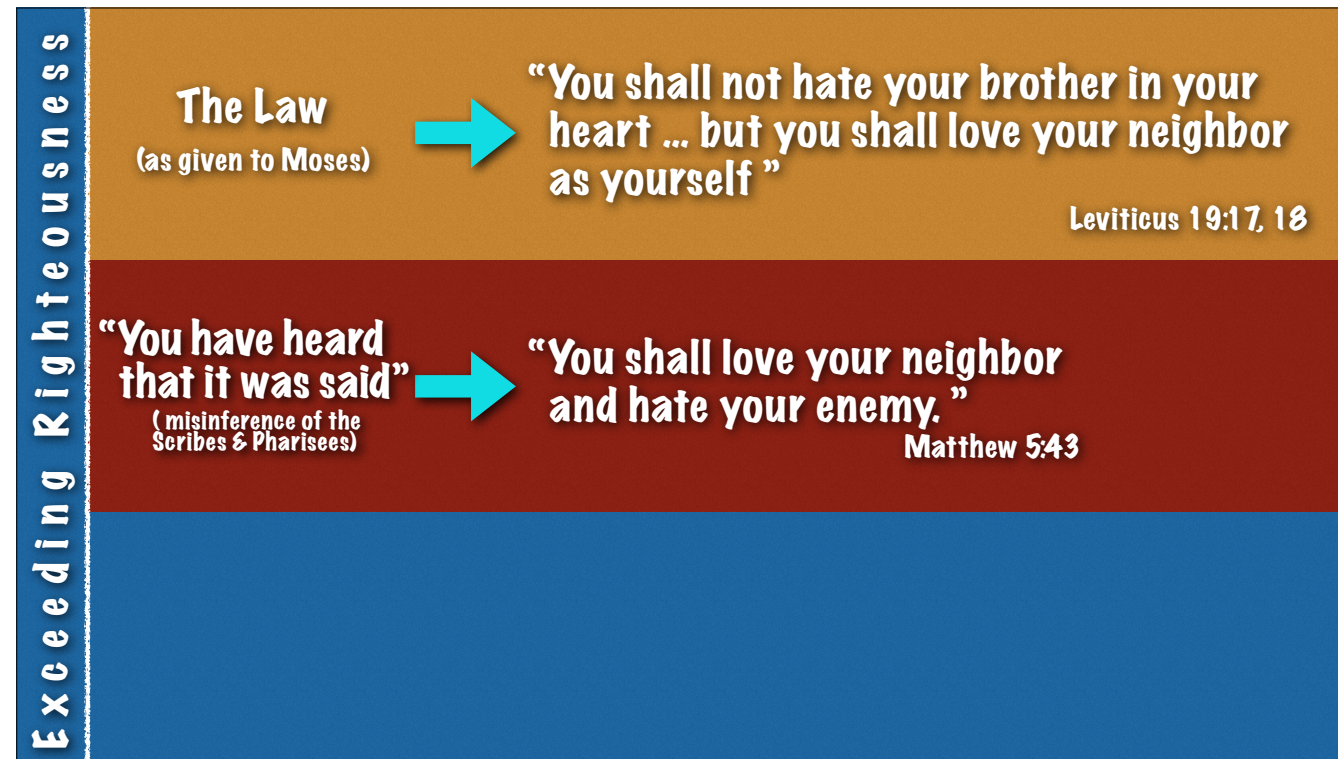
- Deuteronomy 23:3-6 (ESV) 3 "No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the Lord forever, 4 because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loved you. 6 You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.



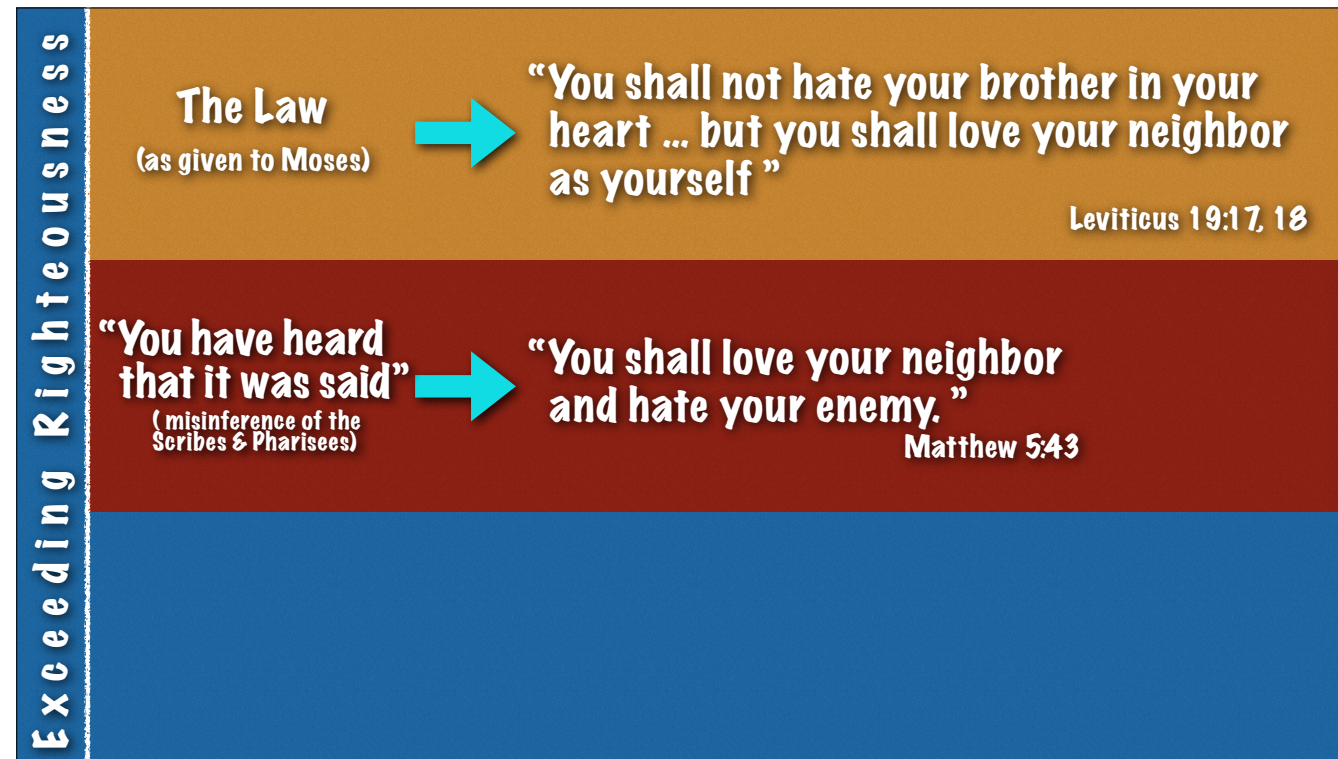
- Psalms 139:19-22 (ESV) 19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain. Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.



- While they were to love their neighbors, they must hate their enemies.
- They said that the 'neighbor' meant only an Israelite
 - so they taught the Jews to love jews,
 - love only your neighbor



- narrows the standard of love, eliminates "as yourself"
 - but they told them at the same time to regard everybody else not only as an alien but as an enemy.
 - qualifies the category: neighbor vs. enemy



- It was their business, almost their right and their duty, to hate all such people.
 - Perhaps because they were opposed to God, therefore God's people.
- Rationalization: specious: double standard of morality
 - Exodus 12:49: There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you."



- Matthew 5:44-47 (ESV) 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?



- All the examples Jesus has used to help us understand true righteousness culminate in this: true love.
 - Murder and anger
 - Lust and adultery and divorce
 - Oaths
 - Vengeance



- Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you
 - How do I love someone who is my enemy; someone who I know hates me? {DON'T ANSWER}
 - love = agape, benevolent love, reason not emotion -- seeking their best above own self interests



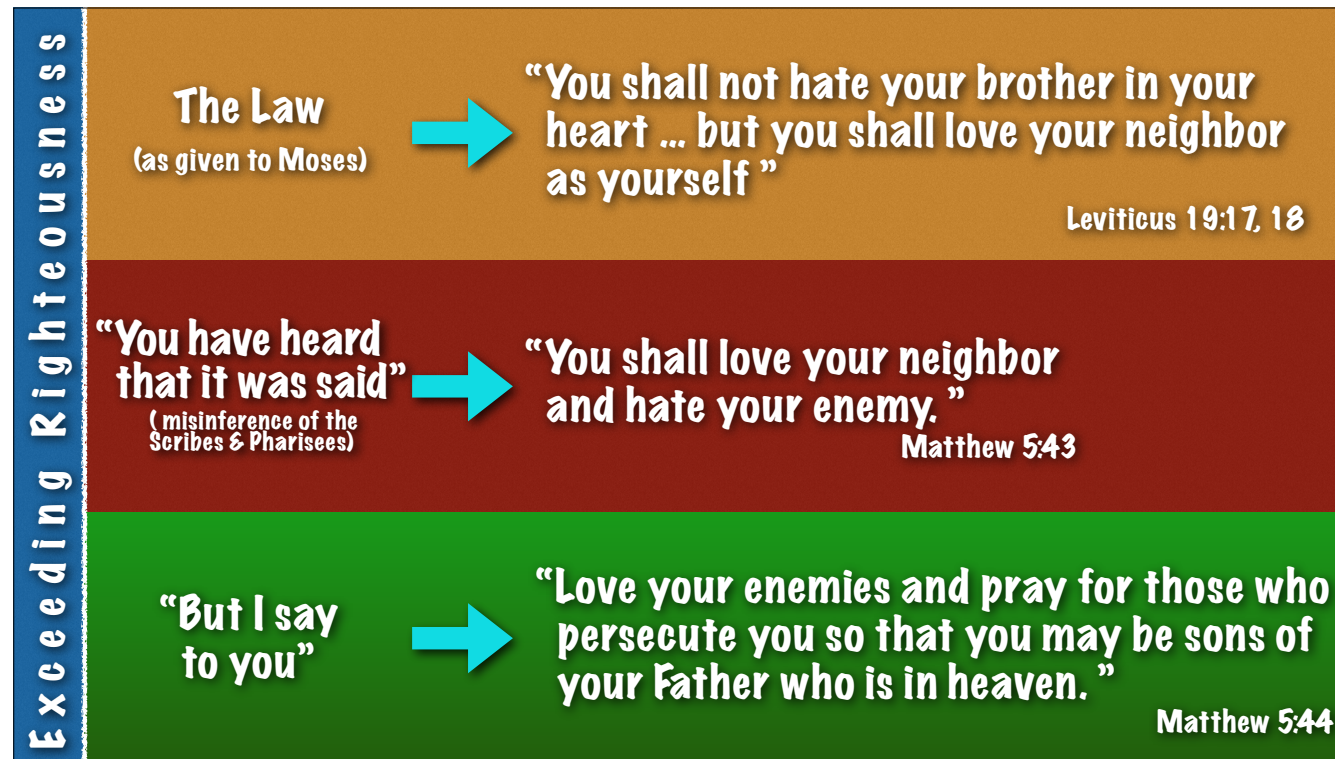
- persecute
 - Mt. 5:10-12: our reaction to being persecuted = rejoice
 - our reaction to those who persecute
 - "If you are praying for someone, you cannot hate them."



- But our Lord goes further here. We must positively love these people who so hate us.
 - our 'neighbor' must of necessity include even our enemy.



- who is my neighbor? Lk. 10:29-37
 - vs. 36: Which of these three, think you, proved neighbor unto him that fell among robbers?
 - He that showed mercy on Him. WHY?
 - Samaritan was not seeking his own
 - Others (Priest and Levite) thought only of themselves
 - Thought of others first, their needs, not his own.



- Go, and do you likewise.
 - No one should be my enemy because I so define him to be my enemy. I am to be a neighbor to all



- Love your enemies because that is what God does.
 - Sons of Father = to be like him, as a characteristic
 - HOW DO I LOVE MY ENEMIES?
 - Just as God loves His enemies:
 - sun rise on evil and good
 - sends rain on just and unjust
 - Sent Son to Die for us - Rom. 5:8



- The struggle with "good enough" love
 - Love those who love you; Greet only brothers
 - Tax collectors and Gentiles do the same.
 - What reward do you have? (what thanks?)
 - What MORE are you doing than others?



- Our love must not be compared to what we see in the world.
 - Our love must not only be greater than the world...
 - Our love must be different than the world's "love"
 - Our love must excel in quality and kind.
- Our goal is to have love like our Father
 - So much greater than the world.



- Understand that the tax collectors and Gentiles do love. But it's a love that has been affected by the ideals of the world.
 - Doing as good as they know how.
 - But this love does rise up to the standard set by our Father!



- When we see love in the world, it's important that we applaud the good love.
 - But we must also discern how it falls short of the love of God, what He desires our love to be.



- 1 Jn. 4:20 - we love because he first loved us
 - Our treatment of others must not depend on who they are, what they are or what they do to us.



- We must be careful that we don't love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us just because we have to.
- Otherwise, we are as blind and self-deceived as the Scribes and Pharisees
- What is our Father trying to teach us about himself, and what he desires us to be?

God is love.

- God is love.
 - And he wants us to be love too.
- But love, real love, is not easy. It's difficult. It's complicated. It's often messy.
 - Must be careful about love...
- God's love is not easy.
- Hosea

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14



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God is Love! (part 1)

Matthew 5:43-47

Synopsis: The last example of righteousness that exceeds the Scribes and the Pharisees is that of love. While the law of Moses taught loving one's neighbor, it didn't teach hatred for enemies. Yet the misinference of the Scribes and Pharisees had lead them to teach this. Jesus corrects this by teaching them to love their enemies, pray for those who persecute them and ultimately to be like their Heavenly Father.

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"Let all that you do be done with love."