



SHARING SCRIPTURE

Discover • Jesus • Together

Waging Love

For use: March 7 - 13

Texts: Isaiah 55:1-7; Isaiah 55:6-13; Isaiah 58:1-12; Isaiah 58:13, 14

A group of Asian-American restaurant and food service owners in New York City recently banded together to take a stand in response to the dramatic increase in assaults and hate crimes against Asian-Americans, especially toward the elderly. Their plan of attack is to return love for hate by feeding the needy in their communities.

Their campaign, #EnoughIsEnough, helps elderly Asian-Americans who don't feel safe going out to shop, and they also feed anyone else of any ethnicity who is food-insecure. "There is good and love and we're countering all the isolation, fear and frustration with encouragement, support and showing up with a smile," says Yin Chang, founder of the helping organization Heart of Dinner. "We're all in this for humanity. We're showing up for our people—our humans. I hope people can clearly see that if you raise your hand to step up, we're all better for it." [1]

It's not a normal response to return love for hate. Our natural human tendency is to fight back, and then to escalate the violence as a deterrent. Only the influence of God's Spirit can turn us away from the temptation to hit back at our enemies, and lead us to feed them instead. God's infinite wisdom shows us that the best approach is not always the natural human response.

God demonstrates that divine approach to all of us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). God instructed Isaiah to invite rebellious Israel to come, buy and eat even though they had no money. Even today, God is telling us in that ancient message that we can also receive

forgiveness for our rebellion, though there is nothing that we offer in return—we have no currency that can purchase our salvation. We are saved by faith alone, and that salvation is a gift from God.

It takes true humility to resist our natural prideful tendencies toward vengeance. In God's upside-down world, however, humility leads to exaltation and pride leads to downfall. One of the most practical ways to exhibit and practice humility is to wage a campaign of love in the face of mindless hate. Those of us who recognize that we have received the greatest expression of God's love—Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sins—will be foremost in reflecting God's graciousness toward a world that's descending more and more into a cycle of violence and evil.

~ Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/news/asian-american-businesses-are-saying-enough-is-enough-to-hate-crimes-by-feeding-the-community-022621>

For Reflection

Connecting: As you honestly reflect on your school years, were you: A bully? Someone who was bullied? Both? Or neither? Through your online connection if you aren't meeting in-person, and if you are comfortable sharing your perspective with your group, please explain how you dealt with the situation. Are you still dealing with the effects of those experiences?

Sharing: What is Sabbath to you?

1. A time to physically rest from the stresses of the week
2. A time to reflect on God's love for me
3. A time to grow in my relationship with God and become more loving
4. A time to remember that my work doesn't save me, and I need God's grace
5. A time to reflect God's character by helping and blessing those in need
6. Other:

Applying: How can a person best respond to conflict with love? Are there steps we can take to keep from reacting angrily to hateful situations? What works for you? Write out your ideas and then compare notes with the rest of your group.

Valuing: Are you always calm in the face of conflict? Do you have a hair-trigger temper sometimes? During the next week, make it a special focus in your prayers that God will help you always respond to anger-inducing situations with Christ-like love and peace.

Other Helpful Resources

[Creative Ministry's website](#) equips you with [friendship evangelism](#), [small group](#),

[community outreach](#), and [healing ministry](#) tools right at your fingertips. Our website also features [Adventist research conducted by Monte Sahlin](#), as well as [Sharing Scripture archives](#), [ScripShots](#), and more. And if you're tired of staring at a screen, digital files are available for download as PDFs and to print.

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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