

## **Do Good to Those Who Hate You**

### **From the Theology of Work Bible Commentary on Luke**

All workplaces experience conflict. In Luke 6:27-36, Jesus addresses situations of conflict. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27-28). Luke leaves no doubt that this is a teaching for the economic world, for he specifically relates it to lending money. "Lend [to your enemies], expecting nothing in return" (Luke 6:35). This doesn't seem like a viable commercial lending strategy, but perhaps we can understand it at a more abstract level. Christians must not use their power to crush people with whom they are in conflict. Instead, they must actively work for their good. This can apply to the workplace at two levels.

At the individual level, it means that we must work for the good of those with whom we are in conflict. This does not mean avoiding conflict or withdrawing from competition. But it does mean, for example, that if you are competing with a co-worker for promotion, you must help your co-worker/opponent do their work as well as they can, while trying to do yours even better.

At the corporate level, it means not crushing your competition, suppliers or customers, especially with unfair or unproductive actions such as frivolous lawsuits, monopolization, false rumors, stock manipulation, and the like. Every occupation has its own circumstances, and it would be foolish to draw a one-size-fits-all application from this passage in Luke. Competing hard in business via intentional fraud might be different from competing hard in basketball via an intentional foul. Therefore, an essential element of believers' participation in an occupation is to try to work out what the proper modes of conflict and competition are in light of Jesus' teaching.