

When

LOVE & HATE

work

TOGETHER.

[PART 1]

(Love-hate #6)

1

God's PRIMARY moral attribute... ❖ HOLINESS

- And he requires us to be holy.

Be **holy** because I, the LORD your God, am **holy**.
Leviticus 19:2b (CSB)

But as the one who called you is **holy**, you also are to be **holy** in all your conduct; for it is written, Be **holy**, because I am **holy**.

... without **holiness** no one will see the Lord.
Hebrews 12:14b (NIV)

1 Peter 1:15-16 (CSB)

- All other moral attributes flow from this one attribute. Holiness *influences* the nature of all the other attributes.
- If we choose to follow Jesus, we will also choose to pursue holiness and moral purity. This will influence our perception of everything else – including how we view love and hate.

2

❖ LOVE – a "secondary" moral characteristic:

- "Secondary" does not mean "unimportant." It just means that the nature of these characteristics is influenced by God's primary characteristic of HOLINESS. So anything that is not compatible with holiness is not a part of love.
- Love is a characteristic that requires interaction with others. It involves *relationships* – first with God, second with people.

✦ Even before people existed, there was love – between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. ✦

❖ HATE – a "tertiary" moral characteristic:

- Such characteristics exist only as a *response* to evil (which is a rejection of all that holiness is).

Like all other godly characteristics (including love), the world twists and distorts it into something it was never intended to be.

3

What can we learn about love and hate?

⇒ By simply paying attention to what the verses say?

- Advanced Bible training and knowledge of Bible languages can be helpful. (We will look at some examples next time.)
- But we can learn so much by simply paying attention to what the Bible says in our own language!

- ❖ It's not that complicated, if we're willing to accept what each passage says. This means paying attention to:
 - The words and how they go together.
 - The context in which they occur.

- ❖ By doing this, we can learn much about the topic we are studying, and can answer many of our questions.

4

What can we learn? ⇒ ① ANSWERS TO SOME BASIC QUESTIONS.

QUESTION 1: DOES "GOOD HATE" REALLY EXIST?

⇒ We can easily see:

- 25% of the "hate" verses involve hate that is *good*. Of these verses many describe a *response* to evil, and some are *commands*.
- In some of these passages, hate and love are both present (normally directed toward different persons/things).
- There are a few passages that encourage the one and not the other – either love (and not hate), or hate (and not love).

OUR GOAL: TO CHOOSE A PATH THAT AVOIDS HALF-TRUTH.

Using the commands about LOVE as an excuse for ignoring or denying what Scripture says about HATE is sin.

Using what the Bible says about HATE as an excuse for ignoring or neglecting LOVE is also sin!

5

⇒ We shouldn't be surprised. *Most* characteristics can be good or bad. For instance, "BAD LOVE" *also* exists!

(A lot of what the world promotes belongs in this category.)

- EXAMPLE: A review of all the verses that contain a form of the word "love" (love, loved, loving, beloved, etc.), using a randomly-picked English language Bible translation (1984 NIV) revealed:
 - ✓ There were about 700 verses that contained some form of the word "love." (The word may occur more than once in a verse.)
 - ✓ Of these, about 100 verses involved "bad" love – which means about 15% of the verses that have something to do with "love." (If we limited ourselves to verses about the love that *people* have, the "bad" percentage would be much higher.)
 - ✓ These "bad" verses included: loving the wrong things, misguided or questionable love (sometimes a matter of wrong priorities), and occasionally a refusal to love the right things.

6

QUESTION 2: WHAT IF THE WORDS HAVE MORE THAN ONE MEANING?

⇒ We can generally recognize how a word is being used by looking at the context.

- Even when we might not be 100% sure; we can usually narrow down the options to the point that it isn't an issue.
- ALL the major teachings in the Bible are covered by many verses; so uncertainty in some passages won't result in serious misunderstandings of the main issue.

⇒ EXAMPLES: By simply looking at the context, we can normally recognize the differences between ...

- Family love, friendship love, commitment love, etc.
- An evil type of hating, the "hating of evil," and when the word simply refers to an "enemy."
- Moral choices, and emotional reactions; God-focused responses, and self-centered responses.
- Hate that can coexist with love, and hate that cannot.

7

QUESTION 3: WHAT ABOUT "HATE THE SIN, BUT NOT THE SINNER"?

⇒ We can easily see, by simply reading the Bible:

- This is an artificial distinction that Scripture does not make. It can't be found anywhere in the Bible!

⇒ What do we find?

- We find verses in which God expresses hate for sin. But we also find verses in which God expresses hate for the sinner.
- The same thing occurs with other concepts similar to "hate": abhor, despise, loathe, detest, wrath, anger, judgment, etc. Here are some examples in which God expresses such attitudes toward people (i.e., the sinner): Leviticus 26:30; Psalm 5:4-6; Proverbs 11:20; John 3:36.
- The same thing also occurs with characteristics we tend to call "positive." God expresses love (etc.) for the "thing" and the "person." (Two "thing" examples: Psalm 33:5; 45:7.)

8

⇒ This view just doesn't fit with what we find in Scripture!

- It's more compatible with the world's view of how hate and love relate.
- People who hold to this view tend to ignore or deny some of the ways the Bible uses the word "hate."
But to be consistent, they would have to ignore or deny many other concepts as well.

NOW IT FITS MY VIEWS!

The boastful ~~cannot~~ **CAN** stand in your sight; you ~~hate~~ **LOVE** all evildoers.
You ~~destroy~~ **LOVE** those who tell lies; the LORD ~~abhors~~ **LOVES** violent and treacherous people.
Psalm 5:5-6 (CSB)

9

QUESTION #4: EVEN IF "HATE" WAS ACCEPTABLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, DID THE NEW TESTAMENT CHANGE THINGS?

⇒ Moral issues did not change, nor did God's requirements for them. The ceremonial obligations are what changed – and this is because we are now under a new covenant.

⇒ God did not change. The God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!
Hebrews 13:8 (NET)

God our Father... He never changes...
James 1:17b (NLT)

"I the Lord do not change."
Malachi 3:6a (NIV)

He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind ...
1 Samuel 15:29a (NIV)

⇒ The message of the "hate" verses did not change. Though there may be fewer "hate" verses in the New Testament (in proportion to its size), what they say is consistent with the verses of the Old Testament.

10

⇒ Most of the New Testament verses about God's love toward sinners are referring to SAVED people, before they were saved.
↳ They are NOT about unsaved people who remain unsaved.

EXAMPLE:

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ...
But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!
For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!
Romans 5:6, 8-10 (NIV)

These underlined phrases are all salvation concepts. They prove that this passage refers to saved people!

11

EXAMPLE:

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.
Titus 3:4-7 (NIV)

These underlined phrases are all salvation concepts!

EXAMPLE:

God has shown us his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him. This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the payment for our sins. ...
We love because God loved us first.
1 John 4:9-10, 19 (GW)

1 John was written so that saved people could know for certain that they were saved (1 John 5:13).

12

- John 3:16 mentions **love** for the "world" ... *but most people who point to this verse ignore the context.*

- > This LOVE is the offer of salvation to people who are already under God's wrath. It does not mean that the wrath doesn't exist! (It ceases only if the person becomes a follower of Jesus.)
- > To experience God's love (instead of wrath), people must accept God's offer of salvation!

For God **loved** the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ... anyone who does not believe is already condemned, ... the one who rejects the Son ... the wrath of God remains on him.
John 3:16, 18b, 36b (CSB)

The words "condemned" and "wrath" belong to the same concept category as does "hate." To be consistent, a person who claims "God hates sin, but loves (not hates) sinners" would have to claim: "God pours out his wrath on sins, but not on sinners" – which directly contradicts what these (and many other) verses say!

13

- Matthew 5:43-44 affirms our obligation to **love** our enemies.

- > This is actually the same obligation that the Old Testament people had – love for "neighbor" and love for "outsiders" (Leviticus 19:18, 34).
- > It does not answer the question about the relationship between love and hate.

"You have heard that it was said, '**Love** your neighbor, and **hate** your enemy.' But I tell you this: **Love** your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."
Matthew 5:43-44 (GW)

[YES]>> Jesus affirmed the need for us to **love all** people (just like the Old Testament required).

[SILENCE]>> His response included no comment about hate. (It is faulty thinking to assume a statement that is not there... especially when it promotes a view that contradicts other Scripture passages.)

14

What can we learn? ⇒ ② THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR OTHER OBLIGATIONS AND THE VERSES THAT SPEAK OF GOOD HATE.

A. WE MUST PAY ATTENTION TO PRIORITIES.

FIRST of all, HOLINESS must influence all that we do.

In the context of our present study, this means we will love what God loves and hate what he hates. NO godly expression of hate or love will contradict holiness.

Be **holy** because I, the LORD your God, am **holy**.
Leviticus 19:2b (CSB)

SECOND, we must LOVE GOD with all our "everything."

This summarizes all our obligations toward God; and will result in a desire to live pure and holy lives.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."
Mark 12:30 (CSB)

15

THIRD, we must LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR the same way we love ourselves.

This includes not only the people we call friends, but also those we would call "outsiders" – and even "enemies."

... **love** your **neighbor** as yourself...
Leviticus 19:18b (CSB)

... **the alien** ... You are to **love** him as yourself ...
Leviticus 19:33b (CSB)

Love your **enemies**, ...
Matthew 5:44b (GW)

Jesus describes it this way:

So in everything, **do to others what you would have them do to you**, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.
Matthew 7:12 (NIV); also in Luke 6:31.

ALSO: Jesus uses the "Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:29-37) to show us that we must actively make ourselves the "neighbor" of other people. Don't wait for them to do it!

16

FOURTH, when "GOOD HATE" is necessary, it will involve a choice based on moral values. (Though emotions may be appropriate, it's not merely an emotional response.)

- > We want good to happen to our neighbors/enemies. We will do what we can to encourage it. **This is love for neighbor.**
- > But when neighbors oppose God, holiness and righteousness, we must oppose them. **This is love for God.**
 - At times, this opposition may express itself as "hate" (the type that comes from God-honoring moral choices).
 - We must also oppose our own selves – our "flesh" or sinful nature – for the same reasons.

Following Jesus will result in conflict with those who are not following him. At those specific points of conflict, God/Jesus get 100% of our loyalty. Neighbor, family and self get 0%. Always.

17

B. WE MUST DEAL WITH CONFLICTS.

"GOOD HATE" answers this big question:

 What if love for NEIGHBOR contradicts love for GOD? 

⇒ This is a situation in which "hate" becomes a requirement – but it's NOT the world's type of hate!

- We must ALWAYS desire (and encourage) good for anyone and everyone.
- But if people get in the way of loving God, GOD COMES FIRST... *even though we still desire good for the people (and will do the good if we can).*

We could wish that conflicts would never happen. But we live in a world that has been messed-up by sin; and things don't always work the way they should. (There can be many reasons for this conflict; but it is especially common when a person decides to put Jesus first in life – and others don't.)

18

⇒ This is why these Scripture passages tell us to HATE and NOT LOVE:

"Whoever **loves** father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever **loves** son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life because of me will find it."
Matthew 10:37-39 (NET)

"If anyone comes to me and does not **hate** his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."
Luke 14:26-27 (NET)

These verses say the same thing in 2 different ways:

- They aren't telling us to desire evil for others (and for self).
- Rather, they are telling us to always put God/Jesus FIRST in our life – ahead of others (and self).

19

★ How should we respond to all this? ★

IF we are following Jesus...
→ We will *always* desire good for other people.

IF we are pursuing holiness...
→ We will know when we must oppose other people (though *still* desiring good for them).

20

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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21