

# A Time to Hate

Hate. Such a dirty word “hate” has become. People hate even to hear the word “hate,” let alone to be accused of “hate” or “hate speech,” or to be described as “hateful.”

And yet, King Solomon wrote that there is “a time to love, and a time to hate” (Eccl. 3:8). In fact, God commands us to hate. More on that in a moment. So hate is necessary.

But what are we to hate? When is the time to hate? And how do we reconcile this with the fact that God also tells us His whole law is summed up in love (Mat. 22:37-40)?

## What God Hates

The Bible lists a number of things that God hates, so let’s start there. Here’s Prov. 6:16-19:

- 16 These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
- 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,
- 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil,
- 19 A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

Not only does the Eternal hate these things, but He also describes them as abominations. That is, they are disgusting, detestable, and abhorrent.

So, in addition to what we’ve already read, here’s a list of things that God hates and regards as abominations, in the order they’re found in the Bible:

- Homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; 20:13)
- All manner of sexual immorality, including incest, adultery, bestiality, and more (Lev. 18)
- Child sacrifice (Lev. 18:21, 26-30; Deut. 12:31; 18:9-12)
- Profaning God’s name (Lev. 18:21, 26-30)
- Idols and idolatry (Deut. 7:25-26; 13:13-16; 16:22; 27:15)
- Cross-dressing (Deut. 22:5)

- Witchcraft, sorcery, and necromancy (Deut. 18:9-12)
- Prostitution, especially in pagan worship (Deut. 23:18)
- Remarrying one's wife after divorcing her if she has since married another man (Deut. 24:4)
- Having dishonest weights and measures (Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1; 20:10)
- Lying (Prov. 12:22)
- Pride (Prov. 16:5)
- Justifying the wicked or condemning the righteous (Prov. 17:15)
- Rebellion and stubbornness against God's instructions (Prov. 28:9; 1 Sam. 15:23)
- Plotting evil (Zech. 8:17)
- Swearing falsely (Zech. 8:17)
- Marrying an idolator or unbeliever (Mal. 2:11)
- Divorce (Mal. 2:16). Literally, "putting away" or "departing" (Strong's # H7971); that is, separation

We might sum all this up by saying that God hates wickedness, and that wickedness is transgression of His law (1 John 3:4). Indeed, Prov. 15:9 tells us, "The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but He loves him who follows righteousness." And Psa. 45:7, addressing Jesus Christ, says this: "You love righteousness and hate wickedness."

Is that it? Are wicked ways the only thing that God hates?

Here's Psa. 11:5: "The wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates." And in Psa. 5:5, David prayed, "You hate all workers of iniquity."

Wait a minute. God also hates the wicked? How does that square with John 3:16? "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

If God loved the whole world enough to sacrifice His Son for it, then how could He hate anyone in it?

The key, I believe, is in the word "hate." In Hebrew, the root word is אָנַח, *sane* (from Strong's # H8130), which means "to hate, a hater, an enemy."

In other words, the wicked are God's enemies. He sets Himself in opposition to them. He finds their works to be detestable and repugnant.

We find this very definition of “hate” in Psa. 139:21-22: “Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.”

The Apostle Paul also made clear that we were once God’s enemies: “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast” (Col. 1:21-23).

But does God desire to destroy sinful people? Does He hate their existence and want them to perish forever? By no means!

“As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’” (Ezek. 33:11). Again, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Is God harsh toward the wicked until they repent? Does He seek to cause them pain and anguish? No, not all.

“The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Psa. 145:9). “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities” (Psa. 103:10). “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father 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” (Mat. 5:44-45).

No, God is very merciful and patient. He doesn’t want to destroy the wicked, but He will if they don’t repent (Rev. 20:15; 21:8). He yearns for their repentance so that He can spare them, but He won’t spare them if they don’t repent.

Wickedness is utterly repugnant to God, and He won’t tolerate it in His presence (Psa. 5:4). As we read in Isa. 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

So when we read that God hates the wicked, it’s their way of life that He hates. Their sins have made them His enemies. He hates the fact that they are wicked, that they are walking a path leading to death. But He also loves all people because they are His creation, and He yearns for them to repent and be reconciled to Him.

## Should We Hate?

As we read above, King David hated those who hated God “with perfect hatred.” God’s enemies became David’s enemies. After all, David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). What God hated, David also hated.

Should we then hate what God hates? Yes we should!

In fact, God tells us, “Hate evil, love good” (Amos 5:15). Psa. 97:10 adds, “You who love the LORD, hate evil!” And in Prov. 8:13, we find, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.”

Let’s look at a few more verses for good measure. “A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame” (Prov. 13:5). “He who hates covetousness will prolong his days” (Prov. 28:16). “I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me” (Psa. 101:3). “I hate and abhor lying, but I love Your law” (Psa. 119:163).

And should we count God’s enemies as our enemies? Again, yes.

Psa. 15:4 tells us that God is pleased with those “in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD.” Psa. 26:5 adds, “I have hated the assembly of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked.” And Psa. 1:1 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.”

In the Book of Acts, the Apostle Paul rebuked a sorcerer with these words, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10).

So yes, God’s enemies should also be our enemies. We must hate their wicked works and their way of life. Yet, as Paul also reminded us, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

Thus, we do not seek our enemies’ destruction, but their repentance. We hate the fact that they are wicked and walking a path leading to death.

We must hate as God hates. Sin must become repugnant to us — especially our own sins. We must learn to hate wickedness, to find it utterly disgusting and vile. We must want nothing to do with it. Everything that’s an abomination to our Creator should also be an abomination to us. We must “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11).

And, like our Creator, we yearn for all humanity to repent and turn back to Him. Just as God has extended mercy to us and granted us repentance, so we also desire for others to have the same blessing.

## **Love and Hate**

Somewhat surprisingly, love and hate go hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other. If we love God, then we also love righteousness and hate evil. And if we don't hate evil, then we don't love God.

As we read in the Book of James, "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jam. 4:4).

There's another facet to this: loving the sinner requires that we hate his evil works. For if we love our fellow man, then we desire for him to repent so that God may show him mercy.

But if we don't hate wickedness, and if we take no stand against evil, then we hate our fellow man and care nothing for his salvation. Acceptance of evil is not love. Tolerance of wickedness is not love.

God gave a stern warning to all who might tolerate wickedness: "Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life" (Ezek. 13:22).

## **What If We Don't Hate?**

Now, in Christian circles, it's pretty common to hear the phrase "hate the sin, love the sinner." Yet it seems that many just don't hear that first part, "hate the sin."

So what happens if we don't hate wickedness? What happens if we decide to tolerate evil and accept all people just as they are?

In the Book of 2 Chronicles, King Jehoshaphat, a righteous king of Judah, made an alliance with the wicked King Ahab of Israel. And what was God's response? He sent a prophet to Jehoshaphat and rebuked him: "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you" (2 Chron. 19:2).

But Jehoshaphat still didn't learn his lesson. Sometime later, he made another alliance. We discover in 2 Chron. 20:35-37:

35 After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly.

36 And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber.

37 But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

You see, our Savior gave us a mission: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Mat. 5:14). That means we are to be different from the world. We are to uphold God's standards, to stand for righteousness and against evil.

As we read in 1 Pet. 2:9, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

If we try to blend in with the world, if we try to hide God's light within us, if we become tolerant or accepting of evil, then we have failed our mission and become useless. We cannot help the world by being like it. You cannot help a drowning man by drowning with him.

Again, our Savior said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Mat. 5:13).

## **Conclusion**

Now, then, as we wrap up this study, let's ask ourselves a few questions. Do we hate evil? Do we find wickedness detestable and abhorrent? Do we hate what God hates and love what He loves?

When we see, for example, sodomite pride parades or so-called transgenders (cross-dressers) gyrating in front of children, do we hate those things? When we see all manner of evil being flaunted in our society, do we find that to be utterly disgusting and vile?

If not, then we must change our values, for they aren't Godly values!

But if, on the other hand, the world accuses you of being hateful for rejecting the abominations that are taught and practiced today, then be glad. Remember that your Father in heaven also hates the abominations of this world!

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