



When Christians Are Called To Hate

*There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time
for every event under heaven—
A time to love and a time to hate...
Ecclesiastes 3:1, 8a*

*We seem to live at a time where the world's notion of political correctness has been embraced to a large degree even by mainstream Evangelical Christianity. Like all deception it masquerades the simple biblical truth by over-emphasizing what might be a truth in and of itself to the point that the whole thing is actually a lie. Political correctness loves to deploy the facade of "love", "tolerance", and "kindness" to an extreme where anything it deems to be encroaching on these noble attributes is evidence of an unloving, intolerable, unkind spirit. But just as we must embrace God's Word to the degree that we no longer love according to the world's definition but according to the way God defines love, so too we must understand, "There is a time to love and a time to **hate**" – not as the world defines "hate", but according to how and what we are taught to hate in alignment with God's Word.*

The first and foremost contrast between the world's definition of "hate" and how it is defined by God's Word is that biblical hate is not unreasonable nor uncontrolled. As a matter of fact, it is extremely well-educated when it comes to knowing what is to be hated and why. God's Word specifically tells us not to hate our neighbor and even

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commands us to love our enemies. (Mt. 5:43-48) Biblically we never return “hate” for “hate” in our personal relationships. The biblical definition of proper, Christian hatred has to do with our attitude toward a person, place, or thing with which one should have no tolerance because they either openly oppose, detest, or despise God and His people or are the open proponents of rebellion against God. It has to do with how we are supposed to deal with someone or something actively opposed to God’s Word and ways to such a degree that a relationship with them under any guise will corrupt us.

This becomes clearer if we shake the dust off our concordance and look up all the Scriptures which employ a variation of the word “hate”. (And there certainly are quite a few.) We quickly begin to see a pattern by which God is making a distinction between those merely acting in ignorance of His Word from those proactively working against Him. And up front I’m going to let it be known that the greatest object of biblical hatred is not the general sin and fallen nature of the world at large. No, the primary target of “hate” in alignment with biblical teaching has much more to do with those claiming to be part of the Kingdom but who teach and live as diametric opponents of it. The roots of biblical hatred can be characterized as an extreme intolerance for hypocrisy, backsliding, and false teaching.

Those in the World Who Hate God

To understand what we are called to hate it might first be helpful to understand something of the nature of the hatred that already exists where God is concerned. The human pursuit of idolatry – to make something or someone else the object of worship in the rightful place of God – is one of God’s first definitions of someone who God says hates Him.

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing

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*lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep
My commandments.
Exodus 20:4-6*

From the outset and throughout the whole of God's Word the repeated evidence of "hate" is disobedience to God's Word and the proof of "love" is obedience. Just as biblical love can never be proven by just the confession of our mouth alone but must be backed up with our actions, so it works in reverse to prove someone "hates" God.

This is verified over and over again in Scripture by showing that the proof of someone who "hates" God is provided by their consistent refusal to listen to Him and put His Word into practice in their life. The proof that someone "hates" God?

- They hate biblical knowledge. (Prov. 1:22, 28-30)
- They hate to be reprov'd by God's Word. (Prov. 5:12-13; 9:8; 15:10; Amos 5:10)
- They have trouble speaking the truth. (Prov. 26:24, 28)
- They hate Christians who serve as reminders to them of what it means to walk in faithfulness to God's Word. (Prov. 29:10)
- They have trouble treating other people fairly. (Micah 3:1-2)

These are all different aspects of rejecting God's Word not just casually, but completely from the heart, mind, and soul. They have such a revulsion to the Truth of God's Word that they most often express their hatred against Him by how they treat others, especially believers. Not wanting to be reminded of it, they want God's truth – and those of us acting as examples reminding them of it – to just go away.

*"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not
come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.
John 3:20*

Toward God personally they embrace some form of idolatry in attempt to displace Him from their life. Toward us who have chosen to instead

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cling to Him regardless such people express their hatred for Him through their mistreatment of us.

"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.

John 7:7

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Matthew 10:22

"But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name.

Luke 21:16-17

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

John 15:18-19

No, we are not called to hate such people back. We are to recognize that they are in rebellion against God and in reality the only pitiful little things they can even attempt against Him is to focus that anger on us. To such people we are called to be living, earthly examples of His love so they will be reminded that their rebellion is actually against God's Word and what awaits them if they will choose to instead reconcile with Him.

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:14

Things God Generally Hates

Across the board there are characteristics in man that God abhors as a rule. Whether someone is a believer or unbeliever, there are behaviors which God simply does not tolerate. Understanding these things provides a foundation for what God expects from everyone.

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- "...You hate all who do iniquity." (Ps. 5:5)
- "...the one who loves violence His soul hates." (Ps. 11:5)
- "...since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you." (Ezek. 35:6)
- "All their evil is at Gilgal; indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds..." (Hosea 9:15)
- "...let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate..." (Zech. 8:17)

Note that the object of God's intolerance is most often defined in terms of how people treat each other. This is probably best exemplified in Proverbs...

*There are six things which the LORD hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:
Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,
A false witness who utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.
Proverbs 6:16-19*

We can really see the biblical roots of the old yarn, "Hate the sin but love the sinner". There are those who actively reject God in their pursuit of worshiping someone or something in His place, and there are those who actively reject God's Word and ways in their pursuit of earthly relationships with other people. In such cases the word "hate" is describing something more akin to a deep, personal disappointment that people choose to go their own way and are blind to the destination to which sin is ultimately going to take them. It is particularly noteworthy that God judges such people not so much by their mistreatment of Him, but according to how they treat others.

*The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is
in the darkness until now.
1 John 2:9*

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Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:15

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

1 John 4:20

Those in the Church Who Hate God

There is a different category of person however, of whom we are supposed to remain keenly aware. There are those who claim the label "Christian" but whose behavior betrays the fact that just like the unsaved they are not putting God's Word into practice in their life either. But whereas the unsaved make no pretense of believing in the One True God, hypocrites and heretics try to twist the very Word of God so that it justifies their outlandish, unbiblical lifestyle.

*"Those who hate the LORD would pretend obedience to Him,
And their time of punishment would be forever.
Psalm 81:15*

One of the chief, repeated biblical characteristics about these people is that they "*pretend obedience to Him*". In spite of God's repeated attempts to reprove and discipline them, they remain unresponsive and continue to act however they want. (Prov. 5:12-13, 12:1, 15:10; Amos 5:10) It is clear from God's Word that those who continue down such a path will eventually arrive at a time when it is too late to turn back.

*"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently but they will not find me,
Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD.
They would not accept my counsel,
They spurned all my reproof.
Proverbs 1:28-30*

And there is a special category of Scriptures devoted to addressing a problem that can only be brought about by people falsely claiming Christ's name in the course of their unbiblical pursuits: wrong worship. Yes, the Bible defines wrong worship not simply as a "mistake" or an "accident", but as something so willful and planned as to constitute the very definition of what it means to "hate" God.

"When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

Deuteronomy 12:29-31

"You shall not set up for yourself a sacred pillar which the LORD your God hates.

Deuteronomy 16:22

"I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them.

Isaiah 1:14

For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense And make an everlasting covenant with them.

Isaiah 61:8

'Yet I sent you all My servants the prophets, again and again, saying, "Oh, do not do this abominable thing which I hate." But they did not listen or incline their ears to turn from their wickedness, so as not to burn sacrifices to other gods.

Jeremiah 44:4-5

"I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.

Amos 5:21

I know there are those who think the continuing discussion about the Church Growth Movement, the Purpose Driven agenda, the Emergent Church Movement, the march toward Ecumenism and many other related “approaches” to how a church should operate is nothing but one man’s opinion versus another man’s. Is it really? When God Himself despises wrong worship and in turn fosters in us an equal response of hatred for it, is it just a “difference of opinion”? Every historical and biblical instance of a false movement gripping the very innards of God’s people **all** began with a corruption of worship. And God Himself defines such people as hating Him because if they loved Him they would...

“...worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:23

How tolerant of alternative worship approaches should we be when God Himself considers it an act of hatred?

The Example of David

One of the highest examples of biblical behavior is stated to be David. Perhaps we can learn something about the proper application of hatred from his own example.

*I do not sit with deceitful men,
Nor will I go with pretenders.
I hate the assembly of evildoers,
And I will not sit with the wicked.*

Psalm 26:4-5

*I hate those who regard vain idols,
But I trust in the LORD.*

Psalm 31:6

*I will set no worthless thing before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not fasten its grip on me.*

Psalm 101:3

A worldly bit of wisdom we are familiar with intones, "You are hardest on your own kind." I see that in David's teaching because the ones with whom we should draw the deepest distinction are those claiming to operate under the same church roof as us. The harshest and most inflexible stands we are to take are with the "*pretenders*" – "*those who fall away*". If the biblical definition of "hate" is to be intolerant of something, then there is no room for political correctness where the corruption of the Body of Christ is concerned.

I do not believe this gives anyone a license to scream uncontrollably at people, I do not believe we are given leave of the boundaries of love to pursue expressing hatred, nor do I think this opens the door to open persecution of those working internally against the Word of God. But at the least it calls for us to stand firm in what we believe, to unflinchingly remain true to God's Word, and in the most loving way possible confront such people with our resolve to not allow their false teaching and false practices to continue. Anyone can calmly and confidently look them in the eye and sincerely admonish and rebuke wrong behavior within the Body of Christ. This is not a call to violence in the classical sense, merely an encouragement not to back down.

'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.

Leviticus 19:17

However, "*There is an appointed time for everything...A time for love and a time for hate...*" (Ecc. 3:1, 8a) The biblical object of our hatred and intolerance is come, and if we allow political correctness and a false understanding of "tolerance" to win the day, we are in danger of losing the day to a false love in the name of political correctness.

In His Love,

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