

August 21, 2022

I Want You To Hate More

Jason Longstreth

I'm sure we have all heard it before. Perhaps we have even taught it to our own children or grandchildren. It is a short lesson about life and the attitudes that we should display. What is it? "You are not supposed to hate." With this one phrase we try to teach our children the value of love and the dangers of hate. We try to teach them to be "good people." We tell them (or at least insinuate) that good people don't hate. And perhaps most of the time it is a lesson that our children need to learn. But let me ask you a question, are we not supposed to hate?

One thing that we need to understand is that sometimes we have preconceived ideas. Most of us probably feel that hatred is wrong. We associate love with goodness and hatred with evil. To use a little "Star Wars" language, hatred is the path to the "dark side." But is that correct? If you were to take out your Bible concordance and look up the word "hate," you may be surprised at what you find. That word is used quite a few times in the Bible. You may also be surprised to learn that a number of times we read that God hates certain things. If God hates something, then hatred itself cannot be evil.

However, a second item that we must understand when we hear the phrase "You are not supposed to hate" is the object of that hatred. In other words, what are you not supposed to hate? If we say that we are not supposed to hate anything, we are wrong! However, if we say that we are not supposed to hate people – that has some validity. This is probably what we are trying to convey to our children anyway. When little Joey says, "I hate him!" we reply, "You shouldn't hate anyone." For the most part, I would agree with this teaching. We are supposed to have love and compassion for our fellow man.

Having said these things, let me now ask another question: Are there things that we should hate? Are we supposed to hate certain things? The answer is, “Absolutely!” Let’s begin by looking at a few verses. Throughout the Old Testament, we read of things that God hates. Malachi 2:16 is probably one of the better known examples of this. Malachi 2:16 says, “‘For I hate divorce,’ says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘and him who covers his garment with wrong,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.’” In this verse, we are told that God hates divorce and him who does wrong. Look at Revelation 2:6. “Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” In this passage we find out that the Ephesian Christians hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans and Jesus did also. One more verse – Romans 12:9. “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.” Here we have a commandment to abhor evil and cling to good. What does abhor mean? It means to hate.

The fact is, we are supposed to hate evil, just like God hates evil. We are supposed to hate sin. What does this mean? If you hate something, how do you treat it? You surely do not support it or condone it, do you? But that is exactly the way some Christians treat evil. Sin is not funny! If we think bad language and bad actions are humorous, we do not hate evil. If we say that our favorite movies or TV shows are the ones that depict people in sinful relationships and situations, we do not hate evil. If our “idols” are people who practice sinful things and boast in their sin, we do not hate evil. It may be true that we should “love the sinner,” but we should also “hate the sin.” And if we do not hate evil, we are not acting like Christians.

This may sound strange, but I believe that most of us need to hate more. We need to hate sin! This is one of the things that will keep us from practicing it. “Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”