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But It's Wrong! Can't I Hate It?

Ecclesiastes 3:8: (NASB) *A time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace.*



It was just a few weeks ago that the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, sparked a firestorm of vitriol and reaction throughout our country. What happened, what did not happen, who reacted and how? All these things became the fuel for more protests and more protests against the protests and reaction of a very negative kind everywhere you look. Let us be abundantly clear on one point - those who would paint themselves as any form of supremacist, white or otherwise, are servants of a deep and destructive darkness. Period. Those who take the law into their own hands and use violence and threats as their primary tools to eradicate all whom they consider supremacists are also choosing to burrow down that dark hole as well. NONE of this is good! All of this provokes hatred and rightfully so. Should we not as Christians hate such evil? Yes, we should. The bigger question here - HOW do we engage our hatred for evil in a Christlike manner?

We prepared this podcast in response to the "Unite the Right" rally that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia, from August 11-12, 2017. As documented in various Wikipedia articles, the rally was organized to protest the removal of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee statue. Protesters included white supremacists, white nationalists, neo-Confederates, neo-Nazis and various militias. During clashes between rally members and counter-protesters, a white nationalist drove a vehicle into counter-protesters who were heading to the rally, killing one person and injuring 19 others. A police helicopter crash resulted in two police fatalities.

After this program was announced, the southeast coast of Texas was hit hard by Hurricane Harvey. At the time of this printing, many lost their lives, millions are without homes and property losses are estimated in the tens of billions. We pray for God's righteous kingdom, a time when both men's hearts and the earth itself will be healed and reconciled back to God for all of eternity. We were very humbled by the fundraising of a local Houston football player, JJ Watt. If our listeners are so moved to donate, they can do so at YouCaring.com/JJWatt.

Our first premise is there are two basic types of hatred from a Christian perspective: Productive hatred and destructive hatred.

Productive hatred stems from and is an objective response to that which would destroy goodness and righteousness. This is the type of hatred God has and what we should strive for.

God watched and warned Israel: Deuteronomy 25:13-16: Is it productive to hate things that are wrong? Was it productive for God to warn against stealing and explaining they would be punished if they did not listen? Yes.

Destructive hatred stems from a personal and emotional perspective that may or may not have a basis of justification. It sees and feeds a frenzied and rash type of reaction.

This is the most popular kind of hatred, the kind which we will naturally adopt. It is bad for everyone.

David talks of being hated in the following Psalm. Bible commentaries speculate on who he was referring to. The two top possibilities are King Saul (whose hatred of David was unjustified) or Ahithophel (who had some justification). Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather. When David had her husband murdered, one could see a justifiable reason for her grandfather to hate David. Psalms 109:1-5

HANDLING HATRED LESSON: Just because a justifiable action may exist that provokes our hatred does not make our hatred a justifiable action.

King Solomon wrote our theme text as a result of his exasperation with his own life and this gives us another place to look when we want to *root out destructive hatred*. Hating circumstances, ourselves or our lives has devastating effects on our ability to clearly see and react to the world around us.

King Solomon was the wisest man on earth. He was powerful, benevolent and as wealthy as wealthy could be. He grew to hate himself and his life. How did he get to that point? Not liking ourselves can skew our ability to see others in a proper light. Our judgment can go from being just to being hurtful and contributing towards destructive hatred.



Solomon's problem was that he grew to be too wealthy and egotistical to manage his own life, and in spite of his great wisdom, he ended up hating his life. *His hatred was from the inside out.* Here are some elements that fed his self-loathing, a place where destructive hatred takes root and grows against others:

EGO: SOLOMON'S WISDOM WAS NOT TEMPERED WITH HUMILITY AND HE SAW HIMSELF AS ABOVE OTHERS.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-3: Solomon's depth of wisdom was not tempered with humility, even though it was God who specifically gave him that wisdom. *Until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives* - In other words, "...until I could see if other peoples' lives were worth anything at all." He was looking down on them. Our lives can get lost in being dissatisfied with ourselves, which we can take out on others. When our ego is so fully engaged it becomes far easier to see others as irrelevant and futile.

GREED: SOLOMON'S EXISTENCE CAME TO BE FOCUSED ONLY UPON HIMSELF.

Ecclesiastes 2:9-10: *I became great* - "It is all about me and my wants" is an insatiable way to live and will eventually crash. When we get so self-absorbed with greed and ego, we look down on others and can start to hate them because they are not like us or did not respect us as much as we think we deserve. That is what happened in Charlottesville, Virginia. The perpetrators were all about "me." Should we hate the wrong? Absolutely. But how?

PARTIAL CLARITY: SOLOMON COULD STILL SEE REALITY, THOUGH IT BEGAN TO LOSE ITS MEANING.

Ecclesiastes 2:12-13: "I, Solomon, have built these incredible gardens and buildings and done these incredible things. When I die, some peon of a human being who is not nearly as smart as me will take it all over. All I have done will go to waste because I will not be there in my wise state to manage it." He removed himself from others and put himself in his own category. *I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness* - he had the clarity to see it, but it did not change him. Having some clarity in the context of greed and ego gives a false sense of security and can feed hatred.

FUTILITY: SOLOMON GAVE US AS HIS INSATIABLE APPROACH BROUGHT HIM NOTHING BUT FRUSTRATION.

Ecclesiastes 2:15-17: *I hated life* - even after all of his incredible accomplishments. If he could not be the one to control things forever and always be the one on top, then it was all futile. He had resentment towards others. Destructive self-hatred completely warps our ability to see any good around us. Ecclesiastes 2:18-19

HANDLING HATRED LESSON: We must be very aware of how easily our warped view of our own life can corrupt the view of others' lives and their role in the world around them.

After King Solomon's tirade about nothing mattering, his next Ecclesiastes writing basically says that everything has its time and place and there is nothing anyone can do about it no matter how rich or wise they are. This is a good observation, though it comes about through a not-so-good process, because he was miserable. He did not say, "These are gifts from God I should appreciate." He was not able to be powerful from a godly manner because he was "off" on the inside, and he looked at everyone else with disdain.

Science shows the emotion of love and hate light up the same part of the brain. Hate is a powerful emotion. Most of us think our hatred is justifiable so it is okay to be angry and act out. According to Scripture and the principles of righteousness, it is not.

Now an example of destructive hatred from both the inside out and the outside in. Unfortunately this involves rape and incest: 2 Samuel 13:1,5: Amnon was in love with Tamar, his sister. "Love" drove this man to entrap her!

His attraction created a devious thought and action: 2 Samuel 13:8-14: "Love" drove him to this horrible, hateful and inexcusable action. Our actions can become justifiable in our own minds because of "how we feel."

2 Samuel 13:15: "Love" became a destructive hate form, and it started a chain reaction of sorrow. His sister became the enemy.



HANDLING HATRED LESSON: Destructive hatred is always emotion-based and often needs no more prompting than our own hearts and minds!

The events in Charlottesville were people reacting, not seeing one another as fellow human beings. **To counteract this problem:** Jeremiah 17:9-10: God searches the heart, executing His judgments in a logical, just and merciful way. This is productive hatred. He hates that which is wrong. We have to learn to rise above our natural emotional reaction to get to a righteous response. Jesus taught us to base our reactions to things in love, but that does not mean there is no room for hate. Hate is appropriate in the right place, at the right time and in the right fashion. If we do not apply it correctly, we will be wrong.

Now we look at destructive hatred from the "outside in." There was a basis to hate here: 2 Samuel 13:23-28: Absalom was the brother of Amnon who wanted revenge for the rape of his sister. He patiently waited two years to set up the murder of Amnon. This premeditated revenge would only continue the ruining of relationships and lives.

HANDLING HATRED LESSON: We must learn to face justifiable hatred without being led by our emotions and instead be led by understanding, lest we join the ranks of those who ruin lives.

The first and most important step to adopting and living by productive hatred is the ability to recognize the difference between the two. This recognition does not come easily and needs to be nurtured, tested, developed and then nurtured some more. Hatred is appropriate in the right way. We cannot fool ourselves into "I feel this way, therefore I am right." We must challenge that feeling and put it up against righteousness, goodness, godliness and mercy. This is how we can tell if "how you feel" is in accordance with God's will.

In Charlottesville, people were throwing around the idea of "America." This side stands for what *they* see as "America," and another side stands for what *they* see as "America." Here is a great quote that helps us understand patriotism vs. nationalism:

Live chat at: ChristianQuestions.com/listen-live/ "David" writes: Jesus' "hatred" of the money changers resulted in some pretty destructive behavior towards them. Where do we draw the line as followers whose "kingdom is not of this world"?

Jesus did not hate the moneychangers. He hated what they *did*. He disrupted what the moneychangers did but did not take anything away from them. He simply made it difficult for them to cheat the people. He let the animals run away, but they could be caught. He turned the tables over. Now the moneychangers would have to argue amongst themselves whose money was whose. But he did not let the doves go - they would have flown away and been lost. Legitimately they were the property of the moneychangers and were what the poor people could buy for their sacrifice. Jesus did not act out of hatred for the moneychangers; he acted out of hatred for what they did in a house of prayer. Big difference! They had dishonest weights and were making more money than they should have been. God hates that.

Was Jesus violent? If so, do we have that right? He did not get violent; he got disruptive. He did enough to stop the activity. Just saying, "Everybody, stop!" would not have worked. He turned the tables over and disrupted the activity, which was enough to make it stop. So, no, we do not have a right to get violent. "Righteous indignation" is something we like to talk about, but usually that is just being emotional.

Let's build the foundation for productive hatred: Hebrews 1:8-9: *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness* - prophetically speaking of Jesus having hatred properly applied. Productive hatred is coupled with appropriate love for righteousness and therefore is an absolute KEY to our footstep following of Jesus!

We suggest five steps towards productive hatred: **1. Acknowledge what you were** and the enormous difference between it and what we are called to be. Ephesians 4:17-19: Looking in the mirror with honesty and humility helps us to find Jesus every day. **2. Abandon what you were** - do not merely push it out of the way; desert it with great intention. Ephesians 4:20-22: *Lay aside the old self* - This is not nudging it out of the way just so you can get by. Put it away. It no longer belongs to your life in a relevant manner. Our proper hatred depends on our putting aside our old self. That is hard to do. It can be done through intentional prayer, intentional thinking and intentional action. We cannot expect to learn how to hate properly by just sitting back and saying, "God will teach me." You have to unlearn, undo and change what



drives you. Intentional prayer, thinking and action are the powerful steps to a new life.

3. **Appreciate the power of your new spiritual life** - know where it is from, what it is meant to accomplish and how it is meant to work. Ephesians 4:23-24: *That you be renewed in the spirit of your mind* - Renewed means different, changed, transformed. True appreciation of true spirituality brings true knowledge and direction. If we claim to be Christians, then we better start acting like it in our emotions. Stop justifying emotion for righteousness. Ezekiel 33:11: God hates evil, not people. We need to understand and emulate that. Jesus hated evil, not people. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers because they were doing evil. In Matthew 23, he told off the scribes and Pharisees because the leadership was leading the people astray. He was honest and straightforward. He did not hate them; he hated what they were doing.

HANDLING HATRED LESSON: Destructive hatred will cower when it is faced with spiritual integrity and determination.

We can put destructive hatred "on notice" in our lives if we handle it with spiritual integrity and determination. Unless we have fully crystallized our character into the likeness of Jesus, we will always be subject to the insidious tentacles of destructive hatred in our lives. Remember that destructive hatred is natural, as it is based squarely upon our emotions, and our emotions are at work all the time! We, by definition, have to always be aware and willing to fight it. Fighting against yourself is difficult. What we have seen with Hurricane Harvey is people who have driven hundreds of miles with boats to find and rescue stranded people. They are not asking them their political affiliation. "You are a human being in trouble. Take my hand, let me help you." There is no room for hatred there. There is human catastrophe. Charlottesville was all ideological. "I stand for this; you stand for that; therefore, I hate you." We have the wrong kind of hatred when we lose our humanity. These two experiences are dramatic in their contrast. The fact that we have this incredible outpouring of compassion is proof that we are better than what was seen in Charlottesville.

4. **Apply Jesus' character and example in your daily life** - be aware of his character and example every day. Ephesians 4:25: We have to maintain the closeness of our connections to be able to rise above destructive hatred. **How do we keep our emotions in check and stay focused on productive hatred? Listen to Jesus: Matthew 5:43-46: The Old Testament Law said *love your neighbor*. It never said *and hate your enemy*. They ADDED that and justified the emotion. That is what we do and it creates destructive hatred! This is the only way to be a true disciple: *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* - this takes hatred and runs it through the "car wash." Wash the emotion out and what comes out the other end is simply hating that which is wrong but loving the people. That is the way we are supposed to hate. There is no excuse for us to go beyond that. Hate must not emanate from us, because God does not emanate hate - He cares for all. 5. **Acquiesce to a spiritually-balanced approach to life** - Anger and hatred happen and CAN be good as long as they are merely tools of righteousness, not tools of your emotion or to hurt others. Ephesians 4:26, Revelation 2:6**

This group took true Christianity and corrupted what it stood for. They made it a cloak for doing whatever they wanted "in the name of Christ." We can see that happening throughout history. *Hate the deeds* - act in a righteous, just manner as a result. **Love the sinner - hate the sin! This can be SO easy to confuse: 2 Peter 3:9: God is patient (not hateful or vengeful) in the unfolding of His plan because He wants all to repent!**

HANDLING HATRED LESSON: God's "hatred" is for a purpose - that of identifying wrong and darkness so that right and light will one day be fully and unequivocally embraced! For our hatred to be productive, it MUST have the same motivation!

We have to be motivated the way God is motivated - to do the right thing in the right way, as shown to us through Jesus. Only productive hatred applied with compassion and grace is appropriate, and that is not common.

*So, it's wrong! Can't I hate it?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*