

END-TIMES ISSUES



#130 Commandment #8 – More about following Jesus.

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

A N D B E Y O N D I

What should we do? We still sin!

- Some people may be surprised to discover all that the Ten Commandments actually represent.
 - Violating the commandments is *easier* than we might expect – even when we think we "aren't doing anything"!
 - This is why we need to cling to Jesus Christ!**
- One of the effects of the New Covenant is that our lives are in the process of *changing*, so that we can learn to obey these commands the way we need to. God is involved, and *guarantees it will happen!*
 - There is a long way to go, but God has promised to get us there. (Since the New Covenant involves *changed hearts*, we will also be *willing* to pursue that change.)
- The best response to all this is:
 - Acknowledge the *full* significance of the Ten Commandments, as well as our failure to follow them. (Don't lie about it!)
 - Then keep looking to Jesus, asking him to use his Word to guide us to where we need to be (empowered by the Holy Spirit).

"Following Jesus" involves *values* choices and priorities.

Jesus must have **FIRST** priority in our lives – over family and self.

- This is the reason for the verses where Jesus says "hate" is a *prerequisite* for following him.

If anyone comes to Me and does not **hate** his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters –

yes, even his own life –

he cannot be My disciple.

Luke 14:26 (BSB)
- Another passage says it this way, using the word "love."

Anyone who **loves** his father or mother **more than Me** is not worthy of Me;

anyone who **loves** his son or daughter **more than Me** is not worthy of Me; ...

Matthew 10:37 (BSB)

How can we understand this "hate"?

It's a *necessary* part of "Following Jesus" – of becoming his "Disciple." People tend to get upset with the word "hate"; so we need to examine it further. Understanding it can help reorient our perspective on everything related to this issue.

- To start with, these two verses are saying essentially the same thing, but in opposite ways.

Anyone who **loves** [family] **more than Me** is not worthy of Me;

Matthew 10:37 (BSB)

If anyone comes to Me and does not **hate** his [family] –

yes, even his own life –

he cannot be My disciple.

Luke 14:26 (BSB)
- Some people say that this "hate" means "love them a little less." That's not a bad description; but it's not the full story. **a LOT less**

THE ULTIMATE ISSUE IS:

NOT ALL "HATE" IS BAD, AND NOT ALL "LOVE" IS GOOD!

With certain types of **HATE**, we are *sinning* if we **DON'T** have it.

With certain types of **LOVE**, we are *sinning* if we **DO** have it.

This is true even *before* we consider how the world has *perverted* these terms, by calling *evil conduct* "love" and calling *agreement with Scripture* an act of "hate."

★ **ANYONE CAN PROVE THIS, IF THEY'RE WILLING TO LOOK IN THE BIBLE!!!** ★

- We can prove this, using *any* common translation of Scripture. All we need to do is *read it!*
- (There is no need to learn the original languages that the Scripture was written in, though we might learn even more that way.)

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION?

- We can look at the words and find out if the context indicates that the "love" or "hate" is good or bad. *It's as simple as that!*
 - We can include each *group* of related words – such as "love, loves, loving, etc." and "hate, hateful, hating, etc." (If using the KJV, we can include the word "charity" with the "love" group.)
 - The exact numbers of words we find will depend on translation, since translations will sometimes use synonyms for the same original word. But we can just focus on the "love" and "hate" word groups, and not make the study more difficult!
- What might we find? Using the 1984 version of NIV, we would find:
 - The LOVE word group:** About 700 word-occurrences, with about 100 of them describing "bad" love. *That's about 15% of them!* (The % would be higher, if we didn't include verses about God's love.)
 - The HATE word group:** About 135 word-occurrences, with about 35 of them describing "good" hate. *That's about 25% of them!*

- **"Digging deeper" – How do "bad love" and "good hate" work?** Find out by looking at the *context* where the words occur!
 - ✓ **"Bad love" verses typically include:** loving the wrong things, misguided or questionable love (sometimes a matter of wrong priorities), and occasionally a refusal to love the right things.
 - ✓ **"Good hate" verses typically include:** responding to evil and those who are persistent in doing evil; expressing certain values or priorities; it can also *coexist* with *good love*.
- **Applying this to the verses about following Jesus.**
 - ✓ Once we realize that there are *good* forms of hate, we will realize that the verse is not telling us to do something that is *wrong*. Instead, it has something to do with values and priorities.
 - ✓ This has to do with who we value *most*: Jesus, or "anyone else" (including ourselves). "If I have to choose between Jesus and someone else, Jesus is my choice." And, "I will choose *against* you and *against* myself." (Fortunately, it doesn't always come down to the issue of needing to choose *only one*!)

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WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES?

- **We can learn some interesting facts that enhance our understanding about the issue.** Here is a simplified explanation:
 - ✓ In the English language, we use mainly ONE word: "love."
 - ✓ The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. In *both* languages, there are TWO main words that we translate with this English word "love." *The differences between the TWO words are quite significant!*
- **Two words for "love" – each with a different emphasis.**
 - ✓ **The "normal" word for "love"** – indicating an *emotional* attachment, a desire to be with (or to have) the object of that love. It's closer to the way we tend to use the word "love," and is typically applied to friends, family, and sometimes to strangers and even things.
 - ✓ **The "special" word for "love"** – involving a special commitment, not changing, regardless of the other's response; it's more a conscious act of the will, than an expression of emotions.

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- **"Digging deeper" – How do these two types of "love" work with the concept of "hate"?**
 - ✓ **The "SPECIAL love" words:** Hate is **NEVER** considered its replacement. We are **NEVER** told to stop having this type of love, in order to start hating. In fact, we are to have this type of love, *even if hate is necessary!*
 - ✓ **It's the "NORMAL love" words that are connected to the concept of "hate."** There may be times that this type of love must be replaced with "hate" ... *even though the other type of love must still be present.*
- **Applying this to the verses about following Jesus.**
 - ✓ Once we realize that there are two types of love mentioned in the Bible, it will make more sense when we see verses that tell us to "always love," yet others that tell us to "not love." *Jesus was talking about two different issues, involving two different types of love!*
 - ✓ Some verses that illustrate this: 

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FIRST, SOME OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES: (THESE ARE ALL ABOUT GOD.)

- ✓ **The "normal" type of love:** When Israel totally rejected God, he stopped having this type of love for them:

Because of the wickedness of their deeds
I will drive them out of my house.
I will love them no more;
Hosea 9:15b (ESV)
- ✓ **The "special" type of love:** God's "commitment love" for Israel remained. (This type of love applies only to selected people, not all.)

The **steadfast love** of the LORD **never ceases** ...
Lamentations 3:22a (ESV)
- ✓ **In contrast, God uses the word "hate," when referring to people who are determined to persist in evil.**

You [= God] **hate** all workers of iniquity.
You destroy those who tell lies;
the LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.
Psalm 5:5b-6 (BSB)

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SOME NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES: "SPECIAL" (COMMITMENT) LOVE.

- ✓ **This is the type of love we are to have for both God and "neighbor."**

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all your mind."
"Love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37b, 39b (CSB)
- ✓ **The religious leaders said *DON'T* have this type of love for enemies.** Jesus said, you **MUST** have this type of love for enemies.

You have heard that it was said, **"Love** your neighbor" and **"Hate** your enemy."
But I tell you, **love** your enemies ...
Matthew 5:43-44a (BSB)
- ✓ **Hate may coexist with this love, but it doesn't cancel it.**

Love must be sincere.
Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
Romans 12:9 (NIV)

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SOME NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES: THE "NORMAL" TYPE OF LOVE.

- ✓ **This is the type of love mentioned in the "discipleship" verses – the love which is connected to the word "hate."**

Anyone who **loves** [his family] **more than Me** is not worthy of Me;
Matthew 10:37 (BSB)

We definitely need "less love" for family.

If anyone comes to Me and does not **hate** his [family] – yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple.

I choose **FOR** Jesus and **AGAINST** everything else!

The one who **loves** his life will lose it, and the one who **hates** his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
John 12:25 (CSB)
- ✓ **We must have this type of love for Jesus!**

If anyone does not **love** the Lord, a curse be on him.
1 Corinthians 16:22a (CSB)

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All of this is an expression of VALUES.

- **"SPECIAL" LOVE:** "Under all circumstances, I want the best for you – both now and eternally."
- **"NORMAL" LOVE:** "Jesus comes first. If I ever have to choose between you (or even myself) and Jesus... it's Jesus who I will choose."

TIME TO THINK!

CONSIDER THESE VALUES... HOW DO THEY FIT WITH WHAT WE HAVE SEEN?

- I have **surrendered to God**. He now has my ultimate allegiance.
- I can **enjoy people**, as long as it does not go against **love for God**.
- I can **enjoy the pleasures of life**, as long as it doesn't go against **love for God OR love for neighbor**.
- I will also **demonstrate commitment love** for my neighbor, by doing what I can to **build him up**. I want *him* to surrender to God, enjoy people, and enjoy the pleasures of life with the same type of "God-and-people-first love" that I have.

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: HOW DO WE DO THESE THINGS?

- Since **ALL that we have is from God**, and we are accountable to God for how we use it:

✓ **Are we using it as an expression of love for God and neighbor?**
This includes our own enjoyment of God's gifts – when enjoyed as an expression of love for God.

OR:

✓ **Are we using it an expression of love for self?** – a "love" that *diminishes* love for God and neighbor.

- **Nothing that we have has been given to us for our own selfish use.**

Each of you should **use whatever gift you have received to serve others**, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

1 Peter 4:10; Luke 12:48b (NIV)

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DO YOU WANT A LIFE CONTROLLED BY LOVE?

>> The **GENUINE** kind, not the world's kind <<

- **Love for God** will influence your daily decisions
 - ✓ This includes how you spend your money, time, attention; what you do with your life, etc.
- **Love for neighbor** will cause you to want to *share* your life, including your enjoyment, as appropriate.
 - ✓ Not for what you can get out of the situation (like a payback) but for your neighbor's good.
 - ✓ It will cause you to want to build up your neighbor – promoting his spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.
 - ✓ You will try to avoid things that have an "appearance of love," but which are actually *detrimental* to the other person. (The world has taught us that certain things are expressions of "love," even when they *enable* the person to continue practicing sin.)

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LOVE FOR GOD – IF WE HAVE IT – WILL IMPACT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD NEIGHBOR, AS WELL AS TOWARD SELF.

- **Love for neighbor is shaped by love for God.**
 - ✓ It is actually an *expression* of love for God.
 - ✓ The two were *not* designed to contradict, and under normal conditions, they *won't* contradict.
 - ✓ (If the two *do* contradict, love for God takes precedence.)
- **Enjoying our own things is *not* the issue.**
 - ✓ Doing so can be good and God-honoring.
 - ✓ **The issue is *motive***, not the *enjoyment* itself. Is your ultimate focus on *self*, or on *God and neighbor*? Is your goal to grasp at what you have and to cling tightly to it, or to "freely give as you have freely received" (as appropriate)?

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★ ★ OUR MISSION: ★ ★

Make it an *ongoing project* to LEARN to love God and neighbor, more and more!

Encourage each other in this matter.
The day of Jesus' return is approaching!

... **encouraging one another**—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25b (NIV)

(In doing these things, you will fulfill the Eighth Commandment!)

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Regarding the "special" and "normal" words for "love" in the Hebrew and Greek languages: The descriptions we gave were *simplified*; and some of the technical details were omitted. But these technical details do not affect the conclusions we reach, when evaluating *this specific issue*.

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