

Loving the Sinner While Hating the Sin

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. This saying is not in scripture in this form. It is from St. Augustine's Letter 211 (c. 424 AD) that contains the phrase *Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum*, which translates roughly to "With love for mankind and hatred of sins." The phrase has become more famous as "love the sinner but hate the sin" or "hate the sin and not the sinner" (the latter form appearing in Mohandas Gandhi's 1929 autobiography).
 - 1. "Being a 'friend of sinners' is an accusation that Christians should wear as a badge of honor, for nothing could honor Jesus more, and nothing is more revealing of who God actually is." (Ronnie McBrayer)
 - 2. Psalm 103:8-12; Matt. 9:9-13 - He called Matthew while he was collecting taxes from the Jews for the Romans

I. SEPARATING THE SINNER FROM THE SINS

- A. The religious world does not understand that the sinner and the sins he commits are not the same thing; they fail to distinguish between who someone is and what they do.
 - 1. This is the reason why so many religious councils decide to accept homosexual behavior among members; they believe that people are defined by their actions; that is, you cannot reject homosexual activity without rejecting the person who practices it
 - 2. They believe that hating the sin necessarily means that you hate the person who commits the sin
 - 3. The Pharisees believed this as well. They rejected publicans and sinners, and then they rejected anyone who associated with them, too
- B. Can you separate the person from his actions?
 - 1. God does; Jesus did; apostle Andrew did; Barnabas did.
 - 2. The Pharisees didn't; Diotrephes didn't.
 - 3. In which group are you?

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOVE AND SERVICE

- A. Matt. 6:24 - Jesus moved from service to love and back to service
 - 1. Love and service are Biblically tied together, just as faith and works are inextricably linked.
 - 2. We love God when we serve God in obedience - 1John 2:5
 - 3. We love our brethren when we serve them - 1John 3:16-18

III. THE NATURE OF GOD MUST BECOME OUR NATURE

- A. God is good, patient, and longsuffering - Rom. 2:4
- B. God's love for us is shown by what He did for us - 1John 4:9-10
- C. One who loves, chooses to serve even when his feelings are repulsed by the actions of the one who is loved - Rom. 5:6-8
 - 1. It is hard to separate our feelings for the person from the feelings we have about what the person does. God does it; we can learn to do it

IV. WE MUST FACE THE FACT THAT GOD HATES SIN

- A. God's goodness is matched with severity - Rom. 11:22
- B. God is angered by sin, with good reason - Rom. 1:18
- C. There are things God finds abominable - Prov. 6:16-19
 - 1. The worship of idols - Jer. 44:3-4
 - 2. The hypocrisy of evil offered for good purposes - Isa. 61:8
 - 3. The worship offered by the wicked - Isa. 1:14-15; Amos 5:21-23
 - 4. Planning evil and making fraudulent promises - Zech. 8:17
 - 5. Divorce - Mal. 2:16
 - 6. The deeds of the Nicolaitans - Rev. 2:6
 - 7. Sin - Heb. 1:9

V. BUT HE DOES NOT HATE THE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT SIN

- A. There is a difference between the person bound in sin through weakness and the person who embraces sin and will not let it go
- B. God hates the workers of iniquity, the bloodthirsty, the violent and liars
 - 1. Psalms 5:5-6, 11:5-7
 - 2. Why? Can a person be loved, who refuses to give up sin, in the same manner as one who is struggling to leave the bondage of sin?
- C. God sends delusions to sinners - 2Thes. 2:10-12.
 - 1. Why? They have no love for the truth
 - 2. There is no hope for the reprobate mind that despises the love of God; therefore, God gives His grace and mercy to those who will receive it

VI. WHEN WE ARE FACED WITH EVIL

- A. It is perfectly acceptable to view differently those who have given their lives over to evil - Psalms 139:21-22
 - 1. The standard is their hatred of God, not your speculation and judgment
 - 2. But even faced with an enemy, we treat them with love - Matt. 5:44-45
 - 3. We give service equally - Rom. 12:20-21

VII. GOD LOVED THE WORLD THAT WAS CAUGHT UP IN SIN

- A. John 3:16 - Christ died for us while we were sinners; but, not all will be saved
 - 1. Luke 23:34 - The answer to His prayer for their forgiveness was their gambling for His clothes
- B. God's love is not unconditional. When God's love is spurned and sin is willfully embraced, then there is nothing left for the sinner - Heb. 10:26-31
- C. God wants every sinner to repent, but there is a limit - 2Peter 3:9; Rom. 2:5-6
 - 1. The sinner who struggles to leave sin is one who is trying to separate himself from his sin. God knows this and sees that the sinner and his sins are two different matters. We must come to see that, too
 - 2. The sinner who rejects the love of God and willfully chooses sin has bound himself to his sins. He chooses to eliminate the distinction between himself and his sins. If that is his choice, that who is God or man to treat him otherwise?