

HOW NOT TO HATE
FPC
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1John 2:7 ¶ Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard.

1John 2:8 Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

1John 2:9 Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.

1John 2:10 Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling.

1John 2:11 But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

1John 2:12 I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven on account of his name.

1John 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young people,
because you have conquered the evil one.

1John 2:14 I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young people,
because you are strong
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

Is there someone in your life with whom you are having a hard time?

Is there someone you dislike....and even bordering close to hating?

What is Hate and how does it start?

Hate is clearly a stronger form of dislike.

When dislike moves to Hate we see little or no good in a person.

Our perception drifts reality to unreality – because the reality is there is always
some good in every person
...there is always some truth
...it is never black or white.

When we hate someone we think we are 100% right and the other person is 100% wrong. That makes it difficult and it becomes hard if not impossible to be fair.

Hate can start innocently in a misunderstanding

Our pride is often hurt

Our feelings may no not feel valued.

Our point of view seems invalidated.

But then in self-defense we can fall to self-righteous thinking where we are righteous and the other person is not.

There is a thin line between dislike and hate. It can jump from one to another quickly

...and while we live in a world where it is easy to do good

....it seems that it is even easier and faster to feel wronged.

We continue our series on being a life long learner....and this morning we want to learn how not to hate....or not even get on the escalator to hate.

Conflicts are more like escalators than elevators. What do I mean by that?

Emotions in a conflict can rise like an escalator slowly, gradually, higher and higher to another level. Or if in despair...it's an escalator ride down to lower and lower levels.

Normally emotions are not like elevators which rise dramatically high to the tenth floor and then plummet to the basement and then shoots up again to the 7th and then lets us out on the ground floor.

Emotions can build slowly towards hate, the feelings rising if left unchecked. Like a frog in the kettle, the water may have started out tepid but n that stove it becomes boiling hot before you know it.

It seems in our passage today that the author of 1 John – the apostle John was concerned with conflict WITHIN the body of the church
– he referred to brothers and sisters or believers; it's not hating the people outside the church but hating people on the inside.

It may have started as a small difference but grew to a level of conflict where John felt compelled to remind them that if we say we walk in the light, then we should not hate a brother or sister for that would be walking in the darkness
...or at least harbor pockets of darkness that the Evil One can use not for good but for evil.

We've all been there...some friend or FORMER friend, maybe a relative or a fellow Christian said something not nice

but we harbor it

....we remember it

....nurture it

...we defend ourselves,

We think unkind things about the other
and slowly we not only dislike the person but hold a grudge that can turn into hate.

This Scripture passage reminds us that Satan takes delight in watching us ride the escalator of hate.

It's such a smooth ride, we hardly notice.

Doesn't take much to start a conflict whether in marriage, friendship, work relationship or in a church – It starts when we're tired, sick, stressed and sometimes because of gender differences and different communication styles of men and women.

It can start with generational differences – the old “generation gap” and “you just don't understand” communication block between boomers, busters, Gen X, Gen Y, and grandma's generation. Completely different.

I think that is why 2000 years ago the Apostle John in our passage included young adults and Fathers and then children

- reminding them that there are generational differences and that as he writes nearly at 100 years of age they are all children compared to him
- and he has had the maturity of seeing many generations so please listen to the wise grandfather on how to build a healthy Christian community.

But clearly he is writing a to a young church where members are starting to have conflict with one another...and so he warns them in verse

SLIDES:

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1John 2:11 But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

Notice how the word change from brother to the word believer in verse 11.

SLIDE: highlight in verse 11 the word believer.

The translators know that it is the same Greek word – *adelphos* that means brother, but they translate it to “believer” because that is the context.

These are brothers and sisters in a church who need wise counsel to not step on the escalator of discord and hate for that escalator will lead them down to darkness.

They may claim to stand in the light, ...but the escalator (MOVE RIGHT) is moving them maybe all so imperceptibly towards darkness and hate.

Let me give you some context on how horrible it is when brothers and sisters fight and it ends in hate.

Do we realize how harmful a Civil war is?

Today is Veteran’s Day weekend. What is it that the veteran or the active serviceman or woman hates the most ...when your own side mistakenly shoots at you.

It is dumb, unnecessary and dangerous.

In the Armed forces, there is a phrase called Friendly Fire....where our own troops fire upon our own soldiers and wound and kill them. It is a shockingly high percentage.

The rate of friendly fire deaths for all US troops in
World War II was 13%,
Vietnam around 12%
and Operation Desert Storm – 17%.

Fortunately in Iraq it is much lower though the war is not over.

In the Civil war – in the 1860's– the North versus South....where brothers and sisters fought against brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers – nearly a half million soldiers died!!!

More Americans died in the Civil War than any other war.

The Civil War alone accounts for 71% of all casualties of all wars, and if you add the friendly fire at least 80% of all war casualties are Americans killing Americans. Our own side killing our own side.

What about Christians? We're not much better. We don't use guns, but we point fingers, use words, gossip.

If we really want to win the world for Christ...here's a novel idea....work hard on loving non Christians

...but work even HARDER on loving Christians...yes Christians who let us down, don't think like us, don't talk like us, are wrong unlike us (that's a joke)....and by the way who are just as sinful and selfish as we are.

We sometimes get more easily ticked off at Christians because we think they should know better....as we do. Trouble.

The World is watching. And the people in the pew next to you need as much love and respect as we want for ourselves.

We must show courtesy, civility to one another. Stop gossip. And never criticize your own ministry nor the ministries of others. Never.

Some of us are fasting until Thanksgiving in preparation for Advent. How about fasting for 24 hours from unfairly criticizing anyone? And if you think, boy Dan that's a dumb idea. Then you just lost and start the clock again.

I told this to a group of Christians recently and they said, "Hey, let's all put in 25 cents in a cup when we criticize someone!" Within two days they had \$5.00 worth of coins in there! I should have raised the bar and said make it \$10 a criticism.

And John said,

SLIDE: 1John 2:9 Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.

I would surmise for most of us it is a rare day we get persecuted for our faith by non Christians. Most of our persecution and criticism come from fellow Christians who say we are not living the right way. Often the non-Christians are more affirming!

Last year, Tony Campolo and I were having a meal and he shared with me how when he was a high school student he was told that he should be willing to take a stand for his faith and stand out...and the more he was persecuted the more honor he would give to the Lord.

So as a high schooler, Tony bought a big, huge Bible and went to school the next day. He was willing to be persecuted for his faith in Jesus...to take a public stand and be willing to suffer and attacked by the pagans.

He was willing to add his name to the rolls of *Foxes' Book of Martyrs*, ready to have his name in Jesus' Hall of Fame as one who suffered for his faith.

So he went to school and sat in class with his huge Bible and his Jewish friend Jerry Horowitz sat next to him and says, "hey, Campolo, what's that big book?"

Tony said, "This is the Bible, and I am going to live every day by the truths and principles of the Bible."

Jerry Horowitz turned to his friend sitting nearby and said, "Hey, Allen, get this. Campolo says he is going to live every day by the truths and principles of the Bible.

"You know what? I think this is great. We need more people like you, Campolo."

And later Tony was elected the student body president!

Somehow, I imagine if Tony said that NOT to Jerry Horowitz but to a Christian friend....and showed off his big Bible and said I am going to live by this.....

You know what I think that Christian friend would have said?....

Oh yeah....and what version? King James?, NIV?, Red Letter Edition?, Life Application notes that go from Genesis to Maps....why that one?

By the way are you pre-tribulation, post-tribulation. Do you speak in tongues or not? Are you truly baptized in the Holy Spirit and washed in the blood of the Lamb? Ugh!

We also need to realize as it says in verses 13 and 14....know that Satan baits us....he tries to get us into conflict. He whispers in our ear – they are wrong – you are right – and you being right is the important thing, more important than relationships. Yeah, don't compromise, stand up for what is right, sever the relationship.

So what is the best antidote to hate and conflict within the body or outside?

Number one: is to Forgive – or as the Bible defines it to give up the right to retaliate.

SLIDE: Forgive – to give up the right to retaliate.

Want to be a life long learner? – learn how to forgive daily. Reduce Pride if that is what is hurt. Normally when strong words are said it there is no blood or loss of limb but there is hurt pride which probably should be hurt now and then.

Forgive, let go of the hurt, move...and feel free to love and to forgive again.

But giving up the right to retaliate doesn't mean we forget the offense...it is knowing we don't need to retaliate because the Lord knows best how to exact justice.

We turn the other cheek because we should not want to get into the hurt business, the pay back profession.

Second, how do we limit Hate?

Understand that person who bothers us –

SLIDE: ...there but for the grace of God go I.

We were once like that, young and head strong or crotchety and stiff in our thinking.

If we are now Christ-followers, we all had times when we were not so loving. We weren't loving to our spouse or friends or co-workers.

So when someone is off base – be as gracious to them knowing we once were like that and be as gracious to them as you would hope someone would be gracious to you.

Besides we can only clean up our own back yard and can clean up someone else's if they ask us to help.

That's why Jesus said –

SLIDE: Luke 6:42 Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

And then third, know that

SLIDE: God allows difficult people and difficult situations in our lives because it gives us a chance to grow.

And you say, wait how is it that difficult people and difficult situations can help me grow?

Remember that scene in the movie *Evan Almighty* when God played by Morgan Freeman appears to Evan's wife.

You see Evan was told by God to build an ark. Needless to say, it caused great stress in his marriage to his wife and family...So, Evan's wife leaves her husband with her kids.

But at a truck stop café, God appears as a waiter to Evan's wife to explain why the difficulty they were facing could bring about good..... here, take a look at this.

DVD: Evan Almighty Clip

When we have personal discord with people, rather than hating them, ask yourself....is God giving me a chance to grow some spiritual muscles?

Sometimes our conflict is a result of what we prayed for. We didn't pray for suffering, but we prayed for a virtue like patience and love that often only comes from suffering and pain.

And lastly, when we are tempted to hate someone I say we must:

SLIDE: Remember what Christians Do

We are called as Christ-followers to love our enemies. We are called to take the higher road. And God gives us the Holy Spirit to enable us to love those who bug, us, bother us.

On this Veteran's Sunday let me show you a picture:

DVD SLIDE: Soldier Picture

On April 6, 2003, during an attack north of Baghdad, we see this picture of a soldier in the Second Battalion 5th Marines caught in a gunfight who is running towards the photographer who is standing in a helicopter.

The Americans have just engaged the Iraqi Republican Guards as they were approaching Baghdad.

This soldier in the photo, a Navy Petty Officer, a U.S. Navy Medical Corpsman running with a man on his back is actually carrying the 4th wounded soldier he has carried that day to the helicopter.

He already has carried 3 wounded marines on his back. He has already with two other soldiers have helped wounded marines by wrapping their broken, bloodied limbs with inflatable tourniquets, started IV's, and bandaged what he could and then ran back out to help more.

Remember this medical corpsman has been running with all of his heavy equipment in 110 degree weather and now after putting down this 4th wounded fighter he runs down the plank...

or I should say staggers down the plank to again put himself in enormous jeopardy in going to the battle lines.

But if you were closer to the screen you might notice something interesting about the uniform of the wounded man this Navy Corpsman is carrying.....it is the uniform of an Iraqi Republican Guard fighter. That is who he is carrying to safety. The enemy!

Just off screen to the right was a Reuters TV news film crew from down under and as the Navy Corpsman ran past them to get more wounded, a man from the news crew yelled to him to say "Hey mate, don't you realize that's an Iraqi fighter," as if to say "you stupid American."

The corpsman stopped in his tracks and offered a rude hand gesture to him....that was something like this PG version of.....

You have to realize this corpsman has been in Baghdad since the 20th of March two and a half weeks earlier and has had little sleep from wearing his chemical suit, in 110 degree weather, and when he heard the TV crew man yell out..

"Don't you realize that's an Iraqi?," – he responded,
"Don't you realize he was WOUNDED – that's what we do, We're Americans!"

And I say when someone ticks us off, offends us, hurts us, shoots at us, we should choose not to hate but know that the person hurting us was often wounded in their earlier life....and that the bottom line is that

If we walk in the light....we are attacked....we return good for bad...because that's what we do....we're Christians.

SLIDE: that's what we do....we're Christians.

It turned out Reuters never showed that clip on the news of what our brave American troops were doing that day.

But here's the point – as brave as that corpsman is....nothing compares to what Jesus did on the Cross.

By dying on the Cross, by being tortured, beaten, whipped, punched, stabbed for our sake.....He goes back and forth to the Heavenly Father carrying us.

And when we remember that...that Jesus suffered and died for us.....it is a lot easier not to return hate with anger or revenge or more hate
.....it is a lot easier to forgive and love....because that's what we do....we're Christians!

Amen? Amen!