

HATRED

There is nothing unusual about people of the world hating one another. The slightest disagreement can cause life-long friends to never speak another word to one another. But when this happens among Christians, we should be appalled!

In 1 John 2:9,10, the Holy Spirit says "9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him." A Christian is one who is "walking in the light" and has forsaken the ways of darkness. Therefore, it is inconsistent to say that you are in the light and harbor hatred in your heart for any brother. The indication here is that one who is carrying hatred in their heart for a brother has within them "an occasion of stumbling." So for us to assure ourselves of a home in heaven, we must remove all hatred which can cause us to fall short of our goal.

In the fourth chapter of 1 John and at verse 20, we read: "20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen." Do YOU say that you love God? If so, you cannot harbor hatred in your heart without making yourself a liar. In the book of Revelation, chapter 21 and verse 8, God says that "all liars" will have their part in the "lake that burns with fire and brimstone;" In order to avoid the punishment that awaits those who are guilty of lying, we must show love toward ALL of our brethren. "15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:15) As far as God is concerned, those who have hatred in their hearts for their brethren are no better than a murderer. Both are guilty of offense before God and stand condemned. Can we not see the seriousness that God attaches to our love for the brethren?

Peter records by inspiration that "above all things" we are to be "fervent in our love among ourselves; for love covers a multitude of sins:" (1 Peter 4:8). The word "fervent" carries with it the idea of "earnest, intent, assiduous" (Thayer P. 200). This means that we must give careful and constant attention to our love for one another. Love by its nature will help to "cover a multitude of sins" because we will be "provoking one another unto love and good works" instead of trying to tear each other down with godless hatred and petty jealousies.

God has never looked favorably upon any who would allow themselves to bear a grudge. In Leviticus 19:18, God commanded the children of

Israel:"18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." This same principle was stated by Paul in Ephesians 4:26 "26 Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath." The person who harbors a grudge in their heart toward someone else, is not only miserable within, but they are violating the commands of God, given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We need to learn compassion and understanding for one another. If we do not, we will be a black mark on the cause of Christ, and be lost eternally!

-Gailen E. Evans