

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/god-loves-the-sinner-but-hates-the-sin>

The problem with the statement — “God loves the sinner, but hates the sin”— is that it is misleading. It is not a false statement.

God Hates Sinners

What is misleading about it is the word but — “but hates the sin” because but should be and. God loves the sinner and hates the sin. But implies he doesn’t hate the sinner — that is not true. God does hate sinners: “You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers” (Psalm 5:4–5). Or, “The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence” (Psalm 11:5). So, it is just not true to give the impression that God doesn’t hate sinners by saying he loves the sinner and hates the sin. He does hate sinners. His wrath is real. It is not something he pours out on people he approves of.

This infinite disapproval is what the Bible means when it says God hates sinners. He infinitely disapproves of them. Sin is not sinful except as committed by sinful hearts. Sin is an expression of anti-God, human corruption in human hearts. Sinful volitions are owing to sinful hearts. Sin doesn’t just hang out there with its own existence; it is in hearts or it is nothing. Sins do not suffer in hell; sinners suffer in hell. I wonder what people who make that misleading statement believe about hell because he is not punishing sin in hell — he is punishing sinners in hell.

Hates and Loves

He hates — now here is the paradox — and he loves at the same time. “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16) that he hates. Hate and love are simultaneous as God looks upon hateful, rebellious, corrupt, loathsome, wicked, God-dishonoring sinners.

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Now, here are the distinctions we need to make. This is just so crucial. I hope people will listen carefully. Hate and love both have two meanings each. Hate can be intense loathing of a quality, or hate can be beyond that — the intense intentionality to destroy. Love, similarly, can be an intense delighting in a quality, and it can be an intense intentionality to bless even in spite of the presence of some unsavory quality.

So, in any given text in the Bible, we have to ask: Is the hatred being spoken of here only an intense loathing of a quality of a person, or is it also the intent to destroy? And they are different. If you went over to Malachi 1, you would find the latter. And I think some of those texts in the Psalms refer to the former. The same is true with God’s love: God’s love moves him to save millions of people who, in and of themselves, are loathsome to him.

Stunned by Salvation

Now, here is why this matters: If we don’t understand that God finds us hateful and loathsome in our ugly sin, we won’t be as stunned by what his love is for us. God saves millions of people who are loathsome to him in and of themselves until he saves them and makes them the apple of his eye,

which makes salvation stunningly more. God comes to us, not in our attractiveness, like “Oh, I really love this person and just hate their sin.” No, he finds me reprehensible because of my rebellion, just like we find certain wicked people reprehensible because of their sin. And he is coming to us, and he is dying for us, in order that he might make us into the apple of his eye.

So God can love us with the intent to save us even while he is hating God-despising rebels like us. And then when he saves us, he transforms us so that now he not only loves us with the intent to bless us forever, but he loves us with an ever-increasing delight, I think, in helping us make much of him.

<https://learn.ligonier.org/qas/is-it-true-that-god-loves-the-sinner-but-hates-the-sin>

You hear this statement all the time. It comes under the category of us trying to help out God. There are elements of the revelation of God that are difficult for us to take. One of these is anytime we associate the word “hate” with God. It’s hard for us to do that, but we have it in Scripture.

This idea that God hates the sin but loves the sinner is contrary to two Psalms ([Pss. 5:5; 11:5](#)) and the opening verses of the book of Malachi: “Esau have I hated, Jacob have I loved” ([Mal. 1:2–3](#)). We have to be very careful that we don’t think we are somehow helping God by improving His PR. We have to be governed by the text.

Now, I don’t think this means we run around saying, “God hates these particular sinners,” or, “God hates this particular group,” and hold banners up, parading up and down the street, saying, “God hates (fill in the social group).” I don’t think that’s the call for us, but neither do I think there is merit in saying “God loves the sinner but hates the sin.”

What we do need to talk about is this: I was a worse sinner than anyone whom we say God hates. We all were. We need to understand, as R.C. said many times, that the smallest sin is an affront to the holiness of God and brings down the thundering wrath of God upon us.

When we slip into these kinds of statements we think we’re doing God a favor, but we’re not doing sinners a favor because we’re not helping them see the wrath of God or what that means. Until they see that, they don’t see their true need for a substitute, and they don’t fully understand what Christ was doing on the cross. So, sometimes we have to be careful about how we want to help God’s PR.

<https://adevotion.org/archive/god-loves-sinners>

God Loves Sinners

JOHN 3:16 KJV 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Many people quote John 3:16 -- but how many believe it?

God never changes. If He loved the people of the world in the past -- He still loves them today. Yet many people think God is mad at sinners -- and hates them.

ROMANS 5:8 NIV 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God is NOT mad at sinners. He loves them enough to die for them -- even today! We should not be mad at sinners either. They are deceived and enslaved by sin. They need to be delivered, and no one can do it except Jesus.

Of course, God doesn't want people to remain sinners. He loves them too much for that. Sin destroys. It brings death. But the gift of God is life -- and that gift is found in a Person: the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the best friend a sinner will ever have. They need to know that. Someone has to tell them the truth. They think Jesus hates them because they're a sinner and not perfect. (The devil already fed them that lie.)

Let's tell them the truth!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 NIV 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

God is not holding people's sins against them. People need to know that. When they do -- they will love Jesus.

SAY THIS: Jesus loves sinners -- so I love them, too. I love them enough to tell them Jesus will help them.