

Hatred is Growing Amid the Body of Messiah

It is doubtful that anyone, no matter what their theological or political beliefs, would argue with the statement that our world today is filled with hatred. One only needs to look at any of our media platforms to see that people are spreading hatred and division of every kind. It also seems as if the finger of the accusation of hatred is being pointed at an alarming rate at those who believe in the Bible.

Bible believers are often accused of being intolerant, a word which has been redefined to be synonymous with hate. These allegations of hatred are often followed up by those condemning Bible believers with a biblical quotation, such as these words of Yeshua (Jesus) found in Mark 12:28-31:

“One of the Torah scholars came and heard them debating. Seeing that Yeshua had answered them well, he asked Him, ‘Which commandment is first of all?’ Yeshua answered, ‘The first is, “Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And you shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’”

Or John 13:34-35:

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Those who accuse Bible believers often quote Yeshua's words with an air of authority and the mannerisms of a prosecutor who has just pointed out evidence that would surely convict

the accused. However, the problem with using a biblical quote to accuse a person of hating their neighbor is that the accuser first must understand how the Bible defines hatred. Thankfully, the Bible provides a clear statement of the definition of what hatred of a neighbor is, in Leviticus. (a book that Yeshua was familiar with and a book Yeshua directly said He didn't come to abolish in Matt. 5:17).

Leviticus 19:17 (TLV): "You are not to hate your brother in your heart. Instead, you are to firmly rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him."

Notice that the Bible tells us that if we do not firmly rebuke our neighbor, we are hating them in our hearts. It has been said before that the most loving thing possible for a human to do is to share the Good News of Yeshua with someone. By extension, the most hateful thing possible for a human to do is to not share the Good News of Yeshua with someone.

When we understand what the Bible actually defines as an act of hatred, we also understand that when a Bible believer confronts someone who is in sin, in a loving manner, the believer is not being hateful at all. Rather, that Bible believer is actually demonstrating biblical love.

It is with this type of biblical love that Yeshua confronted not only sinners like the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:16-19), but also some of the Pharisees and scribes (Matt. 23:15-36). These are only two of the many examples of Yeshua fulfilling the words of Leviticus 19 by truly demonstrating love to His neighbors.

Unfortunately, because of false Bible teachers who are teaching the lies of the adversary, a growing number of people who claim to believe in the Bible have actually been deceived into hating their neighbors. Today, many keep silent in the midst of sin because they have been duped into believing that confronting sinful actions of those around them is unloving or

hateful.

The truth is that the most biblically loving way in which we can respond to sin is by firmly rebuking our neighbor. For us to do anything less is to hate our neighbors in our hearts, which is the complete opposite of loving G-D and loving our neighbor.

But, Leviticus 19:17 doesn't stop with the words about firmly rebuking our neighbor. The verse continues with the words "and not bear sin because of him." These words of warning tell us that when we do not demonstrate love by rebuking our neighbor, we will bear sin because of them. These words "bear sin" teach us that if we do not firmly rebuke our neighbor concerning their sin, we become participants in that sin.

It is because Yeshua understood the truth about love and hatred shown in Leviticus 19:17 that He taught His disciples what we read in Matthew 18:15-17:

"Now if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault while you're with him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen, take with you one or two more, so that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand.' But if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to Messiah's community. And if he refuses to listen even to Messiah's community, let him be to you as a pagan and a tax collector."

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