



**8 Keys To A Better Life:
Love Not Hate
Proverbs 15:17**

January 28th, 2024

INSPIRATION

“We hate some persons because we do not know them;
and will not know them because we hate them.”
– Charles Caleb Colton

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

ICE BREAKER

Hatred:

Do you believe the people of our world have generally had the same level of hatred we are seeing today, or has it been getting progressively worse recently? What are some of the reasons you believe this is the case?

DEEP DIVE

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

“Proverbs 15:17 A bowl of vegetables with someone you love is better than a steak with someone you hate.

Do you have some foods that you just can’t swallow? Like literally swallow. A gag reflex kicks in.

I do. Beets. I can’t stand them – my dad loved them – I would on purpose load up on them if they were on the salad bar.



I think my distance for them started in grade school – I have this memory of them being served to us at the cafeteria – I could not stand the taste- the smell – the little red juice – soaking into my mashed potatoes –

I do like a bowl of vegetables – I like lima beans – peas – corn – all of it – though I am not a huge fan of peas out of a can – that is gross.”

Read I Peter 3:9-12 and then answer the following questions:

- 9) *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult.
On the contrary, repay evil with blessing,
because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*
- 10) *For whoever would love life and see good days,
must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.*
- 11) *The must turn from evil and do good;
They must seek peace and pursue it.*
- 12) *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

- 1) What are some of the reasons revenge and payback are so desired and satisfying for people?
- 2) When you (or people you love) have been hurt by someone, how do you return good for evil? What are things must you not think or do, and what are things you can do to express grace to them instead?
- 3) With His children, God blesses obedience, and disciplines disobedience. Explain your understanding of how this relates to what verse 12 teaches us about our prayers. Does this mean praying is pointless unless we're perfect? Explain.

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

“An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. This sounds harsh – but its aim was to limit vengeance – this was not for someone to take matters into their own hands – but it was to be brought before a judge and the judge would assess the penalty – it was not for an individual to seek vengeance. And it was not to carry out literally – there would be damages paid but it was not physical – but the compensation would be paid out

Read Matthew 5:38-42 and answer the following questions:



38) *You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. 39) But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40) And if anyone wants to sue to and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41) If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42) Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

- 4) Is turning the other cheek a requirement to let people always take advantage of and abuse us? If not, what is the point here of what we should be willing to do and why?
- 5) Yes, Jesus allowed people to mistreat and abuse him, but did he ever stand up for himself and others? Can you think of an example? So what guidelines could we follow for when to stand up for ourselves and when to turn the other cheek?

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

In the Old covenant the defining characteristic was circumcision – I know that sounds weird – but that is what set the people of God apart – just so you know – that is not a part of the membership class – circumcision was decided by mom and dad – and it was only for boys.

This new covenant – new relationship with God – the defining characteristic is LOVE – it is not just for the boys – it is for everyone – it is painful – love is painful especially loving like Jesus – it requires sacrifice and sacrifice is painful. It is costly.

It is no longer – eye for an eye – kind of living – it is no longer vengeful – it is faith expressing itself through love.

Read Philippians 2:3-8 and answer the following questions:

3) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4) not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of the others. 5) In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. 6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7) rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8) and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!



- 6) In your family, if you choose to seek another's desires instead of your own – what would that look like in the following situations.
- a) Restaurant: you would go to _____ for _____ rather than _____.
 - b) Vacation: where instead of where?
 - c) Holiday plans: what instead of what?
 - d) A big Amazon purchase: _____ instead of _____.

Additional Study

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about the love instead of hate consider the following passages:

- Genesis 4:1-6 (Cain and Abel)
- I Sam 19:1-18 (Saul's Jealousy and hatred toward David)
- Hosea 1, 2:1-16 (Hosea and his unfaithful wife)

NEXT STEPS

- 7) Think of one simple thing you could do this week to seek another person's interests instead of your own. What might that be?

PRAYER

Think of the person in your world who is most unkind to you. Pray for them.
