

Dealing with Feelings of Hate

1- Objectives

- To discuss reasons why we hate and what to do to combat it

2- References

- Holy Bible
- Documentary "As we forgive" Laura Hinson

3- Scriptural Verse

- “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? (1 John 4:20)

4- Lesson Outline

- Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- It is probably easy to talk about dealing with the feeling of hate and very hard to do- sometimes even to visualize. It really requires the Lord’s help and strengthening.

How to deal with the feeling of hate?

- The short answer is love. Truly, this is the short answer; the long answer and the only answer (mention the story of Moallem Ibrahim el Gohary’s dealing with his brother’s neighbor).
- But before we can even consider this answer, there are some things we must ask ourselves. “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?” (1 John 4:20). So the foundation question is why do I love God?
- We love him because He first loved us.
- He is able to continually offer us relationship with Him by forgiving us; by putting aside our transgressions and by healing our wounds that provoked the transgressions to begin with.
- Multiple times every day, we pray -- forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.
- Is that what we want? Do we really want God to forgive us as we forgive others? When we harbor the littlest offense in our hearts and replay it over again? When we continually remember a slight we received?
- Peter asked the Lord: “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18: 21-22)
- Remember the parable of the king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants, how did he forgive the servant who owed him ten thousand talents, but this servant could not forgive his fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii

and thus he lost his chance to be forgiven and he was condemned and had to pay all that was due to him (Matthew 18:23- 34).

- Part of our harboring hatred is that we haven't yet experienced the mercy of God on a level that has transformed our heart. A forgiven heart loves much. And remember that love is the only solution to hatred (which takes the face of bitterness, resentment, remembering of evil).

**What about truly wounding offenses?
(Molestation, abuse, rape, infidelity, murder)**

- This is really difficult but still we are not justified in carrying hatred toward evil perpetrators because nowhere in scripture does God separate forgivable vs. unforgivable sins.
- When we see people actually giving up their hatred to follow God, it becomes easier for us to apply this to our own lives. To at least accept the idea that it is something that is doable in even the vilest of circumstances (Remember St. Stephen with His persecutors and St. George when he restored the eye of the soldier who was whipping Him).
- To see the beauty of God in action and the freedom that comes when we act as His children. We are never more like God than when we forgive.
- A documentary about the Rwandan people (history of the genocide) called "As We Forgive" states that a young lady (Rosaria) said: "How can I refuse to forgive when I am a forgiven sinner too? According to God's word, I am called to forgive him for I did not create this man. Even my family that he killed, I did not create them either. His crime was against God who created the people he killed. So I placed everything in the hands of God."

Why should victims forgive?

- First of all forgiveness releases them. The bitterness of their heart- their desire for revenge, their desire for bitter justice against those perpetrators is so great and that eats them up. When they forgive, they get released. It is not only serving the release of the guilt of the perpetrator but it also releases them and then they can think right. They can contribute to the reconstruction.
- The problem is we convert people to the church without converting them to God. So we have to change. Repentance is a requirement, transformation is our calling.
- Always remember that the real persecutor is Satan and he uses people to accomplish his desire that's why praying for these people is a must as they are the real victims of Satan.
- St. Isaiah said: "If at any point in time you remember someone who mistreated you or saddened you, then arise immediately and pray for him with all your heart that God may forgive him and this way the fire of returning evil for evil and of revenge will be put out in your heart."

5- Conclusion

- To abolish the feeling of hate, we have to ask fervently for a divine help, yes it is not easy but for God and through Him we can do everything as St. Paul said: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4: 13)
- Always try to remember the Divine Law: “But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6: 15).

6- Activities / Discussion Points

- Read the story of the persecution of St. Stephen in Acts 7: 54 – 60.
- See how courageous he was, how his eyes and feelings were directed to God, how forgiving he was and how did he likened our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.