

Do Opposites Really Attract

Proverbs 10:12

I would like to begin this morning with a little audience participation. I'm going to give you a word and then you tell me the opposite.

Give
Save
Buy
Frown
First
Find
Hungry
Awake
Dark
Stand
Early
Day
Heavy
Noisy
Good
Sunny
Cold
Deep
Clean
LOVE

That's really the crux of our verse today isn't it? Hatred. Love. They are two complete opposites in terms of emotions. Some suggest that opposites attract. It couldn't be any further from the truth when it comes to hatred and love. As a matter of fact, they couldn't be any more different. So turn with me in your Bibles to **Proverbs 10:12** where we will consider

The path of hatred
The path of love

I. THE PATH OF HATRED – v. 12a

Hatred. It's an ominously dark word. Just by mere mention of the word there is a sinister and menacing shadow that hangs low. There is the presence of a feeling that senses the eminence of danger. It's

more than a word we use to explain our feelings about getting up on Monday morning as we drag ourselves to work. It isn't about our dislike for steamed veggies or liverwurst sandwiches. It's not about hating the cold or the heat or your high school picture. It is strong ill will. You loathe or despise someone or something. You have utter contempt for someone else. It carries with it an attitude of malice, the inner desire to do something cruel to another, something that will harm them.

I scanned the internet for the word hatred. I came across a website that posted poetry about hate. I can't read some of the poems because of the graphic nature of their content. People who were abused physically or sexually wrote poetry about their feelings toward those who mistreated them. Their words were vicious and brutal. Victims dreamed their perpetrators were dead and that they died at the hands of the victim who cruelly killed them. One atrocity leads to another atrocity.

Mitch Albom writes that "hating is a weapon that attacks the person who harmed us. But hatred is a curved blade, and the harm we do, we do to ourselves."

Some Latin guy by the name of Quintus Ennius said that "whom men fear they hate, and whom they hate, they wish dead."

Henry Emerson Fosdick wrote that "hating people is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat."

During the Civil War that still has bred hostility even today, Henry Longfellow knew well of the hatred between countrymen when he penned the oft sung Christmas carol *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*.

*And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth good will to men."*

The angels came to announce the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, but yet it seems, as Longfellow testifies that there is no peace, only hatred.

Scanning the headlines of the local newspaper or flipping through the evening news channels it doesn't take long to realize the theme of much of the news is often laced with under pinning's of hatred.

This past week a block from a movie set in Boston where Sandra Bullock is filming a new movie, a fatal stabbing occurred with one dead and two others injured after a fight broke out.

Violence escalated over protests by Spanish miners. A Flint juvenile is awaiting charges for his 2010 murder of a 73 year old woman.

A Lapeer National Guardsman was recently sentenced for unlawful imprisonment and assault with a deadly weapon on his girlfriend.

"Hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth good will toward men."

The underlying motivation in these and so many other crimes against someone else is hatred. It is nothing new as we see many Biblical examples . Hatred led to the murder of Abel.

Hatred led to the selling of Joseph into slavery.

Hatred led to Saul's pursuit of David.

Hatred led to Haman's drafting a law to exterminate all the Jews.

Hatred led the Pharisees to have Jesus killed.

Hatred led the Pharisees to have Stephen stoned.

Hatred led Saul to pursue Christians with hostile intent.

Throughout history hatred has led nation against nation, neighbor against neighbor.

Hatred led to the genocide of millions of Jews.

Hatred has led to the ethnic cleansing of people groups in Asia and Africa.

Hatred always has some ill will, some malicious intent against another person just because of who they are or maybe something they have done or perhaps even something perceived to have been done.

Our verse says that hatred causes dissension.

A. Hatred Causes Dissension

The KJV uses the word strife. It comes from a root word that means judgment. Someone does something to us that we don't like. They violate what we perceive as a right and so we respond in some retaliatory way. Conflict of some kind then takes place. That is what the word has evolved to mean: conflict, bitter quarrelling, struggle. From judge to jury to executioner.

The verse is then saying that when the emotion of hatred wells up inside us, strife is stirred up, it's agitated, moved violently to do something. Hatred is like the wind. You can't see the wind but you can certainly see its effects. The limbs and leaves of a tree are moving. The flag is flapping. Waves ripple across a lake. Kites soar.

It's the same with hatred. You can't see it but you can see its effects. Anger results in throwing things or hitting something. Because of hatred you become bitter or have resentment that leads to spreading lies about that person. There is always some action associated with the hatred. Hatred is the fuel on the fire of contention and dissension.

Hatred always stirs up strife or causes dissension.

Genesis 13:8 – Abram/Lot shepherds

Genesis 45:24 – Joseph to brothers

Scripture warns of the ugliness of hatred.

1. The Ugliness of Hatred

a. Evil men hate good men

Proverbs 29:10 "Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright."

John 3:19-21 "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes

into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

They don't like having their wrong deeds exposed.
They don't like having a moral standard to live by.
They don't want you to pray at graduations or kneel on a football field in prayer.

They want to jail someone for holding Bible studies in their home.

They don't want religion in government because they fear regulations will get passed that would hinder their lifestyle.

They don't want Bibles or prayer in the schools or in the courts so they stir up strife.

They hate the moral integrity of the righteous.

b. Evil men disguise their hatred

Proverbs 10:18 “He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

Proverbs 26:24-26 “A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit. Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.”

Even though the venom of hatred poisons their heart, their speech is laced with flattery, but their hatred will eventually become evident. Their hatred will be exposed.

But where does such strife or dissension come from?

Proverbs 13:10 “Pride only breeds quarrels (strife), but wisdom is found in those who take advice.” Pride is the breeding ground of hatred.

It was pride that led to dissension between Satan and his followers and God and the rest of the angelic host.

It was pride that led the rift between siblings because one was jealous that his offering was not accepted by God and so led to murder.

It was pride that led to the division of the church in Corinth.

I Corinthians 1:10-13

I Corinthians 3:1-4

I Corinthians 11:17-19

II Corinthians 12:20

Paul will write to the Galatians that hatred is among the works of the flesh that should be stripped away if we are truly led by the Spirit of God.

Hatred causes dissension.

Hatred consumes the heart.

B. Hatred Consumes the Heart

James 4:1

In this case I prefer the KJV rendering of the verse that describes our fighting and quarreling as stemming from our inner lusts. It's a more intense word. It speaks of that inner craving which drives or consumes a person to do things he otherwise wouldn't do. It is an excessive unrestrained desire. If I don't get what I want strife boils up from the hatred inside because I don't have it or can't get it, so I do whatever it takes. It consumes the heart.

Acts 9:1 “Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out (raging fury) murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.”

Hatred consumed the passions of a leader who instilled his hatred in a nation that resulted in the holocaust. As one news source put it, the holocaust was “a program of systematic state-sponsored murder by Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, throughout occupied territory. Of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds perished.”

There is a link between hatred and other sins.

1. The Sin of Envy

Proverbs 27:4 “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?”

James 3:16 “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”

The person with envy not only wants what someone else has, he hates him for having it. Remember the story about Amnon, the son of David who loved his half-sister Tamar so he schemed a way to force himself on her. He couldn't have her so he raped her. **II Samuel 13:15** says he **“hated her with an intense hatred.”**

2. The Sin of Lying

Proverbs 26:28 “A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”

3. The Sin of Revenge

Proverbs 24:29 “Do not say, ‘I’ll do to him as he has done to me; I’ll pay that man back for what he did.’”

Hatred is in the heart of the person who wants to get even with someone. He is out for no good. Remember that where there is strife there is evil of every kind. Hatred manifests itself in so many different actions that are sin. They are part of the old nature and it has no part in the life of a believer who is now a new creation in Christ. The old nature has passed away.

Hatred causes dissension or strife.

Hatred consumes the heart and drives men to do wicked things.

Hatred controls the will.

C. Hatred Controls the Will

I Samuel 18:28-29

I Samuel 19:1, 9-11, 15

I Samuel 20:30-31

How many of you realize that fear breeds hatred?

We're afraid of snakes so we say that we hate them. We're afraid of spiders so we say that we hate them. We're afraid of the dark so we say we hate the dark. We're afraid of needles so we say we hate needles. Saul was afraid of David, so he came to hate David. Time and time again Saul is driven by his hatred for David and tries to kill him. David was his enemy. He wasn't going to rest until David was dead. Hatred will control your will, your desires, your actions, it consumes and controls the person so that you want harm to come to another.

Solomon is advising his son against the sin of hatred because it will only lead to ruin. His advice to us would be not to take the path of hatred. That's why there is hope for the one who follows the commands of God. Follow the path of love.

II. THE PATH OF LOVE – v. 12b

“Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs (transgressions).”

There couldn't be any two greater opposites than hatred and love. Instead of hating someone for something they may have done to us or said to us, we need to seek reconciliation and be forgiving.

Greek mythology had two goddesses. One was the goddess Eris. She was the goddess of discord and her name means strife. The other was named Harmonia and was the goddess of harmony or unity.

Solomon is telling us that we need to do everything in our power to seek unity in relationships. In his first epistle, Peter quotes this verse in relation to the soon coming of the Lord. It was an admonition to seek to have unity in the body of Christ and exhorts us with these words, **“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (I Peter 4:8)** Love demonstrates forgiveness.

A. Love Demonstrates Forgiveness

The deeper the love, the greater the forgiveness.

How many believe that? That's what Christ demonstrated on the cross. Even though Christ served them and fed them and healed their sick and their disabled, people still hated Him. They mocked Him. They didn't believe Him or change their conduct even though He taught the truth of the Old Testament. On different occasions they wanted to kill Him. And as He went to the cross, mobs of people jeered at Him while He marched to the place where each of them and us should have been. There he demonstrated forgiveness through His love.

How Deep The Father's Love For Us

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One,
Bring many sons to glory***

Behold the Man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice,
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished***

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer

But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom***

CCLI 1292471

Christ's death demonstrated the depth of His love and willingness to forgive. Not just some people of some of their sins or some people of all of their sins. Not just a certain group or class of people in a certain time in history. The depth of His love is that He forgave all people all sins. Now it's up to us to appropriate it, to claim it.

Love demonstrates forgiveness. It is quite clear from Scripture that how God has forgiven us is how we are to forgive others. **Ephesians 4:32 "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake has forgiven you."**

The Message "Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you."

Colossians 3:13 "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any many have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you so also do you."

Forgiveness is a basic attitude for a Christian. Because we have been forgiven by God we ought to demonstrate the same forgiveness to others. We can only forgive through His love. There isn't any other way. Without forgiveness there is no unity. Without unity we do not demonstrate Christ's love. *The depth of your love for Christ will greatly determine the depth and degree to which you are willing to forgive someone else.*

Stop and ask yourself about the last time you were offended, when someone said or did something to you that hurt you and then ask if you have totally and completely forgiven them. Without true reconciliation there cannot be unity in the body of

Christ. There will still be dissension. It leaves room for bitterness and resentment to grow.

Hebrews 12:15 “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled.”

And bitterness is something Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4:31** we should get rid of. If there is any root of bitterness all in us, something we just can't let go of, then we have not fully or truly forgiven.

How then does the love of Christ flow from us?

Love demonstrates forgiveness.

Love demonstrates unity.

B. Love Demonstrates Unity

Unity is that quality of being one in spirit, sentiment, or purpose; to be in harmony.

That's what Jesus prayed about for us in His prayer in **John 17** – that we would have unity.

Colossians 3:14 “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Ephesians 4:3 “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Psalms 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”

Romans 15:5-6 “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another (unity), according to Christ Jesus: (why) That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Without unity, we cannot adequately or appropriately glorify God. Worship will be stifled. Where there is dissension, there is a stranglehold on worship. We'll only be going through the motions

and worship will have no meaning and bring no blessing. Where there is unforgiveness, worship is squelched.

A lack of unity was a huge problem in Corinth as we pointed out earlier. Paul had to deal with divisions and cliques that were in the church. The biggest problem was in their communion service. Their observance of this ordinance was a slap in the face of the Lord who came to bring reconciliation between man and God and between man and man and they were embroiled in divisiveness that struck at the heart of worship. There was no unity.

When we come through these doors to worship, we ought to have already settled accounts with others with whom we may be at odds. If we aren't in unity then we are a hypocrite. And our worship is a stench in the nostrils of God.

Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”

It should become a common practice that as we approach Sunday that we ask ourselves if we have mended any broken fences in relationships that occurred through the week so that as we come to the worship time our hearts can truly lift up the name of Jesus in praise as we remember how much He forgave us out of His great love.

Unity among the body is the breeding ground of worship and the sweet aroma that ascends to God.

According to **Mark 12:30** we are called to “love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength.”

That is the heart of our worship. Any less and our worship is inadequate. Any less and we leave the

door open for hatred to slither in and disrupt our unity with one another. Our worship of God should foster true love and forgiveness toward each other.

Through the reconciling work of Christ, God brought us all into one body. The love of Christ in us flows out from us and becomes the bond or cement that holds us all together.

Love demonstrates unity.

Love demonstrates ownership.

C. Love Demonstrates Ownership

John 13:34-34 “A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one to another.”

When God sent His Son, Jesus to die on the cross for us, He placed on us His desire for ownership. It showed us just how much He loved us. When we in turn go out and demonstrate that same love to others, then we are revealing the ownership God has on us. Everyone will know we belong to Christ because of how we treat others. We sing the chorus *“they will know we are Christians by our love.”*

The Apostle John clearly articulates ownership in his first epistle.

I John 4:7-12

Love has been called the great peace maker. Where it thrives it helps dissolve strife and contention.

Someone has said that “love cherishes the wrongdoer as a friend to be won, not as an enemy with whom to get even.”

Just as we cannot see hatred except through its effects, so we cannot see love except in how it is demonstrated by us to others in forgiveness, in unity in ownership.

Our dog is half beagle, half lab or a bagel. She keeps a watchful eye on our property. Squirrels

venture into the yard at their own peril. She barks at them, chases them and corners them in trees. Only the brave of heart leap to the ground and run as fast as their little legs will carry them frantically trying to escape. She has to her credit caught one squirrel. They don’t get along.

*My aunt sent an email with some pictures of a Papillion dog that was nearing the time to give birth to her own litter. A couple weeks before the event the owners found and cared for a baby squirrel by bottle feeding it. They were amazed that their Papillion also took an interest in the squirrel. On several occasions she pulled the squirrel’s cage over near her own bed. After the litter was born she allowed the squirrel to nestle in with the pups. They slept together and on occasion the mother allowed the squirrel to suckle right alongside the other pups. It had become part of the litter. Even though they were different they got along together. The mother seemed to love and care for the squirrel as if it were her own. At the end of the picture story there was a moral: *keep loving everyone, even the squirrely ones.**

How much do you demonstrate your love to others? Is there evidence of God’s ownership of you seen in how you love others?

Is there someone that you need to seek out this week to reconcile a severed relationship because of unforgiveness, because of some degree of hatred that happened a while ago?

Hatred or love, they are both choices we make. They are not in any way shape or form compatible. One stirs up dissension when it is wronged. The other seeks unity through forgiveness when wrong. *Which path will you choose?*