

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)*

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## ***Lesser Discussed Sins: Haters of God***

*by: Justin Brewer*

In our last article, we focused on Romans 1:28-32, in which the Apostle Paul included a rather extensive list of sins and actions that are manifested through the rejection of God. There are a lot of rather distasteful activities associated with such a rejection: fornication, envy, murder, strife, inventors of evil things, and the list goes on. Sadly, a brief look at modern culture proves that the words of Paul are true and applicable throughout every time period and culture. We see hatred being spewed by those who have rejected God and many of the actions that Paul describes in Romans 1 are easily seen simply by watching the news each evening. The foundation for Paul's description of society is the rejection of God, which can often come through one of the problems that is contained in Paul's list: "haters of God" (1:30). In our own culture, we've seen this concept at work; society has come to hate God and therefore reject Him, His commands/word, and His followers. But what does it mean to hate

God? How does one come to hate God?

Recently, there was a video online in which an individual was offered a Bible for free and was told that she could do with it as she chose. Her response was to take the Bible (multiple Bibles, actually) and then say that she would burn them. Instead of burning them, however, she proceeded to walk outside and start throwing the Bibles against the outside of the building. Where does such hatred come from? Does she even understand what she purports to hate? Often, "haters of God" become such simply because they do not understand Him, nor do they care to understand Him. Many reject the Bible and argue against the principles set forth in it without ever actually considering it; there are many "articles" out there condemning the Bible, but they arrive at their conclusions not through the careful preponderance of evidence, but rather through the twisting of the Scriptures into what they are not (2 Pe-

ter 3:16). Through many of the arguments this particular individual stated, it was clear that she lacked any actual knowledge concerning what she so vehemently hated. Some things never change; remember that many were extremely angry with Paul in Ephesus and were rioting, but most of them had no idea why they were so mad (see Acts 19:21-41).

On this same concept, King Solomon wrote that “it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, And he sins who hastens with his feet. The foolishness of a man twists his way, And his heart frets against the Lord” (Proverbs 19:2-3). Too many arrive at the conclusion that society suffers because of God and religion (“without knowledge”) and therefore support outright wickedness (“hastens with his feet”). In a list of what God hates, Solomon included a “heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil” (Proverbs 6:18). The principle is that those who hate God and all that He represents will hasten to do the exact opposite. While the NKJV version of Proverbs 19:3 states that the people described “frets” against the Lord, the NASB translates it as “And his heart rages against the Lord.” How else could “haters of God” be perceived? The wicked of the world rage against the righteousness of the Lord and support the wicked deeds described by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1.

Frequently, coming to hate God is a gradual digression; many do not start out with hatred for Him, but the world will happily teach this hatred. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus said that no “one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” In the context, Jesus spoke of obedience to God and aligning our priorities correctly (such as directing what we see appropriately, laying up our treasures in heaven, etc.). If our focus is primarily on the things of this world and pleasures of sin, then we will come to hate God and everything that He stands for. Where we align ourselves will direct our perspective towards God; do we seek this world’s treasures to the detriment of our obedience to God? Then we will come to despise God and love materialistic things. In the context of our original passage, Paul wrote that those who reject God in favor of sin seek to “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” and will exchange “the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:18-32). Why would truth be rejected in favor of an ungodly lie?

Jesus expressed the principle that those who love darkness (wickedness/lawlessness) will hate the light, the deeds of the light, and those who practice the light. In

John 3:19-21, Jesus stated that “this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” Interestingly enough, Jesus also stated that “it [the world] hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil” (John 7:7). Not only do many hate God, but that hatred extends to His followers. In John 15:18-20, Jesus said that “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

There is a clear connection between loving this present world and the hating of God. The point is clearly made by Jesus who said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). The alternative is clearly true – if we love the things of this world, and refuse to do His will, then we become haters of God.

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## ***A Little Reminder...***

Sometimes we don’t control our tongues the way we should, and venues like social media make it easier than ever to lose control of our mouths! To that end, here is a little reminder from the wise man, Solomon:

*The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. (Proverbs 15:2)*

## **Study Opportunities**

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM  
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

### **Meeting At**

Homewood Suites of Bozeman  
1023 E Baxter Ln,  
Bozeman, MT 59715

***Everyone Welcome!***

# Wisdom From Above

by: Doy Moyer

*“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (Jas 3:13-18, ESV)*

Wisdom has particular characteristics. James tells us that there is a great distinction to be made between wisdom from above and wisdom from below. Godly wisdom is shown by good behavior, in gentleness (v. 13). Such godly wisdom is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruit, unwavering, without hypocrisy (v. 17). Worldly wisdom is grounded in bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, and arrogance. This shows us that not all wisdom is to be equated.

James is mirroring the Hebrew Scriptures in this approach to wisdom. The book of Proverbs draws out all of these points in more detail. Perhaps one of the more comprehensive statements on the wisdom from above comes from Proverbs 3:13-24.

Wisdom is to be discovered (v. 13). This would imply an active seeking on our part, not passively sitting back and waiting for wisdom to be zapped into us. We must “take hold of her” and “hold her fast” (v. 18). Of course, seeking after wisdom coincides with seeking the Lord, for “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (9:10). Fearing God is the foundation of all wisdom, knowledge and understanding (cf. 1:7), so to find wisdom is to find God. No other type of wisdom can have the benefits of His wisdom.

We go after what we deem as valuable. What, then, is the value of godly wisdom? “Her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor” (vv. 15-16).

God’s people must distinguish between the value of earthly wealth and the value

of heavenly wisdom. Theoretically, we know there is a difference, yet we so often spend ourselves in the pursuit of worldly wealth. When we want to get rich and present ourselves to the altar of mammon, we become the fools about which Proverbs warns. If we can spend so much of our time and energy to seek our worldly wealth, which we know will not last, then why can we not spend ourselves completely on the wisdom that leads to salvation? (2 Tim 3:14-15)

The rewards of wisdom are great. "Long life" is not simply about how many years we spend on earth. Proverbs 3:17 even speaks of wisdom being a "tree of life" to those who take hold of her, indicating that this "long life" is one that takes us into eternity. The tree of life, first seen in the Garden of Eden, and at last found in Paradise (Rev 22), is attained only through God's wisdom. Here is the path to true and lasting happiness. Long life is eternal life.

God Himself is the pattern for wisdom. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens" (3:20). God's wisdom is creative and powerful. Wisdom emanates from Him, not simply because He willed it, but because it flows from His very nature. It is who He is.

Wisdom, as described in Scripture, is a way of life. It is not something that we just do occasionally, but more something that we become. There is security in this. Wisdom and discretion becomes life to our souls (v. 22). "Then you will walk in your way securely and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet" (vv 23-24). How can this be? "For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught" (v. 26).

James adds that seeking wisdom is attended by a life of prayer: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach" (1:5). So let us be resolved:

*"Acquire wisdom;  
And with all your acquiring, get understanding.*

*Prize her, and she will exalt you;  
She will honor you if you embrace her.*

*She will place on your head a garland of grace;  
She will present you with a crown of beauty." (Proverbs 4:7-9)*

# From Harlotry to Hope

# Ladies

# Corner

by: Machella Goad

Read along with me Hosea 3.

*Then the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans." So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man--so, too, I will be toward you." For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."*

What did God tell Hosea to do? To love a harlot? To take her into his own home and save her from a life of adultery? To care for her and show her what a loyal marriage should be? Did she deserve this love, this salvation? So what was God's purpose? We understand that God was using Hosea and this action to declare a message to His people. The previous chapters are clear that God would bring judgement upon Israel for their idolatry. However, God also wanted His people to understand His love for them. That even though they committed adultery against Him through their idol worship, after some time of punishment, He would bring them back to Himself, save them from a life of captivity, care for them, and show them goodness. Did they deserve this love, this salvation? Do you think the message was clear when the people witnessed Hosea doing that for the harlot?

So, what does this have to do with us? After reading this passage, we should ask ourselves, "Do my choices show that I have given up a blessed relationship with God because I love the 'raisin cakes' of this world?" If the answer is yes, we are just like the harlot of Hosea's time and the idolatrous Israelites. Just as they were guilty of iniquity, so are we; yet, just as they had hope of being rescued from that life of slavery, so do we.

Examine Romans 5:6-8 with me.

*"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were*

*still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

We are undeserving of God’s love and salvation, just as the harlot and the Israelites were. However, by reading this passage, along with several others, we know that while we were slaves of sin, Christ loved us and purchased us -- not with fifteen shekels of silver and one and one-half homers of barley, but with His own precious blood.

*“...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)*

If we have been bought, we can no longer be slaves of what held us before. If we belong to God, we must then present ourselves slaves unto Him.

*“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:20)*

*“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.” (1 Corinthians 7:23)*

If we have refused God’s salvation, and are currently trapped in a life of sin, why not allow God to rescue us from that life?! He loves us so much, and He desires a relationship with us. It is clear that a life with God is much more satisfying and rewarding than the life offered by the world. Romans 6 explains how we can be freed from our life of sin:

*“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.” (verses 3-7)*

Christ has paid the price; He has purchased us with His own blood. Let us live our lives unto Him, forever showing our gratitude for His compassion on us while we were like the harlot, and for offering us hope of a far better life than we can gain from this world.

# Daily Bible Reading

## March 2018

March 1	Zephaniah 1	March 16	Zechariah 7
March 2	Zephaniah 2	March 19	Zechariah 8
March 5	Zephaniah 3	March 20	Zechariah 9
March 6	Haggai 1	March 21	Zechariah 10
March 7	Haggai 2	March 22	Zechariah 11
March 8	Zechariah 1	March 23	Zechariah 12
March 9	Zechariah 2	March 26	Zechariah 13
March 12	Zechariah 3	March 27	Zechariah 14
March 13	Zechariah 4	March 28	Malachi 1
March 14	Zechariah 5	March 29	Malachi 2
March 15	Zechariah 6	March 30	Malachi 3-4

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