



## Godly Love and the Duty to Hate Evil

There is hardly a week that passes when Christian pastors and ministers from across denominations don't use their time at the pulpit to admonish their flocks to love as Christ loved. As the Christian world prepares itself for the Passion and Resurrection of its Savior during this Holy Week, such calls to love intensify.

To be certain, Christians are called — are commanded — by their Lord to *love*. As St. Paul said, of the three “theological” virtues, faith, hope, and love, the greatest of these is love.

But those of us who aspire to be the disciples of Jesus are also called to *hate*. In fact, it is precisely *because* we are called to love that we are called to hate, and to hate with every ounce of the zeal, the devotion, the aching, with which we are expected to love. The paradox here is only apparent: The love of God and neighbor with which Christians are consumed is inseparable from the intense hatred of evil and sin demanded of them.

Yet Christians hear relatively little about their obligation in Christ to burn with hatred for corruption. This is nothing short of a scandal.

First, while it is true that, as St. John said in his First Epistle, *God is Love*, it is equally true that God is Justice. The God of the Bible — both the Old Testament as well as the New — is a God of infinite compassion. But He is also a God who rewards and punishes. In stressing God's mercy at the expense of neglecting His wrath, Christians do a gross disservice to both, for divine mercy and divine wrath are meaningful only when each is understood in light of the other.

One can't know God unless one knows about His love *and* His justice.

Second, when justice *is* mentioned in connection with love in many Christian churches nowadays — particularly Roman Catholic churches such as the one that I attend — it always refers to something that Christians from times past wouldn't have recognized as justice at all: so-called “*social justice*.”

Yet social justice is what I will call *No Justice*. No Justice is a doctrine, favored by secular, atheistic leftists and far too many Christians alike, that the government must confiscate the resources in time, labor, and property from those to whom they belong and “redistribute” them to those who have less. This is the ugly reality of No Justice.

No Justice is injustice. Far from supporting “social justice,” as a Christian, I am duty-bound to detest it.



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on March 27, 2013

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And I detest it for the same reason that I detest slavery: It is manifestly unjust for one person or group to coerce others, for whatever reasons, to part with the fruits of their labor.

It is unjust for one person or group to coerce others to subsidize activities to which the latter never consented and to which their consciences may very well be opposed.

But it is exactly this of which No Justice consists.

We should not be misled by any of this into thinking that it is only the evil of the government for which Christians are to reserve their hatred, much less that only government is capable of evil. The disciples of Jesus know as well as anyone that such is the ubiquity of evil in the world that it even infects their own hearts.

Still, while Christian clergy will talk much about sin in the abstract, they seem to studiously avoid mentioning many specifics. And even when they urge the members of their flocks to look within, they routinely counsel them to be “less judgmental” of others, and more mindful of their own sins. But turning a blind eye to the wickedness of others is a recipe for the perfection, not of virtue, but of vice.

It has not infrequently been noted — but not noted enough — that the vicious are a better source of moral guidance than are the virtuous. By way of his life sentence behind bars, a convict stands a far better chance of deterring a reckless adolescent male from a life of crime than that of his honest father who constantly pleads with his beloved son to walk the straight and narrow path. All the Surgeon General’s warnings regarding the potential dangers of cigarette smoking aren’t going to persuade young, healthy smokers from indulging their habit of choice. The sight of a lifelong smoker suffering from lung cancer, however, might do the trick.

Similarly, for Christians to learn about and hate evil as they should, they *must* judge, and judge unequivocally, judge passionately, the wickedness of others. We first spot evil when it is outside of us, and it is vastly easier at that point to recognize it in all of its hideousness. Noticing and judging the evil of others is an indispensable step to noticing and judging the evil in our own hearts.

Noticing and judging the evil of others is an indispensable step to knowing and loving God and neighbor.



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