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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

The Political Leaders Weekly Bible Study

PART1 OF 2

Sorting Out Love and Hate in an Election Season



The November elections are quickly approaching, and everyone on the Hill has skin in the game which means emotions are running high. In consideration of that reality, this seems a good time to garner some biblical input about properly channeling our passions of love and hate. Many of you to whom I speak struggle with this; it's so easy to express love and hate in a wrong way—especially in the context of an election.

What do the Scriptures say you should love and hate? In this week's and next week's Bible studies, I will outline all the passages (what in seminary we termed an "exhaustive study") from the Book of Proverbs that relate to these emotions, and see what we can learn. Of course, we will examine the whole of Scripture on this important subject and expand on the biblical concept of love and hate that we find in Proverbs.

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MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE

Torrey Lewis

LGM Northwest Regional Director

Ministry Leader Hillsboro, Oregon



Torrey Lewis, who leads a Local Government Ministries (LGM) Bible-study based ministry in Hillsboro, Oregon, recently experienced a much prayed for, but usually rare experience with an unbeliever. Torrey regularly meets one-onone with many city and county policy makers and school board members, sharing Bible studies and prayer. He also teaches a weekly Bible study at a public library with up to 10 participants that include many former public servants and some who are running for local office. As CapMin's LGM regional director for the Northwest U.S. since 2020, Torrey is charged with growing ministries to city and county leaders in communities in

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Sorting Out Love and Hate in an Election Season—Part 1

What are you deliberately choosing? Do you love and hate according to Scripture, or do you love and hate according to your sin-laden, adamic nature? Most importantly—what does the Bible say about this charged issue? Do you love and hate the right things or the wrong things in God's eyes?

My prayer and heartfelt desire is that these next months won't end up damaging you as the mudslinging only gets worse. So, let's make good choices in this regard, ones that are informed and buoyed by the Word of God.

Read on.

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Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

Running up to the election I challenge you to channel your emotions to *love* and *hate* the things God *loves* and *hates*. As we study this issue, allow the Scriptures to determine the aim of your heart's passions. Your emotions, which ensue from your mental choices, will then be biblically based, well-seated, pleasing to God, and beneficial to your personal stability and success (cf. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1).

Solomon instructs us regarding six things we should always *love* and nine things we should always *hate*. Accordingly, note the parallels and consider the applications to your own life as to God's directives. I will leave the political relevancies and applications up to you and your conscience. May our convictions and emotions during the campaign season parallel His. Discover and mirror what God loves and hates.

II. SIX THINGS WE SHOULD LOVE

A. LOVE THE LORD

"I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me" (8:17).

"But he who sins against me injures himself; all those who hate me love death" (8:36).

The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but He loves one who pursues righteousness (15:9).



And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

For readers who don't know Christ, changing your affections of *love* and *hate* is impossible apart from a conversion to Christ and His Lordship (2 Corinthians 5:17). When you become a *new creature* in *Christ*, you are simultaneously filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 8:9). Post conversion, you possess the power to change versus being *held captive by him* (Satan) *to do his will* (2 Timothy 2:26). Choose to *love* God today—come to Christ before the election!

B. LOVE OTHERS

When it comes to *loving* and *hating* in an election cycle, *love* is much more than kind emotions and expressions toward others—it also involves attitudes and actions. One of the manifest ways you can radically *love* others during the election season is to cover up their faults, to be forgiving and to look out for their backsincluding those who are competing against you and tarnishing your name. Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neigh-BOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43-44). I know all that seems counterintuitive in the heat of a competitive election cycle when your and my fleshly natures want to get even, but it is nonetheless biblical and sorely needed in our American political culture! This directive has little to do with emotions and everything to do with volition aligned with obedience to God which shows our *love* and respect for Him. Note the following passages that will bolster this conviction in you.

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions (10:12).

He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends (17:9).

We are to *love* others—even our enemies—more than our campaigns; such is biblically explicit. Remember too, Romans 12:19: *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: "VEN-GEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.* Do you believe that God can even the score better than you can? Learn to trust Him in this area of your life.

C. LOVE KNOWLEDGE

"How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools bate knowledge?" (1:22).

In this insightful proverb, the virtue of *knowledge* is held preeminent and in contrast to three opposites: *naïveté*, *scoffing*, and *foolishness*. In this proverb of contrast, Solomon is saying that to *love* and delight in any of those three things is equated to *hating knowledge*! The strong inference is that we are to *love* gaining knowledge!

Generally, someone who is disciplined to read great books and ask great questions, is someone who has little time for talking negatively about others.

The word *naive* (*peti*) means "open-minded." *Peti* can also be translated as *open-minded*. Proverbs 1:22 amplified, literally reads, "*How long*, *open-minded ones, will you love being*

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.



Believers are humble; they cherish—and *love*—the guidance of God and others.





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Oregon, Washington, Idaho Wyoming, Montana, and Alaska.

"Ministering to city and county public officials is crucial. These are our neighbors, people who we see at the farmer's market and the hardware store, people who work in our backyard. I've been meeting with many of them one-on-one, sharing Bible studies and telling them I want to pray for them, their families, and issues they're dealing with. These people are across the spectrum from atheist to strong believer, and after they learn there is no ulterior motive, every response has been positive. The other day I met with an atheist who I've been sharing Bible studies with, and I offered to pray about an issue he was having. And he said, 'Torrey, if you could pray for that, it would be great.' An atheist asked for prayer. I see this as a wonderful sign. It's a matter of keeping our hands to the plough and continuing to build relationships and letting Christ lead our conversations because He's doing the work."

open-minded?" Open-minded generally has a positive connotation in our society, but here it has a pejorative implication. As used 14 times in Proverbs, a peti person knows not (or else rejects, i.e., a scoffer) the notion that God has given him guidelines for wise living and prudent decision making via God's infallible, inalterable knowledge per the Scriptures! In contrast to a lifetime habit of seeking God's *knowledge* from His book, the open-minded (peti) person did [does] what was [is] right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25). His thinking is not tethered to Scripture (or as I like to say, his source of authority in life is "Dr. Wellithink.") Peti people are not informed by the *knowledge* of God—and D.C., it seems, is increasingly filled with such naive, scoffing, fools who hate God's knowledge! Appropriately, the apt English word "pitiful" is derived from this Hebrew root.

In contrast, Solomon elaborates on and qualifies the word *knowledge* in 2:5, saying, *the knowledge of God*. God's great desire for those whom He has created in His own image is that we would possess a deep and personal *knowledge* of Him (cf. Hosea 4:1, 6; 6:6); in fact, He has given us His Word for the purpose of helping us to achieve that objective! Specifically, Solomon uses the word *knowledge* in the context of knowing something based on the reliance on a source that lies outside of one's self—to be clear, a *knowledge* that is based in, from, and through the Word of God.

Importantly, Solomon is contrasting the open-minded not with the close-minded, rather with the God-minded.

Unlike the *open-minded*, who hold preeminent their fallen minds (cf. Genesis 3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 1; 3:23; Ephesians 2:1; 2 Timothy 2:26), *wise people habitually confer with* God's *knowledge*, the Bible, the outside source untainted by the Fall. The God-minded are not open to wrong, subjective counsel; theirs is an objective, immutable, infallible source, not jaded, nor influenced by elections, lobbyists, man's platforms, or the pizza they ate the night before.

Assuming they are wiser than God, *open-minded* public servants reject God's guidelines. Absent God's full counsel and wisdom, they are often handicapped in their assessment of complex situations. What results are a panoply of decisions that can and do harm a nation. Lacking in *prudence* (cf. 1:3), they hate the *knowledge of God*, whereas the God-minded *love* the *knowledge of God*. The Hebrew word for *hate* (*sane*) means "to detest; to see knowledge as a foe."¹ In contrast to those who *hate* God's input, and rather, likened to the founders,

Believers should be the most knowledgeable and prudent among all office holders.

Being *open-minded* in the biblical sense of being *naive* should in no way typify believers in government! All should regularly discipline themselves through indepth Bible study in order to gain the *knowledge of God*, and in the process, they are putting away *naïveté* and *foolishness* as they mature in office. It follows that every officeholder should be in regular Bible study with others! Such should be culturally normative for the 512,000 elected leaders in America!

A historic understanding of this very concept best explains the reason America has dominated the world in ways that



William Samuel Johnson

are good and prosperous. Why? Because by and large, America has not been guided by *simpletons* in the past! We have been a nation driven by the *knowledge of God*, borne from the pursuit of scriptural truth amongst our leaders. That pursuit has resulted in a historic understanding and manifestation of policies in respect of the sinful nature of man. The following contrasting proverb underscores this.

"Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD. They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices" (1:29–31).

Are you committed to pursuing and gaining *God's knowledge* throughout the course of your life? My point, will you submit to God when He specifically tells you to *love* something in particular that you may not *love* enough presently? Do you *love God's knowledge*?

D. LOVE DISCIPLINE

For whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights (3:12).

If God's love is equated to reproving ("to discipline, chasten") us, it follows that we should love the work He is doing in us for our benefit! We should love God's discipline in our lives! The New Testament book of Hebrews amplifies this understanding (12:5–11).

And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Wise is the one who does not *hate* reproof but rather *loves* God's *discipline* and the correcting words of others.

Reprove a wise man and he will love you (9:8).

The following proverbs reiterate and underscore these last two virtues that a believer should *love—knowledge* and *discipline*. They underscore the necessity of embracing these key ingredients for wise living.

And you say, "How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof!" (5:12)

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid (12:1).

Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; he who hates reproof will die (15:10).

A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, he will not go to the wise (15:12).



"I am endeavoring ... to attend to my own duty only as a Christian. ... Let us take care that our Christianity, though put to the test, ... be not shaken, and that our love for things really good wax not cold."

 William Samuel Johnson, signer of the U.S. Constitution, member of the Continental Congress, judge, framer of the Bill of Rights, president of Columbia College, U.S. senator.

Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Times of William Samuel Johnson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), 184.



Benjamin Rush



"The Gospel of Jesus Christ prescribes the wisest rules for just conduct in every situation of life. Happy they who are enabled to obey them in all situations! ... My only hope of salvation is in the infinite transcendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the Cross. Nothing but His blood will wash away my sins [Acts 22:16]. I rely exclusively upon it. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!" [Revelation 22:20]

 Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence, surgeon general of the Continental Army, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, "Father of American Medicine," treasurer of the U.S. Mint, "Father of Public Schools Under the Constitution."

Benjamin Rush, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush*, George W. Corner, editor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 165–166.

Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed (27:5).

Believers are humble; they cherish—and *love*—the guidance of God and others. It follows that your intellectual, emotional, and volitional response to correction should be one of *love*, not *hate*. Train your mind to think that way if you haven't already. Don't let pride get in the way.

E. LOVE YOUR SPOUSE

During the election cycle when you are traveling incessantly, keep your mind focused on loving your spouse *especially during this period of time*. Chapter five of Proverbs warns against adultery and contrasts this sinful act with physical *love* expressed in marriage.

As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love (5:19).

A *bind* is a female deer. The biblical use of the words *bind* and *doe* depict poetic imagery of beauty and affection respectively between a man and his wife (cf. Song of Solomon 1:13; 4:1–7; 7:7, 8). If you've ever come upon a deer in the forest and enjoyed the graceful innocence and peacefulness of this animal, you will know how appropriate these words are to the point being made.

A spouse is to habitually direct his or her mind and affections only to his or her mate's beauty.

Ephesians 5:28–31 adds to the biblical understanding and restrictions of this proverb.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

The latter part of this passage is a quotation from Genesis 2:24, where the Hebrew word echad is used for one, meaning a pluralistic unity. Monogamy between a male and a female is God's design for marriage, the only relationship in which sexual *love* is to be expressed. Scripture states explicitly that we are to prioritize loving our spouses at all times-and I will add, especially during the election season when time away and temptation go hand in hand. Does your mate sense she or he is more important than your insatiable passion for campaigning? Don't leave them in the dust during this most intense time in your life!

> On main street in the town where you reside, there exists a bank called "Marriage Savings and Trust."

During this season, rather than deplete and overdraw your joint matrimony account, instead commit to increasing spousal equity!

Promise me you'll make daily deposits no matter where you happen to be in the country.



F. LOVE INSTRUCTING YOUR CHILDREN

The fourth biblically explicit virtue we should set our mind on to *love* during election time is the responsibility to instruct and discipline our own children. As a national public servant, one of the most important contributions you will ever make in the world is to *train up a* [your] *child in the way he should go* (22:6). Keep in mind too, that if you are a female officeholder you have an even larger tension to resolve because your first responsibility is to your family:

She who rocks the cradle rules the world.

Generally speaking, the female in the marriage is influencing the next generation which requires a dedicated focus on biblical teaching and instruction. The results, as Proverbs 22:6 says are, *when he is old he will not depart from it*. Attentive, prioritizing, disciplined mothers and fathers infuse their children with the virtues of *knowledge, discipline* and *love*. Scripture is clear, moms, especially, (cf. Proverbs 31; 1 Timothy 2:15) but also dads are God's intended, preeminent mentors to inculcate these qualities. Proverbs speaks specifically to imputation in this way,

He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently (13:24).

In a fallen world, the parents' authority must be established early on in the life of the child to maximize the child's comprehension and acceptance of *knowledge*, *discipline* and *love* which are foundational to his skill thereafter to live life for the glory and admiration of God, i.e., wise living (cf. Galatians 1:10). If you don't break the will (not the spirit) of your wayward, fallen-natured child at an early age—at what point will you? In the long run, catechizing your child and building a God-centered life-long relationship with him is more important than what is for most, a momentary political career.

> As a public servant with young children, even though you are exceptionally busy, do not shirk this primary responsibility!

God *loves* mothers and fathers who counsel and guide their children. My friend, make sure you prioritize *loving* your children during the election season. To do so is to place priorities in a spot that is biblically explicit and inure to yourself God's special blessings.

III. THE RESULTS OF LOVING WHAT GOD LOVES

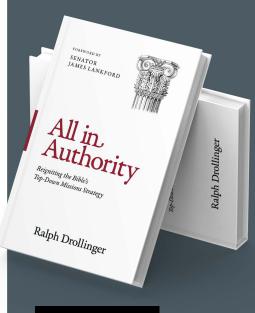
Proverbs frequently displays the positive results of refocusing, of aligning ourselves in ways similar to God, His characteristics, and attributes. Such is certainly the case with what one chooses to *love*. Notice the results of such obedience.

A. FRIENDS, INNER PEACE, AND WEALTH

The following proverbs serve to underscore these biblical results.

"To endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries" (8:21).

Better is a dish of vegetables where love is than a fattened ox served with hatred (15:17).

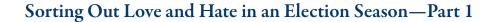


NOW AVAILABLE

The book of Acts records how a small band of men—the apostles in very short order *turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6, KJV) during the first century in which they lived. This small team of uneducated, common men were not elite leaders, so how were they able to saturate the world with the gospel—changing lives, changing culture, and eventually changing the Roman Empire?

Scripture provides the answer: not only did they fulfill the Great Commission one soul at a time through a ministry of geometric evangelism and discipleship, but they succeeded *by concentrating on and impacting a particular element of society, specifically kings and all who are in authority* (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

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He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will find good (19:8).

B. PERSECUTION AND INTOLERANCE

Men of bloodshed hate the blameless, but the upright are concerned for his life (29:10).

So fascinatingly insightful is this Solomonic proverb! The wicked will hate the *blameless* (*tam*) meaning those who are "guiltless; men of integrity." But additionally, others of likeminded *uprightness* (*yashar*) meaning "straight, right" will come to their friend's rescue in his time of need because they are *concerned for his life*. Parallel to the resultant persecution found in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–16), the blameless will be targeted.

This should come as no surprise to you; this is your reward for *loving* and *hating* in ways similar to God in a fallen, increasingly sinful world.

Next week: Part 2 of Sorting Out Love and Hate in an Election Season. We'll look at nine things we should hate during the election season. Stay tuned, my friend!

1. It is worth noting here that Evangelicals have never been characterized by anti-intellectualism, as revisionists of historic American Evangelicalism assert. Fundamentalists (known more so under that titling in the late 18th and early 19th Century) were anti-intellectual only to the degree that secular academic intellectualism arose in opposition to Bible-based education. The various and numerous schools of higher education in America were all founded by Bible-believing Christians, i.e. the Ivy League schools. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), for example, is widely considered by secular and religious historians alike to be the greatest scholar America has ever produced. A cursory understanding of American history reveals that the Protestant Church established America's earliest colleges. Fundamentalists reacted, therefore, to the subsequent secular highjack and have since been falsely labeled as anti-intellectual.

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