

# Bite Size Bible Study

Hate #249

By Lee Logue

Anyone who listens to the news is aware that there is a lot of hate in the world. Nations hate other nations, political powers hate other political powers, people hate other people and so on it goes.

It was no different in the times Jesus walked this earth. *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”* Matthew 5:43-45 NIV

Strong’s Definition of “hate: G3404:

**μισέω miséō**, mis-eh'-o; from a primary μῖσος mîsos (hatred); to detest (especially to persecute); by extension, to love less: hate(-ful).

One morning I was wondering where we get all this hate from and how it is taught to us. We don’t see it in very young children.

My first thought was the Movies and News we see and Books we read. Invariably in most stories there is a person that is the “bad guy” and we are given just enough information about him/her to trigger our hate for this person.

It starts at a young age. Watching a movie a child will encounter situations that always have a crisis and often that crisis is caused by a character in the story that we are supposed to dislike (or hate).

Who hasn’t hated the Hissing Snake or the Monster, or the Big Bad Wolf? And when we get to stories for children a little older who hasn’t hated Cruella de Vil, or the Evil Stepmother (or Sister), or the Ugly Green Witch, or the Wicked King (or Queen), and the list goes on forever?

Now we can’t fault the authors of these stories because the story needs a crisis to solve and that often includes some sort of situation one may encounter in real life. It’s an unfortunate situation but there we are.

Hatred is an intense, pervasive negative emotion or attitude characterized by deep-seated aversion, often involving disgust, contempt, and anger, often focused on viewing a person, group, or idea as inherently evil or threatening. It’s stronger and longer lasting than anger or dislike, often becoming a dominant feeling leading to aberrant behavior. It lasts longer and is more powerful than simple dislike.

It is linked to negative moral judgments, seeing the target as fundamentally bad, evil, or immoral.

It often stems from unresolved trauma, feelings of helplessness, betrayal, or strong ideological differences. These can drive destructive behaviors and serve as a reaction to perceived threats, promoting attack-oriented actions and a desire to harm or destroy the hated target.

Often it develops over time through social conditioning, of thing we are taught to fear and then fear leads to hate. Hate can often provide intense energy giving the person a sense of control, and/or a strong group identity.

Jesus tells us that we should not develop these feelings or attitudes. He knows that they are only going to drive a wedge between us and others. If we hate other people, we have no desire to be with them and often could wish them dead. But if we love our neighbor (meaning anyone) we want to see them succeed to have a fulfilled life.

Sometimes even our enemies can become companions.

We were once (maybe more often) an enemy of God. While we were His enemy He still loved us (*hesed* – look it up) and still wanted the best for us. But that best was not going to happen while we were enemies of His or our neighbors.

People spend a lot of energy on hate. Energy that could be more useful if it was spent on caring and praying for others.

Here is a personal exercise to try out: Find a movie (or a book) you have. Play the movie or read the book all the way through. Make a list of those whom the author has made into the “bad guy”.

- What is your feeling for that person?
- What makes you dislike this person.
- Is it the person or what they are doing that you are supposed to hate?
- Could there be circumstances that made that person act the way they did?
- What might have been those circumstances that the author left out of the story that could change your perception of the person?
- How has the author of the story influenced your feelings toward that person?

Now choose a person that you know and “love less”. Go through the list above and see if your perception of that person changes.