

How to Hate Your Sin

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[0 : 00] Welcome to the Providence Podcast.

My name is Chris Oswald, Senior Pastor at Providence Community Church. Well, I had no intention of making this repentance week, quote unquote, but that was the theme of our sermon last Sunday, and we followed that up with a second podcast.

Hopefully you've listened to by now. We have one more particular issue I think would be beneficial to discuss while we are in the mindset of thinking about repentance, and that is the idea of being angry with our sin or to hate our sin.

Thomas Watson says that there are six essential ingredients to repentance. He says that repentance is like a medicine that is made of six essential ingredients.

The sight of sin, sorrow for sin, confession of sin, shame for sin, hatred for sin, and turning from sin. And as he makes the comment, he says that, you know, if you remove any one of these ingredients, you don't have repentance.

[1 : 13] So I want to talk today about hatred for sin, number five on his list. Many times when someone is struggling to follow through, to really turn from their sin, you can find the other ingredients present.

You can find that they see the sin as sin. You can see that there is some sorrow for that sin. There is a confession of sin. There is shame for sin. But the one elusive ingredient seems to be the hatred of sin.

First of all, let's lay some biblical groundwork down that this is a thing, that the Bible calls us to hate sin. Proverbs 4.13 says, The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.

In Amos 5.15, we are told to hate evil and love good. Psalms 97.10 says, O you who love the Lord, hate evil.

Both Ephesians 4.26 and Psalm 4.4 say, Be angry and do not sin. And finally, in Romans 12.9, we are told to let love be genuine, abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good.

[2 : 21] And the word abhor there is just another way of talking about hate. So that's what we're going to talk about, how to hate our sin. The first thing we might want to do is just to understand what hate entails.

There's simply a connection. The best way to understand hate is just to see it as the other side of the coin with love, the other side of the same coin. Hate and love have a connection, an unbreakable connection.

We tend to hate those things that threaten or hurt what we love. Long before the John Wick type films came on the scene, I used to have a nightmare pretty regularly when I was relatively new dad about people breaking into my house and trying to hurt my kids.

And the nightmare was never about the break-in itself. You know, I'm a superhero in my dreams. I imagine some of you are as well. And I was never scared of the actual threat.

I was actually, I feel like these turned into nightmares because every single time I had one of these dreams where someone would break in to steal a child or something like that, I would absolutely murder that individual with my bare hands.

[3 : 35] And this is what would wake me up, this sick feeling in my stomach, this sense that I had this level of aggression in me that I could just honestly sit on top of someone and, you know, crush their windpipe with my hands.

And that was very disturbing to me. I thought, you know, what is going on here? And it took me a while to realize that as a man, I was just figuring out the dimensions of love for my kids.

You know, men tend to not be completely even aware of half the things we're feeling. And I didn't necessarily feel this immediate, like kind of positive, absolute love for my kids in some way that I was aware of.

Now, I did feel it. I just wasn't aware of it. And what I think I was doing in those nightmares was just navigating this relationship between love and hate and understanding that for me, a fundamental expression of love is a protection and, you know, being a ruination to those who would hurt the things that I love.

And you'll be happy to know that it's been, you know, as soon as I kind of realized, like, it's okay to be dangerous. It's okay to, it's good to be dangerous, as Jordan Peterson would talk about. It's good to have the capacity for danger when it's aligned properly with love.

[4 : 58] Chesterton, you know, he talks about courage in wartime. Courage in wartime flows not so much for the hatred of the thing in front of you, but the love for what is behind you, the love for what you're defending. And so that's sort of important to understand as we discuss how to hate sin.

Hate is just, you know, positive hate, biblical hate, good hate, is always the flip side of a deep, deep love. And we can see this not only in the Christian world.

We can just see this in general when we see someone find that their sacred, quote-unquote, reproductive rights are threatened. Well, they love abortion.

They love abortion. And so what comes out of them when that is threatened is hate. When someone is addicted to, you know, homosexual behavior, and they're told that that's wrong, what you'll see is that they love that sin so much that they hate the truth.

And so there's a, you know, a humanity-wide connection between love and hate. When the thing that we love is threatened, we can hate whatever is threatening it.

[6 : 09] So how does this work with sin? How are we supposed to hate sin? Well, it's tied, I think, biblically there are three loves that can teach us to hate sin. And I'll rank them in what I would consider to be the order of good, better, and best.

Three loves that can make us hate sin from good, better, and best. So the first one would be a love for your own well-being, a love for your own self in some respect.

Ephesians 5.29 says that nobody ever hated their own body but nourishes and cherishes it. We tend to think that people have a problem with self-love. The Bible says the opposite. The Bible teaches that there is no problem with self-love in the human.

The problem is actually with an inordinate self-love. That over time can turn into all sorts of toxic doubts and insecurities because you are simply not an object sufficient of total love.

But people love themselves. And the Bible takes this into account and routinely will offer a call to obedience simply for the sake of self-preservation. That's what Jesus is doing in Mark 8.26 when he says, What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?

[7 : 28] He's counting on people having a self-preserving instinct and that they would want to obey because of this self-preservation kind of instinct.

Deuteronomy 30.19 says, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life that you and your offspring may live.

Now, this is a biblical approach, but I want to explain why I rank it as the least superior. It's still biblical, but it will turn out to be insufficient for certain sins.

You will typically learn to hate sin when you see a consequence hurting something you love. It's the basic math of this. And so one of the problems with being motivated to hate sin because of a love for self-preservation is that not all sins tend to bring immediate consequences that hurt you.

Basically, almost all sins of omission are like this. When we fail to do the thing we're supposed to do, and we usually find more peace in the short term by not doing the thing that we're supposed to do.

[8 : 44] Now, over time, eventually, this kind of sin, the sin of omission, will actually hurt you, but it takes a long time. And so your actual kind of human reasoning and the feedback loop is so long and extended that you don't really see real harm being done to yourself in many sins of omission.

In fact, many times sins of omission kind of give a short-term benefit. You know, when you don't correct that child that you really needed to correct, the short-term benefit is that you get peace.

Like, you don't have to ruin your evening and deal with the whole thing and have this whole drama unfold and so forth. There's really no indicator in the short term that you're hurting yourself. Of course, over time, that will come to be seen.

But in the short term, you will often choose the path of least resistance, which involves a sin of omission. You should get in there. You should correct that. But you often will not because there's just not a sufficient motivation to do that.

It's not clear to you that this is actually going to cause you any problems in the short term. Now, you know, again, we're just talking about sort of human senses. Obviously, if you just believe the Bible, you would understand that that's a very hateful thing to do, to fail to discipline your son.

[9 : 59] And it's a very hateful thing to do to him and a hateful thing to do to you in the long run. But in the short term, you don't see things like that. So one of the areas where we won't really learn to hate our sin and sins of omission if we're just motivated by love for self.

There's just not an obvious connection between the sin and the hurt. There are other sins like this as well, some sins of commission, some sins that we actively do. These would be private sins, secret sins, sins of the heart, sins of the mind.

These are very common, of course. And it's really hard to hate those sins out of a love for self. Because, again, you're not really seeing immediate consequences to these sins.

In my opinion, the average Christian often never grows in holiness or hatred for sins that don't hurt them. And a great number of the sins that they continue to walk with are the sins that don't show any sort of obvious, immediate pain.

So I would say that hatred for sins due to the love for self is an insufficient love to really get us to hate sin in all of its forms.

[11 : 15] Secondly, slightly more superior would simply be something I talked about in the previous podcast, which would just be to learn to hate your sin because it hurts the people you love. This would be hatred for sin as an expression of love for others.

This connection will help you more than the other. For this reason, I say it's better. It's better than good, but it's still not best. Because a lot of the times, even sins that we commit against others don't seem to yield enough hurt to sort of move the needle.

You can really fall into a climate in your home where harsh words are spoken and everyone just adjusts to that environment.

And everybody toughens up and there's no obvious blood on the field. You really are hurting people with your harsh words, but it's not obvious. And so you may know that harsh words are sinful often, and you may understand that that's true.

But how do you hate that sin when it doesn't really hurt you and it doesn't really hurt the people that you love in any way that's just obvious and alarming? Again, this particular love, love for others, is not always sufficient for all the sins that we need to hate.

[12 : 40] Now, it does include a greater circle, though. I think a lot of the sins of omission that we struggle with, we eventually get over just because we don't want to let people down.

We don't want to hurt them. We don't, you know, and so on and so forth. Over the years, you know, every week I, well, you know, I spend about two weeks thinking about a sermon and the final week I spend writing it.

And so it's really, you know, I'm spending a lot of plates all the time to sort of deliver this 40 minutes of Bible encouragement, Bible light every week.

And one of the things that, you know, I learned relatively early in life was if I don't do, like I can potentially, what's the word? I can potentially procrastinate throughout the week and then be caught in what they call the Saturday night special where you're stuck at your computer and you're trying to, you know, develop some kind of content.

But at some point when I was young, I realized, man, that's what a terrible thing I would be doing to people if I didn't put real work into this. And so I've found, you know, sort of a way to hate procrastination out of my love for people.

[13 : 57] I want to make sure that I deliver something to them that is worked on and thought about and prayed over and so on and so forth. So some of your sins of omission will find proper framing just by your love for others.

A lot of those have to do with just keeping up with the duties in life and so on and so forth. You can learn to hate procrastination just from your love of others.

So long as there's some kind of immediate deadline or consequence that's close enough. You know, I confused my dog this morning. We have this whole routine where he goes outside, goes to the bathroom, and then he comes in and gets a treat.

And the treat is really to condition him to just get the bathroom stuff done as quickly as possible and then to come back in the house as quickly as possible. That's what that treat is for.

And so he came in, ran, and got into the kitchen. And he was kind of up in my business as I was getting the treats. And I said, hey, sit. And, you know, he sat, but then he stood and sat and stood.

[15 : 05] And he's just confused. He's a good sitter normally. He's, I was interrupting one reward circuit with another command. You know, we are people that are easily conditioned by such things.

And so I say that your love for others can help you to hate, for instance, the sin of, the omission sin of procrastination. Only if you've got something like I've got, where if I get up on a Sunday and I haven't done the work, you know, the deadline is seven days, right?

The deadline's always seven days. And so I can see clearly how, you know, if I don't do a good job, the payoff, the consequences of that, it's just seven days away.

People are going to have to patiently sit through something that isn't as well structured as they deserve for it to be, isn't as well thought out, isn't as prayed over and as rooted in the word and so on and so forth.

And so for me, you know, seven days is okay, like I can overcome that particular sin tendency just by seeing like, yeah, if I don't get this done, people are going to be hurt by it.

[16 : 13] So, you know, that's one area where a love for others has helped me hate a particular sin. But that doesn't, that still doesn't help us with these very private sins that, you know, maybe nobody knows about.

These are much more difficult because in some respects, your love for others can even keep you from handling those sins. Like it can be a catch-22 where you need to confess something while simultaneously realizing that the confession itself would be quite hurtful.

So the point is, is that in these secret sins, love for self and love for others is an insufficient motivation.

So there is one love, though, that you can develop that will help you to hate your sin, and that is just the love of God. And at some point in the Christian life, most of the sins that have brought kind of immediate consequences and immediate pain both to us and to our loved ones, at some point we handle those.

But there's still these private things that are still, are very much just in us and maybe don't even get expressed very often in the world, and if so, very secretly.

[17 : 27] It's hard to hate those sins because you love yourself or love others. There has to be, there has to be a third motivation, and that motivation is the love of God.

That's made explicit in a number of these verses. For instance, in Psalm 97:10, you who love the Lord hate evil. Now, as you know, I'm all about efficiency.

I'm always looking for that 80-20 kind of practice where we can put 80% of the effort in and get 80% of the results. And I think that when it comes to dealing with sins, we just need to learn to love God.

This is a huge thing. It's not the only solution, but it is the solution that covers all the bases at some level or another. How do we learn to love God?

Well, let me just give you one point today, and that would be to learn to love God by meditating on the cross of Jesus Christ. And what I'm talking about here is a frequent, regular, mental visitation to the scene of the cross and to see the one who did not deserve to suffer suffering for you, the one who did deserve to suffer, and to see God's wrath against your sin poured out on Christ, to see the misery of the cross, to understand how unfair, unjust, and cruel it was.

[18 : 57] To make frequent visits to the cross is to see both God's love for you and his hatred of sin. So this is really where we want to go time and time again as we're trying to handle some of the sins that have seemed resistant to other loves, love for self or love for others, will not be resistant ultimately to the love for God that is developed when you look at the cross.

Charles Spurgeon put it this way, Look to the cross and hate your sin, for sin nailed your well-beloved to the tree. Look up at the cross and you will kill sin, for the strength of Jesus' love will make you strong to put down your tendencies to sin.

Let me read that one more time. I know you're maybe doing things right now, but let me grab your attention, just hold still for a second if you can. Look to the cross, Spurgeon says, and hate your sin, for sin nailed your well-beloved to the tree.

Look up to the cross and you will kill sin, for the strength of Jesus' love will make you strong to put down your tendencies to sin. In his hymn, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, Isaac Watts says, When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, and poor contempt on all my pride.

When you look at the cross, you see the love of God, and you also see just the absolute disgusting nature of your sins, which could not be satisfied in any other way but in Jesus dying for them.

[20 : 45] So if you look to the cross, you'll learn to love God. 1 John 4.10 says, In this is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

It is this love. In this is love. Sorry, guys. In this is love. Not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sins.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love.

Not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. So what we're saying in this brief podcast is that you've got to learn to hate your sin.

The way you learn to hate a sin is to attach it and see its connection to something you love. The Bible offers three potential loves. The first is a love for self-preservation.

[21 : 53] The second is a love for others. And the third is a love for God. You need all three, but ultimately there will be some sins that are resistant to killing and resistant to hating until your love of God increases sufficiently.

You really do have to just fall in love with God and stay in love with God. And friends, this is not an easy thing. I think that we have made the love of God, loving God rather, seem to be some sort of obvious and natural expression.

But the truth is, is you really just need to, throughout your day, do multiple things to increase and stoke your love for God. You need to look around the world and see the beauty and feel gratitude.

You need to thank God for the many blessings he's given you and count his benefits. You need to, you know, get a playlist going of music that you find stirring and edifying and pointing back to God and his worthiness of your love.

You need to spend time just praying throughout the day, just conversationally talking to God, both about what you're hearing in these songs and you want to make melody in your heart, as it says in Ephesians.

[23 : 05] You really just want to focus on using as much of the day as you can to keep your love for God growing warm, staying warm, not growing cold.

And I think that as you do that, as you, especially as you meditate on the cross, you will find a love for God and that love for God will actually create hatred for sin.

All right, well, that's all I've got for you, and I don't expect to do any more podcasts about repentance for a while. So I pray that this one was useful. The previous podcast was useful, and the sermon last Sunday on false repentance was useful.

And friends, let's just make sure, let's just assume, I certainly didn't plan to do this much on repentance. So let's just take this as sort of a word from the Lord or evidence from the Lord that this is something we want to learn and grow in together.

And let's just, you know, walk in the light while there is light. All right, well, blessings, my friend. I can't wait to see you on Sunday and worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ together one more Sunday.

[24 : 18] Be well.