

TRUTH FOR TODAY

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HATRED, VARIANCE, AND EMULATIONS #2

We're currently concentrating our thoughts on three "works of the flesh" - hatred, variance, and emulations - mentioned by the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:20. As we do so, let's make sure these haven't taken root in our hearts, and, if so, let's do our utmost to eradicate them and be clean from the inside out!

Our objectives will be as follows: to define each term, to demonstrate how Bible characters were guilty of participating in these specific sins and the consequences that were forthcoming, and to make practical application as to how Satan is still enticing us to pursue these works of the flesh in our modern circumstances.

We begin with:

A DEFINITION OF TERMS

HATRED

Hatred is derived from the adjective from which we get the word "enemy," and is the exact opposite of love¹ - everything love is, hatred is not! Robertson prefers the rendering "personal animosities,"² while other sources translate this term "enmities" (ASV) and "hatred" (NKJV).

Of course, all hatred is not wrong; there is, after all, "*a time to hate*" (*Ecclesiastes 3:8*). God Himself is said to hate certain things, such as abominations (*Proverbs 6:16-19*), divorce (*Malachi 2:16*), wickedness (*Psalms 45:7*), and iniquity (*Hebrews 1:9*). David, a man "*after God's own heart*" (*Acts 13:22*), hated every false way (*Psalms 119:104,128*), lying (*Psalms 119:163*), and vain thoughts (*Psalms 119:113*). Those who love and fear the Lord are commanded to hate evil (*Psalms 97:10; Proverbs 8:13*). John warns against our "*loving the*

world” (1 John 2:15) and gives valid reasons for such in that context.

Our aversion should always be to sin, but never to the sinner. Herein lies the difficulty for many - failing to distinguish between the two. When C. S. Lewis was asked how it was possible to hate what a man did without hating the man, he replied, “*It occurred to me that there was one man for whom I had been doing this all of my life - myself.*”³ One is said to be in darkness for hating his brother (1 John 2:9), and hating a brother is tantamount to murdering him (1 John 3:15)! Indeed, hatred is an internal vice that often leads to external atrocities, and one cannot be said to be led by the Spirit while allowing this work of the flesh to rule his life.

VARIANCE

“*Variance*” is rendered “*strife*” (ASV) and “*contentions*” (NKJV); it involves wrangling, quarreling, fighting and discord. The same word in the original language is translated “*debate*” (Romans 1:28; 2 Corinthians 12:30), “*strife*” (Romans 13:13), and “*contentions*” (1 Corinthians 11:11).

Variance is the outward result of an inward hate; in fact, hatred is said to fuel strife (Proverbs 10:12). Carnality among the Corinthians caused “*strife and divisions*” (1 Corinthians 3:3), false teaching likewise leads to such (1 Timothy 6:4), and Timothy was to avoid “*foolish and unlearned questions*” since they too “*gender strife*” (2 Timothy 2:23).

The last thing God’s person wants to do is to stir up trouble - there are enough problems in the world as it is! We should strive to make every effort to get along with others, to pursue peace, to “bend over backwards” if necessary to have harmony, and to let others have their way if necessary on optional matters to promote unity.

EMULATIONS

The word “*emulations*” (KJV) is somewhat of an archaic term; it is translated in more modern language by the word “*jealousies*” (ASV, NKJV) and “*jealousy*” (NASV). The term is also translated “*zeal*” (*Galatians 4:17-18; Revelation 3:19*). A term closely related to jealousy is envy, another work of the flesh. Jealousy:

....denotes some kind of passionate desire. Whether it was of good or evil tendency depended on the nature of its object and the spirit in which it was pursued: for the same term was used to designate zeal for God or for some noble object, personal passion, or an exclusive spirit of selfish jealousy.”⁴

Thus, like hatred, jealousy isn’t always evil within itself. In fact, God is said to be a jealous God (*Exodus 20:5*). Paul even refers to the kind of jealousy he had for the Corinthians as “*godly jealousy*” (*2 Corinthians 11:2*). It is the motive behind the jealousy that makes it right or wrong. When the motive is wrong, jealousy is sin, and a work of the flesh at that.

A DEMONSTRATION OF TERMS

Now, let’s see how all three of these sins together influenced the following Bible character and the disastrous consequences that were forthcoming as a result:

CAIN

One doesn’t have to look far down the annals of history before finding one beset with these three works of the flesh. Cain, firstborn son of Adam and Eve, had some very real problems with hatred, strife, and jealousy – so much so that he bears the stigma of being the world’s first murderer. His tragic story unfolds in Genesis chapter four.

THE BACKGROUND (*Genesis 4:1 - 5*).

“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten

a man from the Lord” (Genesis 4:1). The first family began, as most all do, with the joyful birth of their firstborn, Cain. Eve named him such because “*Cain*” sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “*gotten*.”⁵

Soon, another son was born: “*And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground” (Genesis 4:2).* “*Abel*” is related to a Hebrew word which literally means “*vapor, breath.*” One commentary asserts the name may have “*indicated generally a feeling of sorrow on account of his weakness, or was a prophetic presentiment of his untimely death.*”⁶ In any event, two sons are born; two brothers grow up in the family, with Cain being a farmer, and Abel a shepherd.

Little else is known about the early life of Cain and Abel, but time passed, and the two brothers mature to the point where they made a sacrifice to the Lord:

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Genesis 4:3 - 5a).

Cain’s offering was “*of the fruit of the ground,*” while Abel’s was “*of the firstlings of his flock.*” Cain’s sacrifice was rejected but Abel’s was accepted. Why? Since Abel brought his offering “*by faith*” and since it was a “*more excellent sacrifice*” than Cain’s (*Hebrews 11:4*), and since “*faith comes by hearing the word of God*” (*Romans 10:17*), one can only conclude that either God directly or indirectly (through parents Adam and Eve) instructed Cain and Abel what type sacrifice to bring.

A theme throughout Scripture is that one must approach God with an atoning blood

sacrifice, such by His design: “*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission*” (Hebrews 9:22). There was no blood to be found in Cain’s fruit, of whatever sort it was, but there was blood in Abel’s sacrifice of sheep. In comparing the two brothers (and perhaps even the two sacrifices), John, in his first epistle stated that Cain’s “*deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous*” (1 John 3:11 - 12).

[continued next month]

ENDNOTES

1. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, pp. 31-32.
2. Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament Vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1931), p. 312.
3. As quoted by Wendell Winkler, Heart Diseases and Their Cure (Hurst, TX: Winkler Publications, 1972), p. 78.
4. W. Robertson Nichol, ed., The Expositor’s Greek Testament Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 179.
5. H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1942), p. 189.
6. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. 1 (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 109.

AREA-WIDE YOUTH MEETING

September 8, 2019

Speaker: Jameson Steward

5:00 p.m.

VERONA CHURCH OF CHRIST

GOSPEL MEETING

June 26 - 28, 2020

Speaker: Jameson Steward

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