

UPON THE ROCK

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SEVEN THINGS GOD HATES

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Upon the Rock is published bimonthly for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material concerning first-principles and evangelism. We strive to print articles that are informative for Christians and non-Christians.

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A PROUD LOOK

By A.J. Cox

In Proverbs 6:16-19 it is revealed that there are seven things that the LORD hates, and which are an abomination to Him. This, of course, does not mean that these are the only sins hated by God, for God hates all sin. If God's precepts may lead one to "hate every false way," then surely the Lord hates every false way (Psalm 119:104, 128). The special attention given to these seven sins, however, does seem to indicate that these transgressions are particularly detestable to God.

The first in the list of seven things hated by the Lord is "a proud look," or, "haughty, exalted eyes" (Proverbs 6:17). The proud look, or conceited countenance, is a manifestation of that attitude in the heart that overvalues self and undervalues all else. All evil conduct results from evil attitudes in the heart, of which pride is one (Mark 7:18-23).

That God infinitely abhors a prideful, conceited attitude is clear from many statements found throughout the Bible. It is said of God that His eyes are upon the haughty to bring them down (2 Samuel 22:28). Job asked, "Shall any teach God knowledge seeing He judgeth those that are high? (Job 21:22). The LORD will cut off the tongue that speaks proud things (Psalm 12:3). While God will save the afflicted, He will bring down high looks (Psalm 18:27). God will not suffer him who has a high look and a proud heart (Psalm 10 1:5). The LORD will destroy the house of the proud (Proverbs 15:25). Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD, and will not go unpunished (Proverbs 16:5). God promised to punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks (Isaiah 10:5-16). God declared "I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (Isaiah 13:11). Because the king of Babylon said in his heart "I will ascend into heaven... I will be like the most High," God issued the assurance that he would be brought down to hell (Isaiah 14:12-15). After Nebuchadnezzar was humbled he praised, extolled, and honored the King of heaven and declared that God was able to abase those that walk in pride (Daniel 4:28-37). When Edom was deceived by the pride of his heart and

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Hear - (Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27).

Believe - (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16).

Repent - (Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3).

Confess - (Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36).

Be baptized - (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27).

Live faithfully unto death - (Rev. 2:10).

said, "Who shall bring me down to the ground?" God responded, "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD" (Obadiah 3-4).

While the foregoing paragraph is by no means a complete compilation of all that the Bible has to say concerning pride, it is sufficient to illustrate the degree to which the Lord hates pride. The question, then, is "Why does God regard a proud look with such disdain?" The following are just a few of the reasons.

1. Pride is at the root of all rebellion against God. For this reason, it well deserves first mention among the seven sins hated by God. Consider that pride was the devil's sin and, therefore, it is assumed the first sin. Paul indicated that a novice was not to be ordained an elder "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6). In other words, if one newly converted were to be ordained a bishop there would be a high probability that he would fall prey to the same temptation which resulted in the condemnation of the devil, namely pride. While Ezekiel 28:1-19 contains primarily the lamentation upon the king of Tyre, when reading, one wonders if he is not being afforded a glimpse into the circumstances surrounding the initial fall of Satan. "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth... thou wast upon the holy mountain of God... Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee... therefore I will destroy thee O covering chereub... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty...I will cast thee to the ground" (Ezekiel 28:13-17). Concerning the devil Robert Milligan stated, "But in an evil hour his eye was turned from his creator to himself as the highest, the most gifted, and the most influential of all creatures of God. His heart swelled with pride; ambition took possession of his soul; and, rebellion was then seen in heaven." Indeed, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall," and pride went before the devil's fall (Proverbs 16:18). Before the tempter was the tempter, he himself was tempted by pride. All sin, therefore, can ultimately be traced back to pride as its root.

2. Pride is one of the devil's most potent weapons. From the beginning, when in Eden the devil first appealed to man's vanity, the

pride of life has been one of the avenues through which Satan has enticed man to sin (Genesis 3:5-6; 1 John 2:16). The devil tempted Jesus with the pride of life when he tempted Him in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). God warned Israel, before they came into that land which flowed with milk and honey, that if their heart was lifted up they would forget God and they would perish (Deuteronomy 8:11-20). Sadly, this befell God's people. Pride will similarly cause people today to forget God, and will hinder people from seeking after God (Psalm 10:4). Everyone is susceptible to this enticement. The apostle Paul admitted that he was vulnerable to it when he said, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Corinthians 12:7). This answers the question, at least in part, "why are men allowed to suffer?" Sufferings, and affliction, help us to maintain a humble and poor spirit. The rich are particularly susceptible to this attack and should ever be mindful of the pitfalls of great wealth (1 Timothy 6:17).

3. Pride divides brethren, and undermines the unity of the church. As the proverbs say, "by pride cometh contention....He that is of a proud head stirs up strife" (Proverbs 13:10; 28:25). Most disagreements between brethren are attributed to the fact that someone thinks too much of himself, and too little of others. Pride was at the root of the quibbles that the disciples were having relative to who would be the greatest in the kingdom (Matthew 18:1; 20:20-27; Mark 9:33-34; 10:35-45; Luke 9:46). Paul revealed a key step in maintaining unity and resolving conflict in Philippians 2:2-4. "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Of course Christ is the perfect example of one who esteemed others better than Himself (Philippians 2:5-8). In His teachings, and in His life, He revealed that the key to greatness was humble service to others (Matthew 18:2-4; 20:26-28; Mark 9:35-37; 10:43-45; Luke 9:47-48; John 13:5-14).

God hates pride, and for good reason! Let it be remembered that a high look and a proud heart is sin (Proverbs 21:4). Ultimately a man's pride will bring him low (Proverbs 29:23). If a person desires to be

Don't Be the One Responsible for Breaking Unity

The "Discord Sower" can be found nearly everywhere. You can find him in the office or factory where you work; he can often be found in the church you attend; nearly every family has one (maybe not your immediate family, but extended family); you can see him at a ball game; at your school, and we could go on and on. He is the guy that likes to keep things stirred up; he's never content; always has a complaint. He/she likes to pit one against another. He will listen to and spread gossip. He puts down others to make himself look better. He is the most miserable person you ever want to meet. And his soul is lost!

Sowing discord is a pattern that must be broken if we want happiness in our lives, and rest for our souls. It begins by trying to find the good in people, rather than fault-finding. It continues by looking for the good in a situation. Paul wrote: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). What makes that statement even more incredible is that he wrote it from a jail cell. We may be in a difficult, painful situation, but whatever happens to us we can still be safe in the arms of God. What else could we ever hope for?

The discord sower is driven by pride. He thinks that his needs are more important than everyone else's, including the needs of the church. I must humble myself for the sake of unity, realizing that the needs of others are just as important as mine. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10). We cannot let our pride hurt the cause of Christ. I would HATE to meet our Lord in judgment having been responsible for splitting the church for which He died.

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We have a tendency to categorize sin. By this I mean that many are ready to come down hard on some sins, while nearly overlooking others. Many will condemn some works of the flesh, such as, adultery, fornication, murder, drunkenness, etc. (Galatians 5:19-21). But the same passage mentions other fleshly works, such as, strife (acts of contention), wrath (open eruption of anger), divisions (when fellowship is split by the working of the spirit of strife), Backbiting and whispering (gossip) (Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 1:29-30). Oftentimes the later sins are seen as less destructive to our souls, and are tolerated by members of the community, members of the church, elders, parents and others. The end result, however, for those who practice the above is the same: "... as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). These "lesser talked about" sins of the flesh are components of sowing discord, and are equally hated by God. Now the question is, "Why does God hate when people sow discord?"

The Beauty of Unity

The Psalmist declared, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell *together* in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133). Unity is to be pursued and appreciated! It is compared to the anointing oil that consecrated the whole body of the High Priest, and then flowed to the whole congregation. Just like the dew of Mount Hermon that brings vigorous life to plants and crops of those who depend on it for their livelihood, even so unity brings vigorous life to God's people (Roy Deaver in *A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. 2, p. 211). Unity is a blessing both spiritually (as illustrated in the anointing oil of the High Priest), and unity is a blessing physically (as illustrated in the dew from Mount Hermon that gives life to their crops). Therefore, without unity we suffer both physically and spiritually.

truly great, let him walk in the humble steps of Jesus and be a servant.

A LYING TONGUE

Phil Grear

All of man's problems began with a lie. God had specifically told Adam and Eve "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17) The instructions were clear. "Thou shalt not eat of it." The consequences were just as clear. "Thou shalt surely die."

Satan deceived Eve by adding one little word to God's instructions. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5) God said, "Thou shalt surely die.", but Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die." He deceived Eve by adding the word "not". "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (1 Timothy 2:14) It should not surprise us to learn that Satan is a liar. Jesus said, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44).

As the father of lies, Satan certainly has many children. Lying seems to have become a way of life in our society. Advertising promises what it will not deliver. A business deal requires a contract negotiated by a host of lawyers because our word is no longer our bond. We are skeptical of any promise made by politicians. We begin with the assumption that people are trying to deceive us. We do not trust salesmen. For that matter, we find it difficult to trust anyone. Even statements made under oath are suspect. We fully expect others to

be dishonest, and too often they are. “And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.” (Jeremiah 19:5)

There are few things in this world that God is said to hate, but a lying tongue is one of them. (Proverbs 6:17) We may classify some lies as worse than others, but to God they are all falsehoods and deception. Good motives are no justification for lying. We may think it the best thing to do at the time. It may even seem right. But lying is still lying, and does not meet with the approval of God. God expects his people to be honest. “Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King, Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black, But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” (Matthew 5:33-37) We should be so well-known for our honesty that an oath is unnecessary.

Some lie to their fellowman. They do so for various motives. Perhaps they are trying to gain some benefit at the expense of others. Perhaps they are trying to avoid getting into trouble. Maybe they are trying to get someone else into trouble. Whatever the reason, they are readily stretch or distort truth. God clearly does not approve of such behavior. “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” (Colossians 3:9).

Some lie to themselves. They fool themselves into believing they are right with God when they are not. They tell themselves they are as dedicated and faithful to God as possible, but deep down they know better. They convince themselves they are giving God all they can financially, when they could do more. They tell themselves that someday they are going to become a Christian, but really have no real intention of ever doing so. They convince themselves that God approves of whatever they want to do, ignoring what He said.

God Hates Those Who Sow Discord

Mark Reynolds

“These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:16-19).

This passage appears to be a new section, but not a new subject. In fact, the closing words of this section, “he that soweth discord” connect it with the previous section because verse fourteen ends almost identically. It appears, then, that we are reading a description of a man who walks after the world rather than God: “A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth” (Proverbs 6:12).

This passage is certainly not an all-inclusive list of everything God hates. We are told that God also hates those who cheat others (Proverbs 11:1); A king committing wickedness (Proverbs 16:12); The worship of the wicked (Proverbs 15:8); The prayers of those who ignore the law of God (Proverbs 28:9). The Proverbs writer wants us to understand that there are some things which the Lord finds detestable. He also wants to make sure that we understand that one certainly cannot both please God and continue in things that are an abomination to Almighty God.

The Sin of Sowing Discord

The word for “brethren” means “friends or associates, members of the same circle” (Tim Ayers in *The Book of Proverbs*, The Seventh Annual Southwest Lectures, p. 102). Our inclination may be to think only about those who sow discord in the church. While this would certainly include the family of Christ today, it is not limited only to our brethren in Christ. This describes a man who strives to make others think less of any individual through lies and misrepresentations.

Father. God is truth and life. Because God is full of grace and truth He hates those who are false witnesses that speak lies.

The second reason God hates false witnesses that speak lies is because they have an evil heart. “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, theft, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:18-19). When God destroyed the world with the flood it was because man’s “intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Because man’s heart was evil continually God destroyed the world with the flood. Since the heart of man was evil his actions were evil and had to be punished. It is the same with a false witness. He will be punished because of his actions that came from an evil heart. Only those with a pure heart will see God. (Matthew 5:8). Satan knows that what controls your heart will control your actions. This is why Satan has waged an all out war to capture your heart.

The final view of a false witness that speaks lies is seen as Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin. The chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. However there were some willing to give false witness against Jesus. “For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him saying, we heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another made without hands. But not even then did their testimony agree.” (Mark 14:56-58). Think about these false witnesses giving false testimony against Jesus. The one that knew the hearts of all men. “But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” (John 2:24, 25). These same false witnesses will stand before God in judgment and give an account for their sins. The same is true for us today; God knows our hearts and thoughts if they are evil or pure. This is why we are warned to keep our hearts with all diligence. These false witnesses helped crucify an innocent man. We can destroy people’s lives with false testimonies and lies.

Some lie to God. Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of ground and gave part of the money to the Lord. Since they were under no obligation to sell the land or give any of the money to God, this could have been an act of generosity. But instead they chose to imply that they had donated all of the proceeds of the sale to the church. Peter rebuked them, “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? *thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*” (Acts 5:3-4, emphasis mine—PLG) Why would anyone believe they could get away with lying to God? He knows whether we are being honest or not. We cannot fool Him. He knows a lie when he hears it.

Many say that lying is not that serious of a problem, especially what they consider “a little white lie”. Some even argue that such is good and helpful on occasion. But God views this matter differently. A lying tongue is one of the seven things God says he hates. He actually puts it in the same list as “hands that shed innocent blood”. (Proverbs 6:16-17) Many have been destroyed by the lies of another. This is not an innocent sin that can be easily overlooked or justified.

Notice the beginning and the end of lying. It begins with Satan who is the father of lies. (John 8:44) The liar is in league with his father, the Devil, and will end up in eternity with that awful being. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all liars*, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8, emphasis mine, PLG) Liars are found in the same list as murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers and idolaters, and can expect so spend eternity with them. Lying begins and ends with Satan.

We must respect one another enough to tell only the truth. “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” (Ephesians 4:25) Remember, God hates a lying tongue.

Hands That Shed Innocent Blood

Brandon Britton

When you think of God one of the first words that comes to mind is the word love. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). It is logical to associate God with love, but what about hate? Hate is a strong word and one we seldom use in association with God. For that very reason we should “take notice” whenever God says He hates something. In Proverbs 6 Solomon lists seven things that the Lord hates and one of them is hands that shed innocent blood. Understanding this should cause me to make certain I am on the “right side” of such an issue, because I certainly would not want to side with something God says He hates.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20). Although written to Israel nearly three thousand years ago, the warning of Isaiah is timely and applicable to the United States today. It is both tragic and true that we witness injustices on a daily basis. Too often these injustices are handed down from our highest courts and elected officials. When I learned that a federal court declared the words “under God” to be unconstitutional (and therefore un-American), I was reminded of Isaiah’s words. When I learned that the guilty verdict and death sentence of a convicted murderer was appealed and overturned because the jury contemplated what the Bible had to say about crime and punishment, I was reminded of Isaiah’s warning. Every time I see or hear something that reminds me it is legal in this country to execute the unborn, and that it has been done nearly fifty million times since 1973, I cannot help but believe we have become the very thing Isaiah spoke about. How can a person possibly endorse the killing of the unborn? I wish it was that simple. In actuality the 11/29/2005 question is how can one hundred fifty million people support the killing of the unborn, because statistics show that roughly half of all

this saying is false. Words can be destructive both to yourself and others. “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19). I recall a girl in elementary school that was over weight and had a skin problem. The other children made fun of her and said many hurtful things. She was not chosen for many activities because of her looks. It got so bad that her parents removed her from school and placed her in a private school. This is just one example of how the tongue can be used to harm someone. Think of the lives that have been affected by a lie or someone bearing false witness.

In this article we will discuss one of the seven things that God hates, “A false witness that speaks lies” (Proverbs 6:19). We will look at the reasons why God hates a false witness. This sin is different from a “lying tongue” in the respect that this liar is a witness of something that has taken place between two or more people or situations. The very thought conveys that of a courtroom setting. One, the witness is thought to be reliable, trustworthy, and honest-but is not. These false witnesses are held in high regard. When a question is set forth expecting honesty, but lies are gained instead, those hearing will base the impressions of the accused on the testimony of a false witness. The outcome is devastating to the accused as well as the accuser. This is a sin which God hates and will not allow it to go unpunished even though false witnesses think they can hide behind their lies. “A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies will not escape” (Proverbs 19:5).

The first reason that God hates false witnesses that testifies lies is because it is against His character to lie. “Thus God determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed with an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:16,17). God’s nature is truth and those who will be followers of God must be people of truth. When God sent His Son to this earth it was to reveal God to a lost and dying world. A person that would see Christ would see the Father. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Christ was full of grace and truth because His Father is full of grace and truth. Christ is the truth and the life and the way to the

I am a sinner, penitent yes, but no less a sinner. He lovingly wipes the drool off my chin and tells me how much He loves me! He loves the unlovable and brings hope to an otherwise hopeless frame!

How dare we with pompous platitudes toot our own spiritual horns as we berate our brethren who stumble under the load of sins which they are attempting to bear! We have not walked in their shoes and in many cases don't even know or care if they have shoes! Not an article should go to press regarding a wayward brother, not a word of rebuke should be offered, and not a reprimand to a reprobate should be issued until we have painfully looked at our own lives and honestly assessed our own weaknesses. Not until we have walked in their shoes and placed ourselves under their burdens are we in a position to censure another.

Talk is cheap, but real spiritual help cost the blood of the sinless Lamb of God! If talk would suffice, I suppose all of us would be saviors; but, talk is just that — talk! Our hearts must break when a brother errs, not jump for joy because his fall displays our own soundness! God hates feet that are swift in running to evil. The feet that He adores are the feet which run to help those in spiritual trouble. The real difference isn't in the feet; it is in the heart! Our mandate as Christians is to "...rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Romans 12.15). It really is that simple!

A FALSE WITNESS WHO SPEAKS LIES

Proverbs 6:16-19

Larry Reynolds

The book of Proverbs says much about the power of the tongue. One example is found in Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." When we meditate on this verse we can think of many instances that occur in life that tell us how true this verse is. Our words can be a fire, a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison and set on fire by hell. Lives can be changed by the use of words. When I was a boy growing up we had a saying that went like this, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me". I have grown to know that

American citizens support the legalization of abortion. The most perplexing aspect of this to me is that so many of those who support abortion, oppose capital punishment. It is beyond my understanding how people can demand that murdering an unborn child be legal and out of the same mouth argue that executing convicted murderers should be outlawed. Though I don't understand this "logic" many powerful and popular groups espouse this view.

Groups like the National Organization of Women (NOW) and the ACLU support the continued legalization of abortion on demand and oppose the death penalty for convicted murderers. Linda Miklowitz, president of the Florida chapter of NOW was quoted as saying, "We believe that life begins at birth, and we're very pro-life from that point. While NOW doesn't have a formal stand on the death penalty, as it is not one of our main issues, we deplore unnecessary loss of life of persons who are already born in unnecessary wars and unnecessary executions." Did you notice that she stated they believe life begins at birth? If you have ever seen an ultrasound or felt a baby kicking inside the belly of its mother you would either have to be a complete idiot or a liar to argue that what is inside is not alive. No wonder Jeremiah lamented, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Truly we are calling evil good. The Bible teaches that an unborn child is very much a child. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee" (Jeremiah 1:5). "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb" (Luke 1:41). Although this is describing an unborn child in the womb, the word used here is "brephos." It is also used in Luke 2:12,16 to describe the Christ child wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. Both before and after birth the Lord refers to it as a child. Regardless of what activists, politicians or even doctors may say, the Lord has said it is a life and He hates the hands that would shed the blood of that innocent life.

The overwhelming majority of those who will read this will not be doctors and even the small percentage who are, very few, if any, of them will have ever performed an abortion. So why talk about those who shed innocent blood? The answer is simple I do not have to actually perform an abortion to have my hands stained with the blood of the innocent. If I support abortion, or support those who do endorse the continued legalization of abortion the blood is on my

hands. Just like Pilate, who thought washing his hands cleansed him from all guilt in the crucifixion of Jesus, those who turn a blind eye to this genocide are stained. So many of the elected officials in this land proudly and boldly declare that they would not appoint or support a judicial nominee for the Supreme Court if he opposed abortion. I can try and justify it, soothe my troubled conscience or just ignore it altogether, but the truth remains that if I vote for those who make such proclamations or hold to such opinions, I too am guilty of shedding innocent blood. When my vote empowers such men to legalize these atrocities my hands drip with innocent blood.

Perhaps the most pathetic and humorous (if it were not so serious) aspect of it all is the games people often play when trying to defend their support of abortion. Many people, and most politicians, claim to personally and morally oppose abortion, but legally support *Roe v. Wade* (the Supreme Court case that legalized abortion on demand). This has to be one of the most ridiculous and hypocritical statements I have ever heard. Can you imagine Paul or Peter saying, “Personally I am opposed to human sacrifices to idol gods, but I support every parents right to burn their children alive as an offering to Molech”?

Try as one might to justify this barbaric practice, the truth still remains that God hates hands that shed innocent blood. This does not just apply to the one holding the scalpel, vacuum hose or saline injection needle, but also to the politicians and judges who give him the legal power to do so, and to the citizens of the United States who vote them into office giving them the power to do so. Friends when I can open a newspaper and read where people are protesting the execution of convicted murderers and “protecting” a woman’s “right to choose” (abortion), we have got it all backwards. God help us to stop calling evil good and good evil before it is too late.

A HEART THAT DEVISES WICKED PLANS

Patrick Morrison

God has always been concerned with the tenor of man’s heart. While we as humans are often enamored with the outward man—its looks, condition, adornments, etc.—to determine the worth of an individual, God has always looked to the inward man to see the true value of His creation. In the long ago, God told Samuel concerning the selection of

The counterpart of feet which God hates, are feet that are beautiful (see Romans 10:15); these are feet which proclaim the good news to those who are hurting and without means to rescue themselves. Jesus blazed this trail when He announced what should have been obvious, namely, “...the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10). He openly proclaimed “... Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” (Luke 5:31). It was this penchant for going to the spiritually sick and dying that often put Him in bad stead with the religious leaders of His day (see Matthew 9:1-13). It was during one such confrontation that He said, “For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Matthew 9:13).

Now for a personal parable. One Sunday afternoon many years ago I went with a group of believers to visit with a bedfast Christian lady. She had an advanced case of crippling arthritis; it had left her body twisted and contorted. She could move with great difficulty only a few of her fingers and even this was with a herky-jerky movement. Yet, the lady longed to worship with fellow-believers each Lord’s Day. Not being able to go where the saints met, the saints went to her. There we engaged in worship for our own benefit as well as for hers. When the Lord’s Supper was served, she could not even move her arms enough to get the bread to her mouth, so someone helped her with that task. Likewise, it was an impossible chore for her to lift the cup to her lips without the assistance of another person. As she communed, I could not help but notice that she could not contain the bread or the fruit of the vine within her mouth. She drooled horribly and bread and juice ran repulsively down her chin; I couldn’t watch. Mercifully for me and for others of like minds, someone wiped the errant emblems from her face and I could look at her once again as I worshipped.

Now the point of the parable. As I reflected on this real life event, I thought how God must see me when I meet around His table each Lord’s Day. I usually dress acceptably and my limbs and digits function well. Yet, He sees the part of me that others cannot see; He sees my heart. He sees the crippling effects of sin and how it has left my heart and life scarred and disfigured. He knows how I struggle each day with sin and my own burden to overcome it. He sees my hands tremble and my knees buckle as courage fails me. He sees in me what I saw in the crippled woman. Try as I might I cannot contain;

It is our Lord's love for righteousness and hatred for wickedness that allows Him to serve as our great High Priest and Elder Brother (see Psalm 45:6 and Hebrews 1:8). In fact He teaches that those who love Him ought to hate evil (Psalm 97:10). David followed this admonition in as much as he hated those who hated the Lord, and this he says was with a "perfect hatred." (Psalm 139:21-22). So let's dispense with the false notion that love excludes hate; such is just not true; some hate is of the devil and other hate is of God! We now turn our attention to the title text.

"The LORD hates... feet that are swift in running to evil..." Proverbs 6:16-19. Notice what the text does not say; it does not say that God hates feet that are swift in running to do evil; it just says running to evil! Some people delight in good; others delight in evil. In this verse, the wise man contemplates those who delight in evil because it gives them a leg up. These are spiritual ambulance chasers who can't wait to capitalize on the misfortune of others. These are spiritual buzzards who circle over the wounded until they are so weak that they cannot defend themselves. These are bullies who prey on weak and spiritually disadvantaged brethren. These are yellow dog journalists who never want for writing material due to the fact that their focus is entirely negative. These are men and women who cannot be honest with themselves due to the corruption that they would see in their own lives; they focus on others because they cannot stand to look at themselves!

The spiritual opposite of feet that are swift in running to evil are feet that rush alongside a brother to help him bear his burden, thus fulfilling "the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Christ was the great sin-bearer; He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter 2:24). The delight of those who fulfill His law is not in **baring** the burdens of others, but in **bearing** the burdens of others. The feet of faithful brethren that rush alongside the spiritually distressed do so in order to prevent their demise, not to hasten it. They are not there to say, "I told you so!" or, "I knew this was going to happen!" Rather, the feet that God adores are feet that rush alongside the spiritually distressed with the sole intent of rendering aid and assistance. These are spiritual Good Samaritans who are not afraid of getting their hands dirty or jeopardizing their own reputations on behalf of another.

a new king whom He would choose to rule over His people, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Those who profess godliness must learn to look upon the heart as does the Almighty, seeing its importance in making us who we really are. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broided hair; or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9-10). Again, we are reminded, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3-4). Man is often fooled by the outward appearance, "Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD pondereth the hearts" (Proverbs 21:2). We can rest assured that God sees beyond the outward facade into the heart of man, "I the LORD search the heart..." (Jeremiah 17:10).

God's concern with the heart of man is a very legitimate and important one. Our Creator understands full well that whatever man puts into his heart will eventually come out in his words and actions. The wise writer of the Proverbs directed, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Later in the same book we are told, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Jesus also instructed us along these lines, when he said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man" (Matthew 15:18-20a). Again, he said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45). It cannot be overemphasized that we must ever be diligent in guarding what goes into our heart (mind). The heart controls our actions and our words.

Why, then, does God hate and count as abomination the heart that would devise wicked plans? Quite simply, because He knows that the

heart that is constantly focused on thinking evil will eventually engage in that evil. We live in a world where the hearts of man are waxing worse and worse (2 Timothy 2:13). The minds of so many have been blinded by the god of this world [Satan] (2 Corinthians 4:4). God despises the heart that would fixate upon evil continually, that would scheme to do evil at every opportunity. But such is the case with the hearts of far too many. Myriads seem to be of the same mindset of those of Noah's day, *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Genesis 6:8). Some have become so enamored with the fleeting pleasure of sin (Hebrews 11:25) that they lie awake at night in order to concoct more evil plans to be accomplished on the morrow: *"He deviseth mischief upon his bed"* (Psalm 36:4). *"Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually, he soweth discord"* (Proverbs 6:14). Such black and calloused hearts can be found far too readily in this ungodly world. Satan has, through his deception, enticed the masses to buy into his philosophy of *"eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"* (1 Corinthians 15:32). The hearts of men and women the world over are searching and searching for more opportunities, more ways to fulfill their own selfish desires. Have so many given themselves over to evil continually? Paul warned the first century Christians in Ephesus, *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"* (Ephesians 4:17-19). The temptation to live after this evil manner still exists today. We see those around us "living it up," seemingly enjoying life with no consequences for their ungodly deeds. But these who are supposedly "living it up" are really *"dead while they live"* (1 Timothy 5:6). The Proverbs writer warns, *"Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief"* (Proverbs 24:1-2). Even the great and godly man David wondered why those who are bent on evil are so prosperous, while the righteous are made to suffer. Listen to his words: *"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men... Their eyes stand out with fatness:*

they have more than heart could wish... Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" (Psalm 73:3-5, 7, 12). Hopefully, we like David, will come to the same understanding concerning the fate of those whose hearts are so desperately wicked, *"Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood their end"* (Psalm 73:17).

God stands utterly opposed to those whose hearts are so wicked as to think only of evil continually. Those who fail to repent of such an ungodly disposition of heart will bear the brunt of God's wrath in the last day. We can see to it that our hearts never fall victim to such an unholy attitude. Let us be those *who "trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding"* (Proverbs 3:5). Instead of minding things of this world, and finding ourselves captivated by evil, let us be those who fill our hearts and minds with good. *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"* (Philippians 4:8). May we be of the attitude of the psalmist when he said, *"O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day"* (Psalm 119:97). Those who desire the favor of God will strive to maintain a heart that is fixated upon things above (Colossians 3:1-2). Is our heart set on the momentary pleasures of sin, which in the end will bring only death (Romans 6:23), or, are our spiritual eyes firmly fixed on the land of eternal day, knowing that *"where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:21)? What, or better yet Who, is ruling your heart today?

God Hates Feet that are Swift in Running to Evil

Jim Bullington

"God is love." (1 John 4:8, 16). Love does not exclude hate because it is not the antithesis of hate (like light is the antithesis of darkness). Even though God is love, He hates many things; He hates the seven things noted in Proverbs 6:16-19; He hates pagan worship (Deuteronomy 12:31 & 16:22), all workers of iniquity (Psalm 5:5), religious injustice (Isaiah 61:8), and the doctrines and deeds of false teachers (Revelation 2:6, 16).