

## CouplesInBloom.com – Loving The Hateful

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**Why does Jesus say visiting criminals in jail ministers to Him?** God responds to the tears of the prisoner. He visited us in the prison of our sin to show us the way out. He told us to do likewise. When **our spouse** has bad behavior, do we visit their jail with the same love Jesus visited us (His former enemies) with? Or do we get frustrated with our spouse instead, criticizing them for sin with condemnation? Whether we love the prisoner classifies us as sheep or goats ⇒ Matthew 25:32-46 even when the prisoner is our spouse!

**We need to over-value our spouse**, assigning them *more* value than seems right, *because this is what Jesus died to do for us*. We are saved by His **undeserved** kindness; we had **negative value** on our own. People either HATE hearing this because it makes them accountable to unconditional love, or LOVE hearing it because it has set them free.

Living by faith calls our spouse **better** than they are by the authoritative substance of God's Word; otherwise over-valuing them would be a lie. God's Word *has* substance, the supernatural **power to create such goodness in those it is spoken into** ⇒ Proverbs 18:21. Do we worsen life by complaining, or improve it by speaking life into our spouse?

The Gospel is more than firm choices; the Bible gives practical help so prisoners do *not* have to return to prison. **Faith without works doesn't work** ⇒ James 2:17-22. **Works** means living the life God describes: studying of His Word, growing closer to His Holy Spirit, and applying truths learned to our life. Again, people either HATE hearing this because it makes them accountable, or LOVE hearing it because it has set them free.

**Such choices spiritually define us** and are what allows God's strength to help in our weakness ⇒ 2 Corinthians 12:9. Just as Jesus' pain bought our gain, so we as spouses need to live like Christians: follow Christ by loving our spouse *in the midst* of frustration.

God has experienced every offense imaginable. He never did *anything* wrong, is frequently blamed, yet retains love, kindness and patience. Does that seem frustrating? **How does God handle it? The answer is often dismissed due to its simplicity:** separate the sin from the sinner. **Loving The Hateful is** loving sinners plus hating sins.

James 1:20 ⇒ The wrath of man does not work out the righteousness of God. *Wrath* here translates: *properly desire* (as a *reaching forth* or *excitement* of the mind), that is, (by analogy) violent *passion* (*ire*, or [justifiable] *abhorrence*); by implication *punishment*: - anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath. **Passionately: love sinners, hate sin.**

Also remember to **personalize** it: Romans 2:1-4 ⇒ Therefore, O man, **you** are without excuse, everyone who judges, for in that in which you judge the other, you condemn yourself; for you, those judging, practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth on those that practice such things. And, O man, the one judging those practicing such things, and doing them, do you think that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness, and the forbearance and the long-suffering, not knowing that the kindness of God leads **you** to repentance???

Our ability to **Love The Hateful** only comes one way: being loved as a hateful one. Frustration leaves us *when* we give out the grace God gave us. ♥Loren & Kathy Falzone