



Are We Allowed to Hate? by Myrtle Brown

In Psalm 139, David (who represented Jesus) said about the enemies of God *"I hate them with a perfect hatred."* And *"I count them as my enemies."* How can we hate and yet try to be perfect? We need to remember that our whole life under God's law is a discipline.

Discipline is not popular; to the young it can seem to be full of very irksome restrictions, to some it can seem as though too much emphasis can be placed on small things. Yet it is more often these small things in life which make up the overall character. Each time we overcome a small thing, it makes the next triumph much easier.

We must hate all things opposed to God, just as Jesus hated the enemies of God with perfect hatred. He told them *"Depart from me ye wicked men."*

We too should have no company with men who deny God; we ought never to feel comfortable with them. Our lives take us among many people but we can be selective. It is possible of course to turn some enemies of God into friends, and we should try never to lose a chance, a chance word, or a good example could be just the thing.

One of the best rules in our lives is *"In everything give thanks."*

Can we at the end of each day thank God for all we have said or done? Could we for instance thank God that we have hurt someone's feelings? That we have wasted our employer's time? That we have turned out shoddy work? Deceived someone? Joined in rude talking or jokes with others? Of course we couldn't!

But if we had lived a day as if we were in the Lord's house, then we could thank God for a day in which we had gained and given much happiness. How much better to thank God for something than to constantly say *"forgive me."*

Perfect hatred is likely to involve us in some very searching self examination. We must remember first and foremost that we are *"forgiven sinners"* not righteous saints.

We have only to think of our natural tendencies that are with us all the time, idle words that are the result of indiscipline within us. They show our state of mind and when we are older we must not think that we have cleverly overcome our bad and frivolous habits, when all we have done is grown out of them. That is not overcoming.

Overcoming is what Jesus did when he resisted all temptation by the strength he had gained from always doing his father's will and praying often.

We too can gain strength through prayer, the very act of closing our eyes and speaking our inner most thoughts and asking for forgiveness is a divine arrangement for easing our hearts of the burden of sin. God arranged this long before the physiologists thought of it!

God wants us to speak to him through Jesus, but that does not relieve us of our responsibility. David wrote of God's love and care for those who trust in him, but he did not neglect to be very skilful in self defence. He did not expect God to protect him from the lion and the bear, which were ordinary hazards of his occupation as a Shepherd.

He knew it was of God that he killed Goliath, but he took his sling with him. We will never be perfect, but we can try. We must always have our weapons of the truth's warfare ready, we can only do that by reading, praying, and more reading.