**Signs of a False Religion - Hate**

A popular comedian has become famous suggesting indications that you might be a redneck. His hilarious routines are self-deprecating because he includes himself in that category. In a more serious vein, folks have all kinds of religious ideas and some of those views come with eternal consequences. We all will be held accountable by our Creator and, frankly, some teachings are in contradiction to what God has taught us.

**If your religion teaches you to hate anyone, you are in a false religion.** There are some who openly demonstrate their hatred for others in the name of their religion, but those people are not disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:43-44). “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:20-21). If your religion leads you even to sympathize with those who intentionally harm the innocent, you definitely need a new religion.

Loving another person means doing what is in their best interest. “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you” (Matthew 7:12). This doesn’t mean to hand an addict drug money. If I had a dependency problem, I would want someone to act in my best interest, not enable my self-destructive behavior. Doing what is good for others is necessarily inferred in Jesus’ admonition.

Loving another person means kindly sharing with them what we believe to be true. If you believe I am building my life on falsehood, the best way to demonstrate your care and concern would be to show me where you believe I am wrong. That, my friend, is love, not hate. The apostle Paul wrote, “Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Even though his teaching was motivated by love, there were those who took offense at being corrected. In Galatians 4:16, Paul asked, “So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?”

Paul offers the most comprehensive definition of Christ-like love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. He says that love is patient, kind, not jealous, proud, unbecoming or self-seeking. It is not provoked, does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. If your religion doesn’t teach you to foster and demonstrate this kind of love toward even your enemies, I humbly submit that you need to abandon their false teachings and adopt the love of Christ in your heart and life.

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