

Seven things the 7 Lord hates

Proverbs 6:16-19

After describing a wicked person (6:12-15), King Solomon explains: "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him". This is strong language! Definitely worth taking some moments to think about. The formula "six things... seven..." may mean that the list is specific but not exhaustive. Of course there are more than seven sins. It could be a didactic tool to help teach and remember these seven items. The mention of body parts may support this view. Or perhaps it is a way to draw attention to the final item. Since the first six sins are more obvious, there may also be some value in this proposal.

Today, and this has been particularly so since the 1960's, we strongly prefer to focus on the positive. Perhaps you would also prefer a title like "Seven things the Lord loves". But here we are presented with seven negatives. Love and hate are connected, like hot and cold, up and down, left and right. That is why a strong negative can also tell us something about what our Lord deeply values and strongly desires. So what are these seven things?

1. Pride instead of Humility: God hates "haughty eyes" (v17). Also translated "arrogant eyes" (ESV) and "a proud look" (KJ). Our current culture promotes and celebrates pride. Our God values and celebrates humility. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).

2. Lies instead of Truth: God hates "a lying tongue" (v17). That is why Salomon pleaded with the Lord, "keep falsehood and lies far from me" (Prov 30:8). The Lord would have us be genuine, be real. We are to "love the truth" (2 Thes 2:10), to rejoice "with the truth" (1 Cor 13:6) and always speak "the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). Reality and truth matter!

3. Violence instead of Loving Concern: God hates "hands that shed innocent blood" (17). God hates murder. This must include a hatred for abortion. God is the giver of life. Life is sacred. Every human being bears God's image. God loves and Christ died for every person, whoever he or she may be. In his

Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compared anger, the desire to kill, with murder itself (Matt 5:21-22).

4. Wickedness instead of Helpfulness: God hates "a heart that devises wicked schemes" (v18), also translated "a heart that devises wicked imaginations" (KJ). Our brain and creativity are given to us to



imagine solutions to problems, serve God and help others. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24).

5. Evil instead of Blessing: God hates "feet that are quick to rush into evil" (v18), that is those who "race to do wrong" (NLT). "To fear the Lord is to *hate evil*" (Prov 8:13). We are called to "*do good* to all people" (Gal 6:10), to be a blessing to others. We know little about Tabita except that she "was always doing good and helping the poor" (Acts 9:36). What an epitaph!

6. Injustice instead of Fairness: God hates "a false witness who pours out lies" (v19). When Jehoshaphat appointed judges, he told them, "Consider carefully what you do, because you are not judging for mere mortals but for the Lord, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery" (2 Chron 19:6-7). How do you speak about others?

7. Division instead of Harmony: God hates "a person who stirs up conflict in the community" (v19), or "sows discord among brothers". Unity and harmony are very important in God's eyes, be it in your marriage, family, church or social network. "Live in harmony with one another" (Rom 12:16). Satan seeks to use you and me to sow discord, to polarize, to divide. What effect do you have on those around you? Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matt 5:9), that is, peacemakers behave like their heavenly Father.

It is clear that God hates sin. We should also. Hating sin can help us avoid it and will help us repent when we sin. But it can also turn us into judgemental hypocrites. The Christian life does not consist in looking for and avoiding sins. It is good to know and obey the traffic rules. But I drive my car for pleasure or to get somewhere and not to avoid being fined. We live positively. Let's live today seeking to "please him in every way" (Col 1:10).

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