

## More love, less hate

Written by Timothy Houston  
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Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

I recently heard the quote “There is a thin line between love and hate.” But I did not agree with it. I believe that there is more than a thin line between love and hate. To me, they are polar opposites and are as far apart as east and west. Think about this, if a person was in a plane traveling east, even if they continued in that direction for years, they would still be traveling east. They would never intersect with west in this direction.

So it is with love and hate. Although both love and hate speak to the direction of a person’s heart, love is the positive direction and is the basis for a healthy relationship. Hate is a negative direction that becomes the basis for abuse. They are on opposite ends of the spectrum and will never overlap. On life’s positive continuum, they cannot intersect. When we move in the direction of love, we move away from hate. More love equals less hate.

Love is internal. It is an inward emotion that produces an outward positive response. Because of this, no one can claim that they love a person who has become the object of their abuse. Unfortunately today people set their own standards for relationship and think that if they live up to them, they have done what is required of them. Their personal standard may allow abusive behavior if the abuser believes he or she is justified. But we are held to a higher standard than this. This standard cannot and will not justify abuse.

Love is the higher standard and it will always triumph over hate. Never accept or justify any kind of abuse. Love covers a multitude of faults, and it the basis for demonstrating that we know God. Because God is love, he commands us to love one another. This is especially true for men. If a man does not love, protect, and preserve his wife, he is operating outside of God’s word. Whether physical, emotional, or verbal, abuse is not on love’s continuum.

Self-love is one of the most powerful forms of love. No one can really control another person’s action, but they can control their own. There may be times when the love of self compels a person to leave the abuser they love. (Providing anyone the space necessary to get the help they need is the highest form of self-love.) Every person has in them the power to separate themselves from harmful situations. This could one day save that person’s life.

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“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). Love is one of the most powerful forces in the world today, and it is the opposite of hate. It destroys hate, therefore, more love equals less hate. Love brings about life. Love heals. It is patient and kind. Love is a prevailing force that endures all things without fail. Those who love are of God.

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