

Hates

"If anyone says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar."

1 John 4:20

Hates—The Greek word is *miseo*. Several English words come from this root: misogynist a hater of women; misology a hater of reason; misogamy a hater of marriage. In the New Testament, this word is the opposite of *agape* (self-sacrificial love). In this verse we see the contradiction. You can't say that you love (*agape*) God and at the same time act in a way that shows you hate (*miseo*) others.

"Oh, no, I don't hate anyone", we protest. "I'm a nice person. I pray for people. I go to church. I give to charity." But before we protest too loudly, it might be instructive to see how this word is used in the New Testament.

Miseo means active ill will in words or conduct. It means persecution. It means not being a friend. It means speaking against someone gossiping about someone. And it means to refrain from offering *agape*.

"Look at that idiot! He just cut me off. What a jerk!"

"You know, those people are all like that. Their so uneducated."

"Can you imagine living that way? The government should do something about it."

"I can't stand that man. His politics are ridiculous."

"I know that they need help, but I have my own problems."

"At least we're not like them. We have morals."

"People who work in those jobs are all sinners. We couldn't allow them in our church." You see her over there. Someone told me that she had an affair with the boss. Mind you, I'm not saying it's true, or anything. But she got the promotion, didn't she?"

"I can't stand people who are prejudice. We have to punish people like that."

If you say you love God, but your words and actions exhibit *miseo*, you are a liar.

"God, help me. Let my words and deeds show what love means."