

FULLNESS OF GOD'S MIND

Marshall Stiver, February 3, 2023

Sometimes, we know in our culture here that a coin is tossed prior to a game starting, and depending on whether it lands on heads or tails will determine which team gets to go on offense first. And maybe in our own family life we've tossed a coin to see who gets to do some particular chore or job. Sometimes those things we don't want to do we toss a coin for.

Every coin has two sides. Sometimes a coin is tossed at the beginning of a football game to determine who gets the football first. Our families may flip a coin to determine who does which chore. One side of the coin is what we call "heads," and the other is called "tails." The sides are basically opposites, but they are each a part of the coin. The complete coin has a certain value attached to it, regardless.

What if we compared God to a coin? We've got two sides, on each side there is going to be an attribute of God's mind assigned to that side.

The heads side is the one that automatically grabs our attention. When we look at a coin we notice first is the head's side. What attribute of God based on what we know of him, is most striking? What's that thing that's most prominent? Probably every one of us immediately know and we would think "God is love." He sums up the words. So, the front side of this God coin would have the word "love" boldly printed across the face of the coin.

What would we, then, put on the "tail" side of the coin, which completes it? It's the other half. It's also an attribute of God, an equal one. But it's not one that we generally think of first. But we should think of it often because it's important and totally essential to making the front of the coin what it is.

First, let's reflect on what this entire God coin analogy means to each one of us. Our life's goal is to become just like our Father which means we would become just like His Son our Elder Brother Jesus Christ. We all want to become that brilliantly shining love that's on the front side of that coin! I know every one of us wants that to happen in our lives. That's a quest that we all share.

Let's refresh our minds with this other aspect of who and what God is – of what His mind is like. The complete mind in this case. What we need to realize is our God also hates! He also hates. On the one side we love. The other side we have hate. We could tend to view love and hate as unapproachable opposites. Like they can't exist

together – as far as the east if from the west. That’s true in one sense if we’re talking about the carnal side of hatred. In other words, human hatred, or satanic hatred. It’s not so with God.

Psalm 45:6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your (Christ’s.) kingdom.

7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

Carnal hatred, such as hating someone for a real or imagined offense has nothing to do with God’s mind. Nothing at all! God hates whatever destroys the front side of the coin which is love. Anything that is wicked or evil which destroys love, He hates that thing. Anything that stifles it, that blocks it, that prohibits it.

God’s hate is not the vindictive, selfish kind of hate that we’re so familiar with. If we’re honest in our own lives and in the culture that surrounds us, human beings feel it everywhere. But God’s hatred is a powerful, moral reaction to sin because He understands it. He understands it to the very core of His being.

As stated in verse 7, God hates wickedness. It’s the sin that He hates. He hates sin. The word hate in this verse is translated from the Hebrew word is sane’ (saw-nay’). It’s a primitive root; it means to hate (personally) the enemy or foe (which of course, in this circumstance is sin). God hates the enemy of sin.

An adjective associated in the definition is odious which means extremely unpleasant or repulsive. So, God personally hates sin and it is extremely repulsive to Him. Most of us don’t like the smell of skunk essence. It’s a really powerful, pungent, awful odor. It’s repulsive to most of us. That’s how sin is to God. He hates it.

Revelation 2:2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

The Church in Ephesus had some really good qualities, very noteworthy works, but it didn’t offset the fact that they had left their first love. They were ceasing (as we understand, as we think about this) they were ceasing to have the front side of the coin. It was disappearing. It was being marred and diminished. In other words, they were losing the battle for their spiritual lives. That’s essentially what it comes down to.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent.

They're on the verge of spiritual death. They're in a serious spiritual condition. This is a very stern warning to them and to any of us who read it today. Very stern. And yet there was some encouragement:

6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

The encouragement is that they hated some of the same things that Christ did, which were the deeds of the Nicolaitans. We're not certain what that was. Probably was a sensual, sexual sort of sin that was prevalent within that group. Hating that sin (whatever its exact definition would have been) was a starting point for a return to that first love, to a return to the other side of the coin.

We should point out that "hate" here is translated from the Greek word *miseo* it means to detest – to dislike intensely. Intensely dislike! We can look at these words and we don't feel the passion. We don't feel passion sometimes just looking at a word. It means to detest or dislike *intensely!* Common synonyms for detest are abhor, hate, loathe, despise. All those things mean the same thing. To hate sin is the starting point to repentance. That's the whole point of what's being delivered here by Christ. To hate sin is the starting point of repentance.

The Ephesians had lots of good works but they'd lost that first love which is 100% essential because that's who God is. And that's who we are to become. We understand how essential it is. It must be the focus of our private, and our personal lives. Each one of us who are here today, living and preparing for the return of Christ, preparing as the bride for Christ, we have to be tuned in to this.

First love demands that we live the life of an overcomer. Not deluding ourselves, not kidding ourselves that we're righteous through good works. The Ephesians had some fine things that they were doing.

To be an overcomer we must hate the sin in our personal life just like God does so that we understand it's evil and that we're motivated to conquer it through Christ in us. Of course, He gives us His Holy Spirit so that can happen. It absolutely can and does happen.

The hatred of sin very specifically in our own lives is the starting point to getting back to where we were when we were first baptized. We want to rekindle that first love. We have to hate sin as we did. Do we remember, (and I'm sure we must, I certainly hope we do) remember the zeal that we had when we were first baptized? We couldn't wait to conquer whatever was there in our lives. Anything that was wrong we wanted to get rid of it and we were ready to do battle. The hatred of sin for us at that stage of your

life, if you think back to it (I know I can remember it as well) it was exhilarating to hate what we were coming out of. To hate it! To have passionate hate for it, powerful. It's a wonderful thing and that's the mind of God working in us.

Solomon spoke of the wide range that should be a part of our minds. Various factors come into play and they're wide ranging.

Ecclesiastes 3:8 A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace.

Both extremes of love and hate will co-exist in righteousness. We're talking about the right kind of love, obviously because there's a worldly love. And we're talking about the right kind of hate because it's a godly hate. It's a fierce hate of evil.

We love God and our fellow man, but we must work hard to learn to hate what God hates in order to attain and to maintain our first love. Solomon said:

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

So, when is the time and what is the purpose for hatred? The time for the hatred of evil is whenever it's present, whether in deed or whether in thought and the purpose is to let it motivate us to take on God's loving mind. In other words, the purpose of it is to overcome in our lives.

Solomon also wrote that whatever our hand finds to do, we should do it with our might. So much of our culture is today just lackadaisical. It's passion. We should do what we do with our might! The same holds true regarding our mind since it's the place from which our thoughts are driven. So, it should be done with might!

None of us will cease to flirt with evil unless we truly hate it. You think about that and you'll know it's true because the Spirit of God works in our minds. And we can know that is absolutely true. And none of us will go after good unless we truly love it. So, we have to have both sides of the coin as we think about God, think about His mind being in us.

Part of learning to hate something is to gain an understanding of it. That's a tremendous part of learning how to hate something. Let's go to Proverbs chapter 6 and we'll look at verse 16. God reveals through Solomon here, seven specific things that He hates. We're going to consider the first three of these for this particular occasion in order to gain a better understanding of God's mind

Proverbs 6:16 These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

There's nothing passive or lackadaisical about these words. God hates and these things are an abomination to Him. That's how we should have it. Hate is the same

word *sane*' which we saw in Psalm 45. To personally hate the enemy or the foe which is sin. And abomination is something detestable which causes disgust. It means to abhor from His very heart. He hates sin with a passion because He understands it. And of course, He wants us to understand it as well.

Humanly we can get a very distorted view of God if we fail to understand that God's hatred is not passive. It's not just lackadaisical. It's powerful! He doesn't just kind of not like something. He doesn't have a Laodicean attitude. He's hot! Our God is never lukewarm.

We should note Solomon didn't write the verse this way to separate the first six sins from the seventh as though some have more importance or whatever the case may be. It's just a writing style. It was done for emphasis:

Proverbs 30:15 ... There are three things that are never satisfied, Four never say, "Enough!":

It's a style that draws the reader's attention to get it focused on something that's very important. So, there are seven things that God hates passionately.

**Proverbs 6:17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.**

All seven of these things destroy character, they destroy relationships and they destroy love. Everything that God doesn't stand for is what these things produce. Let's understand why He hates them in a little more detail. We can relate this to both sides of the coin. We can bring it together. So, let's begin now with the first. We'll just cover three of them in this study because that's all the time we have.

1. The first thing He hates is a proud look.

A proud look can be expressed nonverbally by body language. For the self-discerning, it's an easy look to recognize but it is so common that the natural man may not even recognize it in self. In other words, it's quite easy for us to see a proud look in someone else but that is not how we learn to hate evil. We see it and recognize it within ourselves. This is about looking at ourselves – self-discernment.

Proverbs 21:4 A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin.

This proverb puts both the proud look and the inner man together. And they're revealed together. The look of pride is illustrated by an attitude that overvalues self and undervalues others. It's when we're looking at others in order to determine our own self-worth or our own character. We're looking at others instead of looking at ourselves. It's

an attitude that overvalues self and undervalues others. And if the outward appearance isn't discernable, the behavior is.

In pride, we do whatever it takes to be the most notable; we can be in the presence of other people, the brightest, the funniest, to have the center of attention, whatever the circumstance might be.

God doesn't want us to be paranoid about solving something really difficult while we're in the midst of a group, or saying something that lightens the moment for those around us or for being the center of attention when it's called for. Whenever those things are needful God wants us to do them. It all comes down to whether it's done in pride or in humility. That's what it all comes down to. Is it done in love or is it done for self-glory? That's the difference.

Lucifer, without a doubt, malfunctioned due to allowing pride within himself. It corrupted his wisdom; it drove him to subtly draw a third of the angels after himself. It led to war in heaven. It was the same attitude that caused Eve to devalue God in her own eyes. She lost confidence in God's truth. She listened to the reasoning of someone else. And it's the same reason Adam chose to reject his God ordained headship over his wife.

Pride is destructive. It's like a spiritual nuke. It's easy for us to look at Lucifer as he became Satan and we look at pride and say, "Whoa! That's awful." Or we can look at Genesis and we can look at Adam and Eve and see how things went haywire there. What we need to understand is it is destructive. It's a spiritual nuke in our lives. That's the understanding we need to have.

In verse 4 Solomon referred to the plowing of the wicked as sin. That can sound like a strange concept to us but it's very understandable. Plow can be spelled either plow or plough. We know that a steel plow is used to cut a deep furrow through the soil. It cuts. An associated meaning is to force a way through. A plow forces a way through the soil by the power of the tractor pulling it.

The proud and wicked force their way through – they pursue their own will forcefully regardless of God's instruction. It doesn't have to be overly evident to those around us. We can try to camouflage it. But it is plowing. It's cutting a furrow.

So their look and especially the attitude is that they're superior to others or superior to God. They know more than God. That means that they see no need to change, very simply, because pride won't let a person be self-analytical, self-critical, however you want to term it.

A proud attitude will then prevent us from overcoming. Only overcomers can inherit the Kingdom of God. That's why God was saying what He said to the Church in Ephesus. They had to get that first love back.

God hates pride because it destroys His potential family. The question for us then as we think about this do we hate it as intensely as God does? It's something that we really have to dwell on and totally block out others around us. We have to be introspective and look at self. Do we hate sin in ourselves as intensely as God does because He understands the outcome.

Since the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked how can we know if we're developing a righteous hatred of pride? There is a way to know. It's not difficult at all. We can ask ourselves how do we react to correction? How do we react to correction? In Revelation 3:19, Christ said to the Church in Laodicea:

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

God provides all sorts of ways, as we well know, for us be corrected. He provides many ways that we can hang onto if we're sensitive to it, if we're in tune with, if we're thinking about, if we see it as evil as He does. We can receive a message on the Sabbath, we might get comments from family, or friends. It can come as direct inspiration through His Spirit when we're yielded to Him. It might be a seemingly small matter in our lives or it might be something that is full blown.

Those who are learning to hate pride will listen and they will course correct. They will become self-discerning. David listened to correction.

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

David acknowledged his sin, and he took ownership of it. We didn't see that happen in Genesis with Adam and Eve there in the very beginning. David didn't come out and try to blame Bathsheba or the circumstance, or anything like that. He was looking at himself. He wasn't looking at Bathsheba and thinking she was half of this problem. That wasn't the case at all. He was looking at himself:

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Not only was he repenting, but how can we know that he was repenting? Because he was intent on turning other people away from the same thing that he did. He was intent on going as far afield on the other side of the field, clear on the other side of the coin to hate this thing. That's what he was doing.

16 For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

David knew that God was looking for a humble-minded person with which He could work. And that is what he wanted to be. And through the course of his life that is exactly what David came to be. In God's eyes he became "A man after His own heart." He couldn't do that with a passive rejection of sin. He did it because he was passionate about it. He'd learned something and he was going to teach other people. See, brethren, we've got to be passionate about learning to hate what God hates. Learning to hate pride is a huge part of what made this possible for David. And it works the same for us in our lives.

God hates a lying tongue.

The second thing that Solomon spoke of that God hates is lying. He passionately hates lying. But why? Why does He passionately hate it? Because it destroys the character of the one telling the lie. It has far greater repercussions than that.

When we're lied to, how does it affect us? We've all lied or been lied to. When we are lied to how does it affect us? Truth is shattered. Truth, confidence, loyalty, all those things that we so much value in each other in our relationships, are shattered.

I'd like to paint for you a word picture, an analogy. We looked at God in an analogy form, in the form of a coin. Now let's imagine a massive, powerful tree that birds and squirrels make their home in. We all like to see the birds and squirrels in the tall trees. This is a beautiful specimen of a tree. It's got huge branches that spread way out.

In the shade of those branches, a family can go and find a reprieve from the summer heat. It's a wonderful thing. Children can play happily in a swing that's supported under one of those massive branches on that tree. This tree also breaks the wind. In other words, it slows down the intense winds that come through and helps to protect their home which is very nearby. It would be wonderful if everyone had such a tree as this. It's a wonderful blessing. But the name of that tree is trust.

Then to continue our thought here, one day, this gigantic deciduous patriarch, that's been a steadfast blessing all through the years, perhaps through generations, is needlessly cut down. It's a blessing removed and in its place is a curse. That's what a lie is. It's cutting down a wonderful blessing and turning it into a curse.

How can a family or a relationship thrive in a curse? The short answer is they can't. The first lie among humankind led to doubt about God in Eve's mind. That was a curse. We can recall that Satan said to Eve, "You won't surely die. This tree's fruit is good and it's going to make you wise so you can be like God."

That doubt through that lie led to entertaining the thought of her doing it her own way. How about that? That led to desire which then gave birth to sin. And that led to

death because what God said was true. It led to death. Mankind's future was cut down by a lie. Lies destroy and God hates that. Mankind's future was revived through Jesus Christ, but it was cut down through a lie.

We'll read several verses here. Lies don't just negatively impact our character or our relationships but also our ability to understand. And understanding is so essential. And developing the passion that we must have to hate the things that God hates. Hate sin in the way that He does. We need to have understanding.

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.

43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word.

44 You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

There's a lot of information in these few verses but let's look at the obvious first and that is that Satan the devil is a liar and he is the father of all lying. That fact unquestionably puts emphasis on just how evil it is because our adversary is the one who's turned mankind into what it is today. His influence and his sway through his spirit.

Lies and truth are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Each is of a different spirit. Now Christ said that when Satan lies, he speaks on his own. That word "own" means of the things that are appropriate to him, or that belong to his nature. In short, He speaks lies based on his own will, on what he thinks is right, what he thinks is the thing to do.

His propensity to lie ties the first thing that God hates to the second. The proud disregard God's truth in favor of their own will and therefore they don't fear to fabricate lies.

It's an essential understanding if we're going to come to hate lies as God does. We all know it's easy to lie to ourselves – to give ourselves permission to do something that violates the principle of God's word. Again, that's something we have to deal with on an individual basis. It's not looking at others but looking at ourselves.

Permission to think hateful thoughts is what we're talking about. We could think to ourselves, they've got it coming. We give ourselves permission to have unrighteous anger, permission to do whatever our will dictates. "I'm going to do this. They did that, I'll do this."

And when we live a lie by believing it and acting on it, we are little by little and bit by bit destroying godly character. We're leaving our first love behind. Remember that first love? We had a zeal. We were passionate about getting rid of evil! Is that where we are today? The bride that Jesus Christ returns to is going to be of that mind, passionate about hating evil in self. Not looking around.

In that condition, when we're little by little accepting it we're leaving our first love behind. And what's happening to Christ in us by means of His Spirit? We know that Christ in us is diminishing. We can't serve two masters. Scripture tells us that. Which spirit will we ultimately be of if we persist in living the lie?

Our lifetime is a span in which God is judging us. He's weighing our choices to see what our character really is. What are we really like? What are we passionate about? Because whichever wins inside of us is where our passion lies obviously. He's given us the priceless gift of the Holy Spirit by which we can overcome anything. There's not anything that cannot be overcome. Hopefully, we're doing that; in the process of doing that. Or on the other hand, are we living the lies and destroying our character and losing that first love? It is essential to become a part of God's family in the end.

We know God made mankind physical and that given time we'll each die a physical death. He didn't make us immortal so that, if we, by our own choice, choose to live the lies, we can be turned back into ash or dust from which we came. And we'll be gone!

Character that can't be trusted will not be immortalized. We tend to want to look around all the time and compare ourselves with others and say, "Well, I'm not that bad." That isn't the point here. If our character, if we're not passionate about learning to hate what God hates, to hate the sin that's in our lives then we won't be made immortal.

And you know the subtle thing about lies is that they can seem so insignificant. Permission to just go ahead and get mad. I'm talking about unrighteous anger again. But these are the seeds of destruction. We must see them for what they are.

We know how this works in us, and it's very reasonable, very logical to assume that that is the progression that was in Lucifer's mind when he was corrupted. And what began insignificant sprouted and grew into an all-out war among spirit beings because Lucifer had lost his passion for good. That's how dangerous it is.

God hates lying. It's a character devouring spiritual cancer. Because if we can lie to ourselves about ourselves, we're in the same boat that Lucifer was in when he was making that transition from one side to the other.

But let's get back to the Pharisees that Christ was speaking to, that couldn't understand the truth. Like those Pharisees, those who are in the habit of telling lies and listening to lies, separate themselves from God and will over time lose the ability to recognize the truth when it's right in front of them. That can be you or me. We can lose

our ability to recognize the truth because we've been living the lie. We haven't been passionate with getting real with ourselves. It's like dying on the vine. It's a sad thing. God has so much invested in us as His people. All wonderful, good things that He's done. To see His people dying on the vine...we think back to the parable of the virgins. Half of them that died on the vine. They withered up and shriveled.

I'm sure we see the danger because if we can't recognize the truth within self, if we can't be self-critical, self-analytical, then we can't overcome, and we therefore can't become love perfected. We can't give love to anyone around us at the level or in the way that we should. Because after all, what is there to change? It's human to not want to see the truth about ourselves. Again, that's pride

Again, we see the correlation between these two things that God hates. The proud look and the lying tongue. They destroy the potential to become what God is, the completed picture, the God of love who hates evil, the two sides of the coin.

Let's revisit David's example but from a different perspective this time.

Psalm 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

First of all, we realize through David (and in our own life if we're honest) that we can become completely blind to our own horrible sins. In other words, the thoughts that we allow to come into our minds. We can become blind to those things. David was continuing in sin, just living his life as if he was just fine. God had to get his attention through Nathan. We know the story. We understand that.

God can and does use many sources in dealing with each of us in order to wake us up, such as a message just like this. It's intended to help each of us to wake up. Once David came to see how horrible his sins really were, he realized that what he needed was what he had proudly ignored. He needed truth in the inner parts, not lies. He couldn't live the lie. He came to understand that. He was proudly trying to live the lie thinking that everything would be okay. He needed that truth in the depths of his being where our character springs. That's what identifies us to God. That's how He knows us at His return. But he'd been arrogantly lying to himself about his own sin. And he's been giving himself permission.

Adultery in either a man or a woman will begin with permission for self to take a second look or to have a second thought. After all, we can reason in our own minds that it's not that significant. And of course, one look demands another and one thought demands another. And eventually those thoughts demand action.

Now on a spiritual level, adultery occurs on taking the second look. Or dwelling on second thoughts. That's where it happens on the spiritual level. It's far quicker. We need to comprehend these things because God's given us His Spirit. We need to be

passionate when we understand the level at which Christ looks at these things and what He expects within us, these aren't hard things for us at all. Not hard at all if we want to utilize the Holy Spirit. That's the truth according to God.

We can have a lying tongue that we speak with audibly or we can have the spiritual equivalent of it by choosing to follow the deceit that we allow within our own minds. In David's case, the lie brought down a huge tree. It destroyed trust, it destroyed innocent lives, it destroyed relationships and ultimately, love was lost.

And of course, the lesson for us is that whatever it is that we don't want to be truthful about in our own minds, it'll do the very same thing. The very same thing will happen. Love will be lost instead of being rekindled because we haven't addressed the backside of the coin. We've seen the front side and we can reason, oh yes, I'm a person of love. And at the backside, we don't have the hatred of sin that God does. That brings us to the third thing that God hates.

2. God hates hands that shed innocent blood.

Genesis 9:6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Being made in God's image, in His own likeness or form set humanity apart from the rest of creation. Something we understand very well. Are we passive about it? We read that and we say, “Sure, that's true.” Do we think about that passionately? How unique this is. How do we find an adjective that remotely begins to define how unique and how special a thing this is?

We know that God gave us His physical form with the intention that we should become just like Him on a spiritual level. In other words, internally. He wants us to become like Him. That our thinking and our actions would come to be perfect as His are. He wants us to have the very same character that He and our Elder Brother have which is incorruptible. We know that both Christ and our Father are full of light and truth.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Our Father gave us physical light in the form of the sun, which supports our own human life. But it only shines on that part of the earth that faces it as the earth rotates on its axis. Consequently, through the course of the day and the night we have light and shadows in a varying with the turning.

But it's not so on a spiritual level with God. There is no variableness – not even the appearance of it. God is the same yesterday today and forever. His truth, and

standards and character are unchanging just like the light that He is. It's unchanging. As we think about God, as we think about our Father and Christ, David describes part of God's uniqueness. These are a part of His internal makeup, His internal character or what makes Him who He is. .

Psalm 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

8 Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; Nor are there any works like Your works.

9 All nations whom You have made Shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.

10 For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God. (Verse 15)

15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

This is how he defines the character and attributes of God. God hates sin but loves to extend mercy to those who call upon Him, those who want to turn. He loves to extend mercy. He does wondrous things. He's created everything that's in the heavens which for us is incomprehensible even though we can see so much more of it, that with our telescopes today that's probably what makes it even more incomprehensible, to see how vast it is, the part that we can see. Out of everything that He's created, we are the only thing that He's made in His very, own image. We are, therefore, each incredibly special and unique. Even our uniqueness is hard to describe.

So, for us to take the life of an innocent human being is to devalue or despise our heritage. God made us like Him. Out of everything there is He made us like Him so we could become like Him. If an innocent life is taken, we are devaluing and we are despising what He has intended for us and we're despising Him. To shed the blood of the innocent tramples on the family name and on top of that it usurps the authority that is God's alone.

We've been focusing on glorifying God in this manner but we might ask, where is the focus on the innocent who are murdered? That's an obvious factor. But the sin is against God. The sin of taking innocent life is against God and in violation of His righteous law.

In Psalm 51, David wrote, "against You (God) and You only have I sinned" and he said that after committing adultery and after the murder of Uriah, the taking of innocent blood. God hates the taking of innocent blood because of the destruction that it leaves behind among those who've been made in His image. His image is summed up on the front side of that coin. It's love. That's His image. How can this be any part with Him? He hates it.

The potential of the innocent being murdered is snatched away (at least until the proper resurrection). And the character of the one who commits murder is also snatched away (at least until true repentance) just as in David's case. David had done horrible things for which he repented deeply and bitterly and changed. But not everyone does repent, and it can progressively even change a culture. What happens within us can be happening within the culture around us and we're affected by it.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

Of course, Paul had his own context that he was using. Today I'm wanting to look at it from what we're discussing. At this point we could say the proud pay attention to seducing spirits instead of God's Spirit. They're paying attention to the wrong spirit. That's what happens when we slowly lose our ability to be self-critical. We're tying these things together now. That's what happens. If we're not self-critical, we begin to speak or to live lies in hypocrisy.

As these conditions persist, the conscience will become seared. It will be branded with a hot iron so that the distinction between right and wrong will disappear within a person or on a larger scale, within a culture. We live in such a culture as this today in which there is the shedding of innocent blood happening all around us.

One of the most obvious things and I'm only going to share a couple of statistics, a couple of facts because it's just not something that's fun to dwell on. Since 1973, in other words, over the last fifty years there have been over one and a half billion abortions worldwide! Over one and a half billion worldwide.

Second stat is that about 90% of this innocent life was taken for the sake of convenience! Each one of these babies were made in God's image and each had the same human potential of becoming literal spirit-born members of God's family. The same potential that you and I have right now. We can see why God hates murder and understanding it helps us to hate it too when we come to see it a little more clearly the way that God does

Now let's take it to the next level. There are physically begotten infants not yet born that can be innocently killed and there are those who are spiritually begotten but not yet born, that innocent person, that can be murdered by someone else.

Both are living beings, made in God's likeness but not yet born, whether it's physical or spiritual.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
(Sons in embryo)

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by [which] we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

16 The Spirit [Itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

A person who’s been begotten of the Holy Spirit is one of God’s children in embryo form and an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. But as we read on, we’re going to see the difference in maturity.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Paul is contrasting the present time (in this embryonic state as sons and daughters of God right now, not yet born) with the time when the glory shall be revealed in us. The spirit born sons of God will be made so in the first resurrection at Christ’s return and that is what the creation is eagerly awaiting at this time.

Now we know how precious (we’ve talked about it and we’ve probably thought about this in our own lives a lot) how precious unborn physical infants are in God’s eyes, potential God family member. But there is a huge difference between the physical infant and the spiritual one. In Peter 4:17, we know that the spiritual infant is under judgment in this physical lifetime. We’re under judgment. Failure for us, for God’s begotten ones right now would mean eternal death. God’s spiritually begotten ones have been bought with the priceless blood of Christ.

So, if the physical infants are precious in God’s sight, how much more so are the spiritual ones whose time of judgment is right now?

Matthew 5:19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Pharisees might have refrained from physical murder. We might do the very same thing. But that alone is insufficient to stop spiritual bloodshed. That’s what we need to think about. We must be passionate and think about it in our life. Not somebody else doing something to us but how are we doing?

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother *without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

Christ took the taking of innocent lives to a whole new level –it went beyond the letter to the inner man, to the spirit. If we look back to verse 1, we see that this was after Christ had left the multitudes behind, then He said these things to His disciples, to those who would become the apostles. So, He spoke it to those who would very soon comprise the Church of God. In other words, He was speaking to very soon to be, spiritual infants among each other.

Christ is warning against the murder of those physically made in God’s image, but also of those who have been begotten in His spiritual image. God hates murder.

Verse 22 is much easier to understand if we omit the phrase “without a cause” because it wasn’t in the original text. It should read, “But I say to you that whoever is *angry* with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.” The natural man can always rationalize a good cause for his anger. If we want to get irritable and angry and fly off the handle we can always give ourselves permission. The Pharisees would have been just as capable as anyone of that.

But Christ teaches that we ought not to, for any reason allow ourselves to become angry enough to call any person *raca* or fool. *Raca* is a Syriac word that expresses great contempt. In other words, the person who is saying it feels far superior, far above the other individual. As a word of contempt, it denotes senselessness, stupidity, or shallow brains.

Fool is a term expressing more than a lack of wisdom. It was expressive of the highest guilt.

23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24 Leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Not only does God hate being angry with your brother, but we can deduce that He would also hate an attitude of being unwilling to reconcile. That’s something that God would hate. If we’re unwilling to reconcile, we’d have to be unrighteously angry to be unwilling.

Let’s reflect back now on what we have covered thus far. God hates pride, He hates lying and He hates murder. These things all work together.

In pride, we can when we have a relational problem and just automatically, impulsively, and maybe emotionally, set out to solve it our own way. We can block God's way. Once on autopilot, it's easy to lie to ourselves regarding how we should proceed. That old "you won't surely die" attitude from the Garden springs to life. It can come right into our minds.

So, we solve it our way by getting good and mad in the other person's face, offering no opportunity for reconciliation because we flat don't want to. We have some passion about that. We're talking about the dark side of what we've experienced in life, some of the things we've experienced. Or we could go to someone else to malign the character of the one that God tells us to reconcile with.

Either way the blood of those made in God's image and begotten in His image is flowing. The blood is flowing. That's what we have to be passionate about. This blood-letting that we can cause, that we individually can cause within the body of Christ. Where is the outcry? Where is the outcry over physical, innocent life being taken? Where is the outcry withing the body of Christ? It has to be within those who are passionate, who hate evil or are learning to hate evil.

We've only covered three of the seven things that God hates that are listed there in Proverbs chapter 6. But hopefully we can see the need to dig deep as we consider God's hatred of sin. Coming to truly understand how it applies to each of us personally can drive us to get back to the place we were when we were first baptized, when we had a passion to learn to hate the things that God hated. We could get back to our first love. And it will certainly be helpful to us as we begin to prepare for this coming Passover.