

# 'Hating' Our Relatives

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of prioritizing love for God above all familial ties in true discipleship.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 73:25, Matthew 16:23, Luke 14:26, John 2:4, John 14:21, John 21:15, 1 John 3:15, Revelation 2:1

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Divine Love"

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## Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the first condition of discipleship, emphasizing the need to cut off the natural, inordinate love we have for our relatives as instructed by Jesus in Luke 14:26. This 'hatred' refers to putting to death the natural affection we have for our loved ones, allowing God to replace it with Divine love, making our love for relatives pure. The sermon highlights the importance of giving God first place in our lives, even above family, as seen in Jesus' example of prioritizing the Father's will over human relationships.

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## Transcript

The first condition of discipleship is that we must cut off the natural, inordinate love that we have for our relatives.

Jesus said "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26).

Those are strong words. What does it mean to 'hate'? To hate is the same as to kill (1 Jn. 3:15). What we are asked to put to death here is the natural affection that we have for our relatives.

Does that mean that we are not to love them? No. It certainly doesn't mean that. When we give up our human affection for them, God will replace it with Divine love. Our love for our relatives will then be pure - in the sense that God will always be first in our affections, and not our relatives.

Many don't obey God because they are afraid to offend their father, mother or wife etc., The Lord demands first place in our life. And if we don't give Him that place, we can't be His disciples at all.

Look at Jesus' own example. Although He loved His widowed mother, yet He never allowed her to influence Him away from the perfect will of His Father, even in small matters. We see an example of this at the marriage at Cana where Jesus refused to act on His mother's prompting (Jn. 2:4).

Jesus also taught us how to `hate' our brothers. When Peter tried to turn Him away from going to the cross, He turned around and rebuked him with some of the sharpest words that He ever uttered. He said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to Me " (Matt. 16:23). Peter had made his suggestion with a lot of human love. But Jesus rebuked him, because what he had suggested was contrary to the Father's will.

The Father was always supreme in Jesus' affections. He expects us to have the same attitude too. After His resurrection He asked Peter whether he loved Him more than everything else on earth (Jn. 21:15-17). Only those who love the Lord supremely are given responsibilities in His church.

The leader of the Ephesian church was in danger of being rejected because he had lost his initial devotion for the Lord (Rev. 2:1-5).

If we can say, like the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven, Lord, but Thee? And besides Thee I desire nothing on earth," then we have truly fulfilled the first condition of discipleship (Psa. 73:25).

The love that Jesus demands from us is not the emotional, sentimental, human affection that expresses itself in singing stirring songs of devotion to Him. No. If we love Him, we'll obey Him (Jn. 14:21).

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