



DATE	October 30, 2016
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Love vs. Hate
SERIES	Everyone wants to fit in. And there's nothing wrong with that, but there are ways God wants His followers to stand out from the world around them. The first-century church dealt with this same tension, so John wrote them a letter, 1 John, describing the difference between true followers of Jesus and counterfeit ones. So, what's true, and what's false?

Today's sermon discusses the subject of love and hatred and how we as believers should approach these opposite emotions.

1. Pastor David opened the message by asking "True or false: most Americans believe it is wrong to refuse to serve someone based on their lifestyle." Can you give an example of a person or group of people where it's difficult for you to love and serve? How have your feelings on this been shaped? How does today's sermon impact your thoughts on it?
2. Several incidents of Christians refusing to serve people with different lifestyles based on personal conviction have received national attention. (ex. Woman wouldn't issue marriage certificate to gay married couple, bakers wouldn't bake wedding cake for gay marriage). What part do you think personal convictions should play in God's command to love? How do you as a believer navigate this? Are there scripture passages that help you decipher this?
3. As a group read *1 John 3:17*, *Proverbs 15:1*, *Ephesians 4:29*. Pastor David laid out the following love actions. Discuss them as a group. Where do you think you're strong? Where do you think you or believers in general need work? What other passages of scripture can you apply?
 - Time & money
 - Be courteous of others
 - Don't interrupt or dominate a conversation
 - Refuse to stereotype others
 - Guard against provocative words
 - Apologize quickly
 - Be prompt & faithful: Show up & do what you say
4. Read *1 John 3:13-14*. Pastor David said one practical way to love people is to differ without demeaning. Discuss instances where you've observed demeaning conversations and conversations where someone disagreed without demeaning. Discuss what you think distinguishes these two different approaches?
5. Read *1 John 3:12*. As believers, we know we should love and not hate. So most likely, we use the word *dislike* to describe our negative feelings towards something or someone. Discuss the ideas of love, like, hate and dislike. What do you think differentiates these ideas? What do you think are some indications that a person's dislike might actually be hate?

6. Pastor David offered these coaching tips to deal with hate. Discuss the ideas in your group. What are the ones that stand out the most to you? Can you share how one or more of these ideas have played out in your life? If you have time, read the scripture passage with each one and discuss how you think it applies to the coaching tip.
- Get under the waterfall of God's love – *1 John 4:7-12, Isaiah 43:4*
 - Hang out with radically loving people – *1 John 4:13-16a*
 - Steer clear of any source that generates hate – *1 John 4:16b-18*
 - Form opinions slowly & carefully – *1 John 4:19-21*
 - Increase our capacity to love – *1 John 2:9-11*

Pastor David ended by encouraging us to think the best of people. As you go to prayer, is there someone in your life you need *to think the best of*? Perhaps you might consider lifting that person up in prayer.