

The Gospel of Inclusion

Chapter Seven: The Gospel of Hate

Notes, Questions, and Reflections

In preparation for this week's discussion, please think about the [Basic Homework Questions](#) as you read it. Mark in your copy of the book or in your notebook which paragraphs pertain to these questions for you. Include your thoughts as to how they pertain to it. You'll be ready to engage in discussion with the Group.

Then come back to this page and check out the additional questions and thoughts from past courses that St. John's MCC people have had about the section that are listed below....

Chapter Seven: The Gospel of Hate

Which passages or paragraphs interested or inspired you most from this chapter?

What are we NOT supposed to love? Consider the passage in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (KJV) ... Of course, God loved the world. We know that from John 3:16. So what is it we are NOT supposed to love?

"It is impossible to help and heal a world we hold in contempt." (p. 138) Cite examples in your life where you have acted in a non-loving way toward a person you felt contemptuously.

What is the "narrow gate" that Jesus describes in Matthew 7:13? (p. 141)

How would you describe your "world?" (p. 142) Is there more than one "world?" Who did Jesus include in his world? Which world hated Christ and why?

"If nonbelievers do not hate us, we perceive that as a sign we aren't fully representing Christ or that we are not following His example." (p. 143) How is this statement false?

What is a mature Christian? (p. 146)

"Fear of God creates more harm than good for the human race." (p. 149) "To perceive any deity as angry at everyone who does not believe the same way that you do is a form of mental illness that produces psychotic behavior. Trying to appease an angry God is a debilitating cancer of our religious sensibilities." (p. 151)

"If you perceive God to hate someone enough to execute and torture him in hell forever, then in your subconscious you will devalue and hate that person as well. Given the opportunity or

provocation, you will act out that hatred.” (p. 150)

“God does not need us to do anything to earn His love; we already have it. Tragically, many of us delude ourselves into the belief that we must perform God’s will on earth....” (p. 155)

Pearson explains on page 159, “None of us is lost to God. We can only be lost from God, and that only in our minds, not God’s. Colossians 1:21-22 says, ‘Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now God has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in God’s sight, without blemish and free from accusation.’” ... This is what Christians are supposed to be doing – not telling people how evil and wrong they are, but how loved they are by God.

“Do we assume that punishing others is something God plans to do anyway, so we’re actually helping God mete out God’s ultimate judgment on the world?” How is that view psychotic?

Pearson uses the story of the Prodigal Son – and several others – to demonstrate how Jesus understood God’s relationship with us to be. Do you feel amazed that the Father in the story would accept the Son back into his life? Pearson thinks Jesus told the story to show how misguided the older brother’s reaction was. What do you think?

In the last paragraph of the chapter on page 161, Pearson says, “If these thoughts [about how much God loves us] become entrenched in the thinking of all people, especially Christians, they will influence the way we respond to all of God’s creation. Perhaps then, the older brother [of the Prodigal Son story] in all of us might go in search of our lost brothers to remind them that their Father loves them and is waiting to wrap them in His loving arms.”