

Do you ever just get tired of all the negativity and hate in the world? Seems like you can hardly go more than a few hours of a day without hearing about something mean or hateful someone did or said towards someone else. There's always plenty of reason to disagree with someone, especially in our world today. Whether it's politics, Covid, world views, or a host of other things with differing views, there's always an argument to be had.

I have social media accounts like Facebook but I often find myself having to stay away for awhile because there is always just so much negativity and arguing. Even in conversations it often seems like people tend to just gravitate towards being hateful towards others even when it is completely unwarranted. I've heard and even been part of small talk conversations while getting my hair cut, checking out at a store, or other places where someone says something along the lines of, "I can't stand people who..." or "those idiots in charge of..." or "people who believe this or that are insane."

This type of negative speech doesn't seem to just be contained within people outside the church either unfortunately. Often times it seems like the most harsh of this behavior comes from within the body of Christ. Some Christians seem to think that the only way to tell someone that you disagree with them is to berate them and belittle them. The reality though is that the majority of the time, there's really no need to inform someone that you don't agree with what they think. However, if you feel there is a need to disagree, then attacking their character and insulting them is certainly not the way to do it.

I was listening to a conversation between some mutual friends the other day and noticed something very different. I kept hearing lots of things like, "the way you did that was really awesome!" or "I'm really proud of you for doing this!" or "you've done an amazing job and worked hard." There was lots of encouragement and love within the conversations. It was like a breath of fresh air compared to the kind of conversations you often hear.

That particular conversation brought to mind something Jesus told the disciples. In John 13:35, Jesus says, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." That is exactly what that conversation was—two disciples of Jesus loving and encouraging one another. It's sad to me that hearing that conversation was such a breath of fresh air. It means that we as Christians probably aren't doing a very good job of loving each other and therefore showing others we are Jesus' disciples. I know I'm not. In a world where it is so easy to remind people why they are wrong, or why we disagree with them, why don't we remind them they are loved and valued no matter what they believe? That's how others will see Jesus in us. Not by how we vote or how well we argue, but by how we love others.

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