

“STOP CALLING EVERYTHING HATE” by Tim Challies

Over time, a word can change its meaning, sometimes picking up an entirely new definition and sometimes expanding or contracting an existing one. It is not unusual to see a familiar word explode into contemporary parlance with a far more expansive definition than it has had in the past. Think about “tolerance.” For many years the word quietly meant something like, “accepting the rights of others to have a belief different from your own.” Then, suddenly, the word was everywhere and carried a meaning like, “accepting other people’s views without critique.” As D.A. Carson says, **“this shift from ‘accepting the existence of different views’ to ‘acceptance of different views,’ from recognizing other people’s right to have different beliefs or practices to accepting the differing views of other people, is subtle in form, but massive in substance.”**

We still hear a lot about tolerance and the unpardonable sin of intolerance. And now, closely related, we’ve got a second word to describe the people who commit such an offense: They are haters. And, like “tolerance,” the word “hate” has taken on a new and wider meaning. It has always been used to describe an extreme, passionate dislike for another person. But suddenly it is being used to describe simple disagreement, especially when that disagreement is with society’s prevailing opinions and agendas. Any perceived intolerance is quickly drowned out by cries of “hate!” or “hater!” The problem, of course, is that if everything is hate,

[then] nothing is hate. As we expand the use of the word, it loses any meaningful definition.

Today, everything short of glowing endorsement can be counted as hate. If you express concern about transgendered adults using the same changing rooms as children of the opposite sex, someone will accuse you of hate. If you express careful, kindly-spoken disagreement with same-sex marriage, perhaps urging caution to such a quick change to an institution foundational to society, the cries of “hater” will be immediate and loud. If you urge freedom of conscience for people who hesitate to bake cakes or arrange flowers for certain festivities, you’ll be considered full of hatred. Coming to blows is hate, sure, but so is constructive critique. Berating and verbally abusing is hate—no one disagrees with that—but so is measured disagreement. In a few short years we’ve completely transformed what it means to hate.

This matters to Christians because words tend to worm their way from the outside of the church to the inside.

“Tolerance” tried but, thankfully, Christians managed to cling to its long-standing definition. Today “hatred” is on the move, making its attempt to enter our parlance in its new form.

...
We need to resist this updated definition of “hate,” to keep the new, expansive form of the word out of the church. Otherwise, we risk confusing

In so many ways, what is now described as hate is actually love. We guard against error not because we hate people, but because we love the truth and mean to defend sound doctrine. ... We must be willing to love, even when we are told it is hate. We owe it to God and man to continue to love, no matter how it is perceived, no matter how it is described.

hatred with confidence about revealed truth—we need to have the ability to confidently declare what is orthodox and what is heterodox, what is consistent with the Bible and what is heretical. We risk confusing hatred with the obedient exercise of church discipline—we need to be willing and able to remove people from church membership who are clinging to sin or teaching error. We risk confusing hatred with caution—we need to be able to debate and discuss, especially as we wade into new moral waters and answer perplexing questions about gender, marriage, and sexuality. In these ways and many others, we need to be able to confidently explore, discuss, believe, and obey the Bible without being labeled as “haters.”

In so many ways, what is now described as hate is actually love. We guard against error not because we hate people, but because we love the truth and mean to defend sound doctrine. We enforce church discipline not because we hate sinners, but because we love the church and mean to protect her integrity. We proceed cautiously when evaluating current issues not because we hate homosexuals or transgendered individuals, but because we love purity and mean to live according to Scripture. **We must be willing to love, even when we are told it is hate. We owe it to God and man to continue to**

love, no matter how it is perceived, no matter how it is described. [<https://www.challies.com/articles/stop-calling-everything-hate/>]

This is an excellent article, but I [Pastor Dave] have one disagreement. This statement:

“Tolerance” tried but, thankfully, Christians managed to cling to its long-standing definition.

I disagree. It seems that there are more and more professing Christians who have completely adopted the world’s view of tolerance. I am speaking of those who demand acceptance, validation and endorsement—aka tolerance—of their opinions, heretical beliefs and false teaching concerning the gospel of works salvation, specifically those who insist on adding water baptism.

“Intolerance is no longer a refusal to allow contrary opinions to say their piece in public, but must be understood to be any questioning or contradicting the view that all opinions are equal in value, that all world views have equal worth, that all stances are equally valid. To question such postmodern axioms is by definition intolerant” (D. A. Carson). [<https://www.challies.com/book-reviews/the-intolerance-of-tolerance/>]