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HATE THE SIN BUT LOVE THE SINNER

It was Easter Sunday (Resurrection Day) about 20 years ago. My husband and I stopped to visit a friend. Now this man and his wife were religious. He had been a long-distance truck driver and had his own tractor. On the front of it was in lights Jesus Christ. It made an awesome display for God as he drove down the road. There was only one problem, he did not have a personal relationship through salvation with Jesus Christ. The Church he was part of growing up taught that salvation came as an infant when he was baptized.

It happened to be the spring after 911 had hit New York and our nation. As we sat around in his living room, he started to talk about the hatred that was evident in the 911 incident. He could not understand how people could hate that much. It certainly was a time of hatred, destroying the twin towers, and taking so many lives. As we discussed this, the Holy Spirit prompted me to remind him of an incident that had happened the previous summer. We had gone out to dinner with this man, his wife and two kids. I ordered fish and so did my husband. I asked my friend, whose name was Sal, why didn't he order fish, because I had eaten some a few times there. His response was not what I expected. He said he hated fish and never ate it. His two young children said, we hate fish too.

I reminded Sal of that dinner we had had. I said, "Do you remember telling me that you hated fish?" He said, "yes." I then in turned told him that since he hated fish that he had taught his children to hate fish too. They wouldn't eat fish because Dad wouldn't eat fish. Then I proceeded to tell him that is the way of hatred. We are not born with hatred, it is developed. Whether it is fish, or any other food, or even people, hatred is taught. I then told him that is how hatred is developed. It starts in childhood and continues into adulthood. The look on his face changed. He realized that he had taught his children to hate, just like the parents of those in 911 had taught the terrorists to hate. He understood hatred then.

I went on to witness to him, and shared the love that God wants each of us to have through Jesus Christ, and he and his wife both accepted Jesus as their Savior. It was a glorious moment. I haven't seen Sal in years, but I know that I will see him again someday in heaven.

Do you have a hate life? The only thing you should hate is sin, and not the sinner. We must remember the scripture that says in Romans 5:8 ***"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*** Only God could love someone enough in their sin to save them. There should be no room for hatred in a Christian's life, other than hating sin. We must love the sinner to Christ. If we don't, who will?