

Man's Rules vs. God's Rules

In society, we have many rules. Most of these rules are made up of man. Now, these rules can cover everything from the mundane to the most serious. However, the most important rules are created by God. And these rules trump any rules made by man. I question quite a few of man's rules, and at times don't understand them. I have also been known to question quite a few of God's rules, and even don't understand them at times.

There are several things that God has set forth, which can drastically and negatively affect your life. Why? Because these things are bad, and no good can ever come of them.

Both man's rules and God's rules are established for our good. The difference is that man's rules are established with the "best intentions" for the common good or because those in charge believe it's best for everyone else. However, God established His rules with the knowledge and 100% certainty that His way is the best. There's no guesswork when it comes to God's rules. And by following His rules and implementing them, he intends that society will have the best chance of surviving.

In Proverbs 6, God lists seven things that He "hates," not that he dislikes. Now, I know that hate is a strong word. But God used it to illustrate the terrible things that can happen when His rules are not followed. And God is specific for a reason. To use a weaker word would mean that God is somehow tolerable of disobedience. And although God is a loving and forgiving God, we must know and understand that He is serious in everything He tells us. And we must follow His word and make it a part of our daily lives.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines hate as "intense hostility and aversion." Let's explore this a little further.

Over my short life, I've sometimes struggled with a few of these seven things that God hates. And sometimes I still do... for I am but a man. And man is weak. But I keep trying, and thankfully, God keeps forgiving me. So let's take a look at these seven things that God hates.

- 1. A proud look is hard to control at times. When I accomplish something or do something brilliant, I want to take immediate credit for the effort. Don't we all? I might even get a little dramatic and beat my chest like Tarzan of the jungle. Done in the right attitude and spirit, this action can be good for me. But normally, the attitude and spirit in which I act like Tarzan aren't. It's more boastful and... dare I say... proud. It takes practice to manage pride and boastfulness. And for some, it takes more practice than others.***
- 2. A lying tongue is damaging both to myself and others around me. It's so easy to tell a little "white lie" and rationalize that the lie is best for all concerned. Truth is, it isn't. It never is. No action or inaction will ever be more important than telling the truth. In my humanness, I've struggled with this concept for many years—although I do strive daily to be an honest man.***

3. Hands that shed innocent blood isn't one I've experienced in a literal sense. But God's intention is not always the literal interpretation of His words. You see, at times I've been so angry or consumed that I've wanted to strangle someone. Thank goodness I've never acted upon it. But God's meaning behind these words is, as I said, less literal. The things we say and do can sometimes cause an avalanche of results that we never intended or foresaw. And even though we don't have foresight, God always does. I

think this concept may apply to voting and many other small actions. Romans says we shall give an account for every action. And so we must account for every one of our actions both to ourselves and to the people around us as well as to God.

4. A heart that devises wicked plans is bad. What proceeds from the mouth comes from the heart. Our heart sets the tone of our life and our actions are exhibited in everyday life. So, if our heart is bad, it will devise wicked plans. This is in direct conflict with showing the love of Christ to others. It also keeps us from receiving the blessings of God. When that idea of retribution enters your mind or the thought of getting even comes upon you, then you must resist it. Don't make wicked plans.

5. Feet that are swift in running to evil involve more than just motion. For example, I try to stay away from gossip or spreading rumors. You see, gossip and rumors don't involve using your feet, but these actions can quickly grow feet of their own. I have to admit that sometimes it's hard to run away or avoid the temptation to get back at someone. However, God says by acting upon these influences that we are being evil.

These first five things that God hates all deal with the person and their actions. These are things that a person can control about themselves. The next two things that God hates address personal actions toward others.

6. Bearing a false witness is the act of telling a lie about another person to either hurt them or provide an advantage for themselves. Another example would be lying to a police officer or while under oath in a court of law to change the outcome of a case... or being deceitful in business action. This isn't just creating a little white lie. You have intentionally tried to change the outcome of an event by using a falsehood. That's wrong. So a lying tongue and bearing false witness are both a form of lying. However, bearing false witness creates a domino effect of repercussions that would not have taken place in the face of honesty and truth.

7. The last thing that God hates sows discord among brethren. We all know these folks. We get the call disguised as a prayer request and it goes like this. "I've called to tell you about Brother Nathan and Brother Steve. They need our prayers." This is where the call should stop, right? But the caller often goes on to describe every bit of gossip and rumor they have heard. They even throw in their own two cents worth. By the time the story goes through the church, it has been twisted and spun into so much more!

Scriptures say that if you have an issue with someone to GO to them directly and work it out, NOT to call everyone in the church or post it on Facebook.

In the end, God's word holds the key to living a fruitful and blessed life. The spiritual key is applying this knowledge and wisdom to our everyday life.

Proverbs 6:16-19

"These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren."