

What is the opposite of love? Hate. Right? Well.....

Someone has said that the opposite of love is not hate, but apathy. Let's consider this for a moment.

It's true, in some situations, hate probably does represent the reverse pole of love. We dislike someone so much that we feel hatred for that individual. We abhor someone because of their arrogance, their viewpoints, the way they treat others. Or we can't stand a person's annoying mannerisms or bad habits so much that dislike turns to pure hatred.

But here's another side to the anti-love reality. A man falls in love with a woman. He is passionately in love with her, and marries her. But she disappoints him or doesn't treat him the way he wants and expects. She doesn't pay as much attention to him as he would like. They start to have heated arguments. Their marriage turns sour. One day she does something that really touches his hot button, and he flies into a rage. He screams at her, "I hate you!" But isn't it true that he has invested so much feeling in this relationship that when he senses that his love is rejected or not returned, it is this reality that generates these powerful feelings that cause him to react in such hostile ways. The opposite of love in this case would be for him to simply lose interest in her and go his separate way.

Or here's another situation. A woman named Brenda knows of a neighbor several doors down the street who has just come out of the hospital. She is a single mom with several young children. Brenda feels sorry for her, but has never given a thought as to whether she might take a meal to her or offer to help in some way. Brenda in no way hates her neighbor; she just doesn't really care that much about her plight.

A congregation in the city is located in a neighborhood that has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Where once this was a middle class neighborhood and many of those in the church lived nearby and walked to church, the neighborhood is now racially and ethnically much more diverse, and much poorer than it used to be. Most of the few people left in the dwindling congregation have moved elsewhere and drive to the church for worship and other activities. They don't hate their neighbors at all. They just don't bother with them, because they are so "different".

In both instances, Brenda, and the dying city congregation, can't be accused of hating the others in question. But neither do they love them. They just don't care.

1 John 3:17 in the New Testament says this: "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?"

Love is active caring – caring about someone and acting in a way that demonstrates that concern. Love is a verb. In many instances, the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference – not caring enough to act.

