

tionem hominum et odium vitiorum,” which translates roughly as, “With love for mankind and hatred of sins.” As for Scriptural references, **Jude** wrote that we should be “hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh” (**v. 23**), and Paul wrote in **Romans 7:15**: “For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.” Clearly we should hate sin. The Gospel shows God’s love for the sinner, as in **John 3:16**; and Jesus did not “cast the first stone” in **John 8:3–11**, but told the woman caught in adultery to “go and sin no more” (KJV).

▲ *Neither a borrower nor a lender be.* **No.** This advice is given by Polonius to his son, Laertes, in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Perhaps, however, he was thinking of **Proverbs 11:15**: “To guarantee loans for a stranger brings trouble, but there is safety in refusing to do so” (NRSV).

▲ *To err is human, to forgive divine.* **No.** This is from Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*. A finer point of Christian doctrine maintains the distinction that it is an attribute of *fallen* human nature to err, but Jesus Christ became a true human being and was able to live without sin. He did this for us as a part of accomplishing forgiveness for everyone. Forgiving each other, then, is a reflection of what God has done for us in Christ (**Ephesians 4:32**).

▲ *Go the extra mile.* **Yes.** So many companies promise that their customer service will “go the extra mile” that we might forget that Jesus said in **Matthew 5:41**: “If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”

▲ *The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.* **Yes.** Jesus’ disciples were unable to stay awake while Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His arrest. See **Matthew 26:41** and **Mark 14:38**.

When is a time that you felt like the disciples, whose spirit was willing but flesh was weak?

▲ *Cleanliness is next to godliness.* **No.** *Poor Richard’s Almanac* again. True “cleanliness” is not something we can achieve on our own but is a gift of God in Baptism, “not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God” (**1 Peter 3:21**).

Why do you think this saying is so popular?

▲ *Read the writing on the wall.* **Yes.** Though not an exact quote, the image of a finger writing on a wall in **Daniel 5:5** is the source of this saying encouraging someone to acknowledge what is plainly in front of them.

▲ *Spare the rod and spoil the child.* **Yes and No.** Give yourself credit if you knew that this exact phrasing is not found in the Bible (it is attributed to Mark Twain), but you may also give yourself credit if you knew that the importance of discipline in raising children is emphasized by passages such as **Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13–14; 29:15**.

▲ *Lend me your ears!* **No.** Marc Anthony gets the attention of “friends, Romans, [and] countrymen” in this speech from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. If you missed this, you

may have been thinking of “He who has ears to hear, let him hear,” which appears numerous times in the Bible.

▲ *Be slow to speak and quick to listen.* **Yes.** **James 1:19** is sometimes paraphrased as “God gave you two ears and only one mouth.”

When is a time that you wish you had been quicker to listen and slower to speak?

▲ *Don’t cast pearls before swine.* **Yes.** **Matthew 7:6**.

▲ *That which does not destroy us makes us stronger.* **No.** Paul did write, “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us” (**Romans 5:3–5**), but the quote as given is from Friedrich Nietzsche.

▲ *Blood is thicker than water.* **No.** First cited by Sir Walter Scott. Blood and water are mentioned together in **John 19:34** as flowing from Jesus’ side (interpreted by some to represent the two sacraments, Communion and Baptism), and one of the plagues in Egypt was turning the Nile to blood (**Exodus 7**).

▲ *Turn the other cheek.* **Yes.** **Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:29**.

▲ *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.* **Yes.** Not a trick question! Jesus says essentially this in **Luke 6:31** and **Matthew 7:12**. Similar aphorisms are also found in many world religions, testifying to the truth that God has written His Law on human hearts (**Romans 2:15**).

For further discussion:

Which of the misquotations of the Bible do you think are most prevalent? Which ones might be the most damaging?

What are some concrete steps we can take toward increasing biblical literacy?

When you hear these sayings come up in conversation, how might that provide you with the opportunity to share the Gospel?

Closing:

Sing or speak “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word” (*LSB* 655; *LW* 334; *TLH* 261)

**Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.**

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