

Continuing the Series on Building Community

Subtitle in my Bible for this paragraph -- "Behave Like a Christian"

- First week of this series we explored the idea of community and emphasized the point that we are members of one another through our shared relationship with Jesus.
- Last week we looked at the idea of being connected through joint participation – that we become one through using our God given gifts in the context of our spiritual community. That our individual health and spiritual growth as well as the health and spiritual growth of the church is DEPENDANT upon each individual "doing their share."
- This week we will examine the foundational, or bedrock need for genuine LOVE.

Romans 12:9-21 NLT *Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! 17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. 20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." 21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.*

Verse 9, " *Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good*"

- **NKJV:** *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good*
- **Message:** *Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good*
- I like how the NLT keeps it simple, almost like a formula
 - Really love them = hate what is wrong + hold tight to what is good
 - The Popular, or Politically Correct, idea of love in our day seems to convey that the idea of "love" and "hate" cannot coexist!
 - But here, in the Bible – the same Bible that says Love one another, and Do not judge, and God is Love – we find that Real love involves hating what is wrong as well as holding tight – or close to – what is good
 - Superficial love ignores or overlooks inappropriately what is evil
 - Twisted, or destructive "love" denies what is evil (or denies that something bad is really bad – minimizes the evil)
 - God offers an alternative to the superficial or destructive relationships we often find in life

- The Bible teaches us that in our relationships with one another – in our Biblical community we
 - Shouldn't "pretend" or be hypocritical, but rather "love from the center" of who we are
 - That we should not only acknowledge, but deal with anything "evil" while at the same time "holding tightly" and embracing with love that which is good.
- "Evil" -- From a derivative of G4192; **hurtful**, that is, *evil* (properly in effect or influence, and thus differing from G2556, which refers rather to *essential* character, as well as from G4550, which indicates *degeneracy* from original virtue); figuratively *calamitous*; also (passively) *ill*, that is, *diseased*; but especially (morally) *culpable*, that is, *derelict*, *vicious*, *facinorous*; neuter (singular) *mischief*, *malice*, or (plural) *guilt*; masculine (singular) the *devil*, or (plural) *sinners*: - bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked (-ness). See also G4191.
- "Good" -- A primary word; "good" (in any sense, often as noun): - benefit, good (-s, things), well.
 - This verse implies that even as Christians we will find good things and evil things in most of us, and in most relationships
 - It shouldn't surprise us when we encounter something "hurtful" or destructive
 - We need to deal with it, and not reject the person or the good that is in the person while at the same time HATING and abhorring the hurtful and destructive aspect
 - Applies to
 - Attitudes, ideas & beliefs, as a well as acts or behaviors,
 - Others,
 - There are going to be things in others that are hurtful, often it is something they are not even aware of
 - Often it is even things they are not responsible for – their idiosyncrasies trigger your own issues
 - Or even if it is blatant sin – we need to embrace what is good in the persons while at the same time rejecting what is hurtful
 - Ourselves,
 - Some people hate themselves because they see weaknesses or faults and overlook their own GOODS
 - While others live in denial while they hurt themselves and those around them
 - Groups – Often one group can think its okay to dismiss another group on the basis of some aspect that we disagree about. For some republicans, its okay to hate the democrats – and vice versa – Or its okay to hate all Muslims – because some things in Islam are evil; Or the Catholics; or The Protestants; Or the Goths: or those guys that walk around with their pants half way down their legs....
 - Particular relationships (i.e. Things are fine unless so and so are together – then they get critical...)

John 13:35 NKJV " *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

John 13:35 NLT *Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples.*"

- Twelve times in the New Testament we are commanded to Love one another
- The Church is to be a community built upon the foundation of genuine love
 - Love that hates and abhors what is evil, hurtful and destructive

- While at the same time clings to and openly embraces what is good
- This community we are called to is the hope of the world
- Borrowing the words of Bonhoeffer, It is only “through Jesus Christ and In Jesus Christ” that a community like this is ABLE to exist
- Jesus is the truth, In Him we know what is Good and what is Evil
- Yet He is humble, In Him we can love those who are hurtful, because He has died for them as equally as he has for ourselves
- The Church is the community that the world is dying to know – and we are called to be the church
 - Here when we gather together
 - Elsewhere when we join in fellowship
 - But ALSO everywhere, when we encounter those who need to experience the genuine love that can only be found in and through Jesus Christ!

Twelve References to “Love One Another”

John 13:34 NKJV A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 NKJV By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:12 NKJV This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

John 15:17 NKJV These things I command you, that you love one another.

Romans 12:10 NKJV Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Romans 13:8 NKJV Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Galatians 5:13 NKJV For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Ephesians 4:2 NKJV with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

1 Thessalonians 3:12 NKJV And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

1 Thessalonians 4:9 NKJV But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

Hebrews 10:24 NKJV And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

1 Peter 1:22 NKJV Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

1 Peter 3:8 NKJV Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

1 Peter 4:8 NKJV And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS."

1 Peter 5:14 NKJV Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1 John 3:11 NKJV For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

1 John 3:23 NKJV And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

1 John 4:7 NKJV Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11 NKJV Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:12 NKJV No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

2 John 1:5 NKJV And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.