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# ***Teaching Sound Doctrine***

## ***Lord Teach Us Pt. 9***

### ***Love in its Proper Perspective***

One of the key words in the Bible is love. It is greater than faith or hope (*I Cor. 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*), and is the bond of perfectness (*Col. 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*).

Knowledge, faith, benevolence and sacrifice are nothing without love (*I Cor. 13:1 -3 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*). Everything that we are to do toward God or man is fulfilled in love. We can truthfully say that love is the greatest principle that the world has ever known. Yet, many have misconceptions and warped ideas as to the real meaning of Bible love.

#### **False Notions**

Some think that love will not allow rebuke and chastisement. Preachers are often accused of lacking love because they rebuke and reprove. If preachers or anybody else lack love they are nothing, but rebuke and reproof do not necessarily manifest it. Such kind of preaching is done most of the time because of a love for souls and the truth of God. One way God shows his love is by chastening (*Heb. 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*), and parents do the same (*Prov. 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*). True love necessitates chastisement. It will not compromise truth or overlook wrong. The flatterer and the compromiser are the ones who lack love. They are mostly interested

in themselves.

Some think that love will not permit hate for anything. "If one hates, he doesn't love" expresses the attitude. But the Bible teaches we are to hate certain things. The Psalmist said, "I hate every false way" (*Psa. 119: 104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way*). Christ hates iniquity (*Heb. 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* ) and false doctrine (*Rev. 2: 15*). Solomon said of God, "These six things doeth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him" (*Prov. 6:16*). Yet, God is love (*I Jn. 4:8*). Hence, we are to hate what God hates and to love what God loves.

Others think that love will nullify obedience. "If we love God with all our hearts, he will overlook a lack of strict obedience to his will" is the idea of some. But strict obedience is how we show our love. John wrote, "*But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected . . .*" (*I Jn. 2:5*). Genuine love produces obedience. One who will not obey does not love as he ought to love. Some just see one side of God. They forget that God is a God of severity as well as a God of goodness.

### True Meaning of Love

"Love can be known only from the action it prompts," says Vine. God showed his love by giving his Son (*Jn. 3: 16*) and we in like-manner manifest our love by action. John wrote, "*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and truth*" (*I Jn. 3:18*).

Vine further says, "Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, *John 14 If ye love me, keep my commandments. Also see verses 15, 21, 23 . . .* Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the opportunity to do good to '*all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith*' (*Gal. 6:10*)."

Our first and primary duty is to love God. " . . . *Thou shalt love the*

*Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mt. 22:37). Jesus said, "This is the first and great commandment." I believe it is greater than the second, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," because if we love God we will love our neighbor, but on the other hand, we can love our neighbor without loving God. As already stated, love for God is shown by "implicit obedience to His commandments."*

Love for our neighbor is shown by treating him properly (that is, we will not cheat him, covet his possessions, deliberately misrepresent him, lie about him, try to smear his name, etc.) and love seeks his benefit, whether it is physical or spiritual.

Our enemy is to be blessed, done good unto and prayed for (*Mt. 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; See also Rom. 12:20-21 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*). Our brother is to be shown kind affection and preferred (*Rom. 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;* ). The indigent are to be helped (*Lk. 10:25-37*). To the lost, whether it be an alien or a brother, we manifest our love by trying to save them. In these ways we seek the welfare of all.

1 Cor. 13:4-7 shows how love truly works. Henry Drummond wrote concerning this passage, "The Spectrum of Love has nine ingredients: Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Humility, Courtesy, Unselfishness, Good Temper, Guilelessness, Sincerity." These are the traits of love. If we lack any one of these traits we lack just that much being a lovely character.

From the preceding we see, therefore, that love is not an insipid, weak, apathetic sort of thing that stands for nothing and opposes nothing, but rather is something that has principle, courage and justice.

### Misplaced Love

Perhaps we could say that everybody loves, but not everybody loves the right things. There are too many who love the things of this

earth.

Many love themselves. *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves...."* (2 Tim. 3:1-2). This kind of people are selfish and self-pleasing. They love their own selves too much to deny themselves and follow Christ.

Many are lovers of pleasure. "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4). Jesus said pleasures would choke out the word (Lk. 8:14). I take this to mean excessive pleasures or sinful pleasures. Myriads of people have turned their back upon God because of a pleasure craze.

The world is full of those who love money. *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1 Tim. 6: 10). A love for money caused the rich ruler to turn away from Christ (Mt. 19:16-22), caused the rich fool to think all was well (Lk. 12: 16-21) and caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie to God (Acts 5:1-11) A love for money has caused murder, divorce, perjury, robbery' war and numerous other things. Many spend nearly every moment figuring out some way to make another dollar. God is left out.

Like Demas, we have those who love the world (2 Tim. 4:10). John says, *"Love not the world"* and gives as a reason, *"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof . . ."* (1 Jn. 2: 15-17). The world has nothing good to offer for eternity, but if we love God and do His will, we will abide forever. There is no future in loving the world.

Some love preeminence. This was Diotrephes' trouble. He *"loveth to have the preeminence"* (3 Jn. 9). The Pharisees were the same way. They loved the chief seats in the synagogue (Mt. 23:6).

The praise of men is loved by many. The chief rulers *"loved the praise of men more than the praise of God"* (Jn. 12:43). Love of praise causes elders and preachers to compromise the truth and become men-pleasers. Such cannot be the servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10).

Conclusion

Love is indispensable and eternal. It is the Christian's badge of discipleship. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jno. 13:35). Let us cultivate this fruit of the Spirit more!