

LOVE

When asked by a Pharisee as to what was the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus replied that it was to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:36-40). Love is a topic brought forth many times both in Jesus' teachings as well as in the teachings of the apostles of the early Church.

Under the old law in the Old Testament, there were detailed laws with detailed methods of punishing violators of those laws. When the new law came about at Pentecost, the early Christians felt as if they were without these rules. Many of us today like to know exactly what we can do and what we can't do legally, morally, etc. We do not like gray area. Many of the early Christians' questions and struggles came at the perceived lack of detail in the new law. Jesus and the apostles of the early Church gave simple teachings, such that if you followed their teachings, everything else would naturally fall into place as a result. For instance, if you make serving God the only thing you do, as a result you'll also happen to fulfill being a Christian spouse, parent, child, worker, etc. Likewise, Paul wrote in Galatians 5:14 that the law is fulfilled in one word: love. Similarly in Romans 13:8-10, Paul wrote the one who loves has fulfilled the law, and by loving, you avoid adultery, murder, stealing, lying, and covetousness. Paul basically sums up the entire new law in verses 9 and 10: *"...and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

We find that love is the driving force behind the new law. We read in James of our works being a showing of our faith (Jas. 2:18). If we love God, we have faith and vice versa. If we have faith, we show it through our works, one of those being love. Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). Again, we see things falling into place under love: if we love God, we'll have faith, and our behavior and actions reflect our faith and love for God. First Corinthians 13:4-7 details love's characteristics. Since love towards our fellow man is one of those results of our love and faith in God, our behavior towards others should include these characteristics.

While we all realize that we are supposed to love both God and our fellow man, we often falter on the latter. In this day and age, there are so many opposing points of view religiously and politically that there is a growing number of people in our lives with whom we disagree on several matters. We have these "enemies," and there are those who simply rub us the wrong way. We are told explicitly that if we love God, we will also love our fellow man.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John 4:20-21)

Opposed to the eye-for-an-eye policy under the old law, Jesus specifically puts its common interpretation aside and clarifies what the law intended for treating our enemies in Luke 6:27-35. The key here is that Jesus notes that loving your neighbor is not simply being good back to those who are good to us:

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

So what does this all mean? We know we are to love God and our neighbor. We have heard numerous lessons on love, and we sit there and nod, "Ok, sounds good. Now, how can we use this in our lives?" Let's look at applying this to some

issues we see in today's society.

The Bible is clearly against homosexuality and states that marriage is between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:22-25). We're coming in contact with homosexuals more frequently in our daily lives, and there has been growing recent publicity about teenage and young adult homosexuals being both verbally and physically assaulted. While homosexuality is wrong, should Christians treat homosexuals this way? Should we be hateful with our words and physically beat homosexuals, or anyone else for that matter? As we have previously seen, Paul writes that we don't extend love to only those who extend it to us, nor can we love God yet hate our fellow man. Jesus was loving to all, even noting that it is the sick who need the care of a physician more than the well (Matt. 9:12). We should in no way condone homosexuality and should let people know that it is wrong. However, we are not to extend hate towards them. The Christian way is not to attack homosexuals; the Christian way is to love.

A similar issue is seen in abortion. While we should in no way condone it, should a Christian attack an abortion doctor or bomb a clinic? No, because as Christians we work through love.

Consider those people you know best in life. Likely, they are your immediate family. Sadly, we treat the people we love the most, the worst. We tend to go to a scary place, a special kind of grumpy, when we are tired or hungry. We hide this from others, but our family tends to get the full effect of it. We say the meanest things and act awful towards them. Why are we this way to people we love so much? Simple: because we can.

In our bad moods, we are this way towards our family because patience and forgiveness are right there. Whether it is a sleepy toddler, a hungry sister, or a stressed spouse, we are able to handle their worst. We are patient because we know that behind those awful moods are just empty stomachs or heavy eyelids; we love them for it all the same. For the same reason, we are quick to give forgiveness. All of those qualities of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 can be found here. That forbearing patience and ready forgiveness needs to be witnessed in us at all times, not just towards family. The way we love and put up with family is to be extended towards all: homosexuals,

abortionists, our enemies, and those we know who are erring.

Christians should be seen as loving people. We are not to be selective with it. The best example of what Christian love embodies is seen in the patient and forgiving nature we reserve for our close family. As Jesus did, these qualities of love should be extended towards all people, even those with whom we disagree.

BEN

A RECIPE FOR COMMUNION BREAD

Every first day of the week Christians come together to take the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). This consists of remembering Christ in the eating of bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine while examining oneself (Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:20-28). Christians traditionally use unleavened bread each week in the observance of the Lord's supper, also known as communion (1 Cor. 10:16).

How is unleavened bread made? The Bible tells us! In Leviticus 2:4-13, we find ingredients and even the cooking medium given to us. The unleavened bread was baked in either an oven or in a frying pan (verses 4,5,7). It was to be made with unleavened flour and oil (verses 5,7), and to be salted (verse 13). We know that there was no leaven at all in these ingredients because *"No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire"* (verse 11).

Here is one sister's recipe:

4 Cups Plain Flour (unsifted)
1 Tablespoon Salt
1 & 1/4 Cups Oil
1 Cup Water

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In large bowl, whisk together flour & salt. Add oil & mix in with a fork. Next add the water & mix it in but don't over mix the dough. Since you're working with a lot of dough, I usually take about half the mixture out at a time to work with on a well floured surface. Roll out as thin as you can get it without

it tearing on you when you get ready to move it to your baking pan. Prick the rolled out dough several times with a fork to prevent it from bubbling up while baking. Use something round to form your bread in a circle. Place on ungreased cookie sheet & bake for about 20 minutes. You should have enough for a month's worth of Sundays & then some.

--Recipe submitted by Tammy Frederick
Wedowee, AL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*2011 Fellowship Conference
at DeSoto State Park in Fort Payne, AL
June 23 - 24
For Reservations:
DeSoto State Park 1-800-568-8840
Group Number #1106
Conference #8173*

*2011 Camp Meeting
at Welk Resort in Branson, MO
June 27 - July 1
For Reservations:
Becky Jewsbury 1-800-268-4014
More Information:
Terry Darnell 870-743-5881*

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES

PLACE

SPEAKER

May
2 - 6

Van Lear
Van Lear, KY

James McDonald
(Woodbury, TN)

May
6 - 8

Claud
Eclectic, AL

Hunter Bulger
(Fort Deposit, AL)

May 13 - 15	Antioch Greenup, IL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 13 - 15	Freefield State Line, MS	Hunter Bulger (Fort Deposit, AL)
May 27 - 29	Verona Verona, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
May 27 - 29	Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What were Joseph's brothers planning to blame his death on after they killed him?
2. When David defeated Zobah, I Chronicles says he went as far as Hamath, to establish his power by what river?
3. According to the book of Isaiah, what two tribes would devour each other, yet both be against Judah?
4. When the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign, He told them the only sign they would see was the sign of what prophet?
5. What illustration did Paul use in the eleventh chapter of Romans to symbolize God's acceptance of Gentiles in place of Jews?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. According to Moses in Deuteronomy, who died in the thirty eight years from the time they left Kadesh Barnea until they crossed the Zered Valley? ALL THE GENERATION OF ISRAEL SOLDIERS (Deut. 2:14)
2. Why did Saul originally send for David? HE WANTED DAVID TO PLAY THE HARP FOR HIM (1 Sam. 16:17-19)

3. Why did Elihu, Job's fourth visitor, wait until everyone had spoken before he addressed Job and the others? HE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY YOUNGER THAN THE OTHERS (Job 32:4)
4. In Acts 15, a controversy arose which resulted in an official letter being taken to the new converts at Antioch. What was being debated? CIRCUMCISION (Acts 15:1-31)
5. In closing his I Corinthians letter, Paul mentioned that he wanted to visit the Corinthians but planned to stay in what city until Pentecost? EPHESUS (1 Cor. 16:8-9)