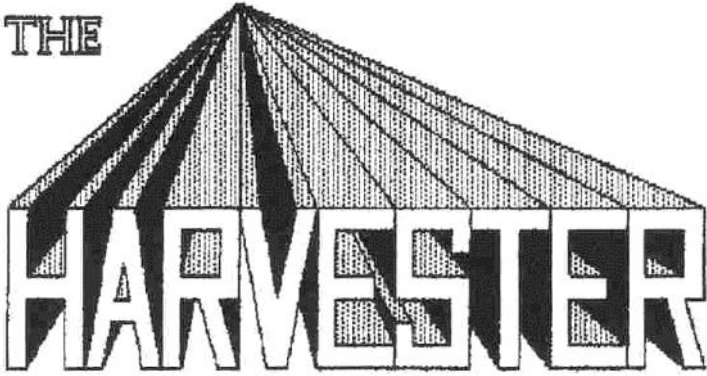


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"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

March 2014

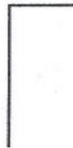
No. 339

DO WE REALLY LOVE EACH OTHER?

We, as Christians, are duty bound to love each other. The inspired John vividly expounds in 1 John 3:11-18:

(11) For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (12) Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. (13) Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. (14) We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the breth-

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ren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (15) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. (16) Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (17) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (18) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

The "love" that we are to have for each other is not a feeling. It is an action. The Bible is its own best commentary. We see in verse 18 that love is accomplished by deeds according to truth. This means that we are to do things for each other in a manner that is prescribed by God via His word, the Bible. John 17:17 plainly conveys, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

What are actions of love that we are to extend to each other? We are to receive or welcome one another (Rom. 15:7). Do we receive each other as Christians or do we treat each other like politicians at a social club at the church assemblies? If we have been baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38) and we are living according to the pages of inspiration without adding to or taking from it (Rev. 22:18-19), we are to receive each other according to truth. We are to be of the "same mind" (1 Cor. 1:10). Do we really receive one another at our Church assemblies? When we assemble we are to "tarry one for another" (1 Cor. 11:33). We should all try to get to the assembly before it starts. But, if someone is late, we should wait or tar-

ry for them. This enjoins the idea of respect and unity of brothers and sisters in God's family. Let us not receive each other just because of being clean and wearing pretty clothes. It is the "*hidden man of the heart*" (1 Pet. 3:4) that God is looking for. We are to receive each other as God's family, not as strangers that one may dread seeing at the church assembly because of cliques, amount of education, outward appearance, style of speech and such like. We are to look forward to being with all of God's family regardless of one's earthly status.

We are to edify one another. In Romans 14:19 the Apostle Paul emphatically teaches, "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*" We are to edify every person we come into contact with whether it is the assembly of the Lord's church, at work, at home, or wherever we come into contact with another human being. To edify means to "build". *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible* said that to "build" in this verse when applied to the church "means to do anything by teaching, counsel, advice, etc. which will tend to promote its great object; to aid Christians, to enable them to surmount difficulties, to remove their ignorance." We teach each other by word and example. When we teach, whether in public or private, we are to be humble and promote God and not ourselves. We are to serve each other (Gal. 5:13). We should not be proud, boasting, and domineering. Christians must be very careful not to intentionally offend anyone by words or actions (Rom. 14:19-23).

We are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:1-2). We all sin (Rom. 3:23). Christians should

never think they are incapable of sinning. We are to "take heed" and continue in the doctrine of Christ (1 Tim. 4:16). Each person lives a unique life. We all have problems and challenges that we face on a daily basis. Sometimes we falter and fail. At that point we ask God in prayer for forgiveness. If we forgive each other He will forgive us. Let us carefully consider the words of Matthew 6:14-15:

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

If we do not release each other from sin God will not release us. We set the amount of forgiveness we get by how much we forgive. We are to "provoke" one another "unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10:24). Let us not provoke each other to pride, lust, jealousy, anger, and competition. James teaches us to "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

We are to help one another. Jesus said in Matthew 25:34-40:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee

in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

We have a divine mandate from Jesus Christ on how to treat Him and His brethren. Christians are to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty. How many of our brothers and sisters around the world are starving to death and we dare complain about anything while living in the land of plenty. When is the last time you visited someone that is sick, elderly, or crippled? In fact when is the last time you just simply spent some leisure time with the Lord's family instead of running with the world? Have you ever visited someone in jail or prison? Ask yourself, "What if I were in any of the conditions Jesus mentioned in Matthew 25, how would I want to be treated?" We are commanded by Jesus to treat each other like we want to be treated (Matt. 7:12). At times we see empty seats at services that are usually filled. Do we call or visit the person that did not attend for whatever reason? What if you or I were sick, depressed, lonely, or in need - would we want someone to encourage or visit us? No human being is an island. We need each other. We are supposed to "provoke" each other to "love" and "good works" (Heb. 10:24).

The Bible is very clear in that we are to love each other. The words of Jesus should ever ring clear in our minds. His holy injunction is found in John 13:34. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Our eternal

destination is dependent on our conforming to the wishes of Jesus. He said in Matthew 25:41-46:

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Where can we find Biblical authority for various uses of the contribution?

ANSWER: Contributions of the early Christians were used for various purposes.

- Poor saints (1 Cor. 16:1-3)
- Widows (Acts 6:1-6)
- Widows and orphans (Jam. 1:27)
- Support of those engaged in God's work (Php. 4:16)

As to meeting places, there is no record of such being purchased or owned by the disciples.

There is record, however, of the brethren assembling at various places and structures. Whenever there is a command to obey, that command of necessity authorizes whatever is required to carry out the command. Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 record the assembling of the early church on the first day of the week, while Hebrews 10:25 exhorts "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.*" Such examples of assembling required a place at which to assemble and a time of day for that assembly to occur. Acts 20:8, for instance, speaks of "*lights in the upper chamber;*" Thus authority to have lights.

Luke 22:14 states that Jesus and His disciples were sitting at the institution of the communion; our authority for seats where we meet. That occasion also involved a "*large upper room,*": thus our permission to meet in a building which has two floors.

Meeting places among the early disciples were often the houses where they lived. The church met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. 16:3-5). We must not go beyond what is permitted by Scripture and what was favorably approved by example in the Scriptures. Where we are instructed in Scripture to accomplish something, however, we are in complete accord with Scrip-

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Gospel Meetings

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
March 7 - 9	New Bethel Cullman, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 7 - 9	Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 9 - 11	Owens Road Prattville, AL	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 23 - 26	Gilstrap Morgantown, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
March 28 - 30	Verona Verona, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

ture in using what is necessary to accomplish that result.

HARRY COBB
Wedowee, AL

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. Why did Moses' hand become leprous?
AS A SIGN (Exodus 4:6-8)
2. Which tribe of Israel received no inheritance of land?
LEVI (Deuteronomy 10:9)
3. What object did Gideon place on the ground to receive a sign from God?
A FLEECE (Judges 6:37)
4. Which disciple brought the boy with five loaves and two fishes to Jesus?
ANDREW (John 6:8)
5. With what affliction did Paul strike Elymas the sorcerer down?
BLINDNESS (Acts 13:8-11)