



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – June 4, 2017

Heart to Heart...

We need to grow in our love for the Lord and one another. Read I Corinthians 13:4-7, and see love at work. Each of these actions of love takes a heart of faith. Let's look at one action of love we need to consider. ***“Love is not provoked.”*** (I Corinthians 13:5) To be provoked is to be stirred or aroused to anger or wrong attitudes. We need God's help (and we have it if we would submit) to control our emotions and will (Galatians 5:22-23).

Within Christ's body, the church, brethren are on various levels of faith and love. But one thing that stands out are those who are *“touchy.”* These that are *“touchy”* are easily provoked. They are hypersensitive and it takes little to get them stirred. Something said wrongly or something questioned and off they run with it taking it personal. They aren't walking in the love of God. Not only are they burdened in their own heart but they burden others around them. How? Because if you say something the wrong way they get upset! It happens in marriages too. Those who live by easily being provoked leave the assemblies upset about something said or done and they want to vent. At this point they cannot be reasoned with because they are self-consumed and want to hear nothing other than what they feel. Many times, they can hold a congregation captive because people are afraid of their reactions. It seems they are in a chronic state of being offended! Their mind-set is constantly about them and what has them upset. In marriages, I have known those who are fearful of saying anything to their mate because everything is taken as an attack, a provocation. Brethren like this seem to pick up on every little word and interpret them as an attack or snub. What's worse, they think they are the ones walking in love serving the Lord! It's a dangerous game of self-deceit.

Until self leaves, love can't enter! Self can't leave until one surrenders their heart to the Lord. Jesus said: ***“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”*** (Matthew 16:24) To follow the Lord, self must be dethroned. To love the Lord with all your heart you must yield to His Lordship and humble yourself before Him. Only then can His love enter the heart. The love of God softens and helps us see that we died with Him and it's no longer about us and what we want. Love is about Christ and helping His cause. To live *“touchy”* and easily provoked is to cut off the love of God from helping you.

“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (I John 3:16) How do we know love? By looking to Jesus and what He

did. Jesus wasn't "*touchy*" about every decision, every word said to Him and every action interpreted. If He were He would have never gone to the cross, dying in our place. How does one know they are walking in love? They help by laying down their life for the brethren. They don't lay the lives of others down! There is nothing more discouraging and more damaging than someone living in provocation. And they won't be happy until they let you know how they feel.

God is love. To be in fellowship with Him, to mature spiritually will only increase our love for His people and that includes our mates. How's your love? Are you walking in the love of God or are you easily provoked? Take an honest inventory of your heart. Think about it!!!

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