

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

Number: 08

Verses: Romans 13:8-10, 1 John 3:4-7

Topic: Love Is Not Lawless

Date: 07/27/2011

Romans 13:8-10 *Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves another has fulfilled the Law. (9) For: "Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not lust;" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (10) Love works no ill to its neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.*

1 John 3:4-7 *Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. (5) And you know that He was revealed that He might take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. (6) Everyone who abides in Him does not sin. Everyone who sins has not seen Him nor known Him. (7) Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as that One is righteous.*

Love is from God and God is holy, righteous and just. So God's love will also be holy, righteous and just! We see this on the Cross when God's love and God's justice worked together for our justification. Our sin incurred God's wrath and the penalty for that sin was paid by Jesus Christ who died for us to be both saved and holy!

Ephesians 1:4 *according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

1 John 3:4 tells us that "sin is lawlessness". Now God's love is not sinful! So God's love is not lawless, rather it fulfills the Law! God's love does what is righteous and thus does no harm to a neighbor (Romans 13:10).

So love is not lawless, instead love upholds the law. Love does what is good and wise and true! Indeed love has certain boundaries and moral constraints:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 *Love is patient, love is kind; love does not envy; love does not boast, is not puffed up; (5) does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own, is not provoked to anger, thinks no evil; (6) does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; (7) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

This raises the problem of how we ascertain what sort of things are good and righteous and lawful for love to do, obey, and be regulated by. How is love lawful and not licentious? Do we revert to 613 Jewish Commandments in the Torah? Do we invent a new Torah, a Christian Torah? Neither of the above! We listen to the Holy Spirit in our conscience as we are led by the Spirit and we serve one another in love.

We serve in the newness of the Spirit not the oldness of the letter. The new law, of the New Commandment is written on our hearts. As a result the Holy Spirit leads us, teaches us and instructs on how to serve one another both in liberty (from the Law) and in love!

Let's see how Paul explains this in the epistle to the Galatians:

Galatians 5:13-18 *For you, brothers were called to freedom; only do not use freedom for an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (14) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ... (16) I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh. ... (18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

Love is not a license to sin (Galatians 5:13)! But neither is love legalistic (Galatians 5:18)! In fact Christians are called to freedom and not to legalism. Earlier in that same chapter Paul tells the Galatians that they were called out from the religious "yoke of bondage" and were never to go back under it again:

Galatians 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the freedom in which Christ has made us free, and do not be loaded down again with a yoke of bondage.*

So agape love is freely given and is not some onerous religious duty! It is not an excuse for burn-out. We do not have to change the entire world. Nor are we obligated to satisfy the wants and needs of every other human being.

On one hand love is not lawless but neither is agape love a burden for our souls:

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome,*

Matthew 11:28-30 *Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. (29) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

So then how do we know and keep His commandments if they are not a big list, etched in stone on the courthouse wall? His commandments are written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit! It is as we obey the Holy Spirit and are led by the Spirit, that we end up obeying His commandments as a by-product of the spiritual life of love.

Under the Old Covenant the commandments were written in a book which was then interpreted by scribes and lawyers and taught to the people who then obeyed them. In the New Covenant this is entirely done away with.

In the New Testament the commandments are put within us, and are directly written on our hearts by the Spirit. Thus we have no need of lawyers, Scribes, Pharisees or teachers of laws! For God Himself teaches us how to love one another.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 *Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for me to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.*

1 John 2:27 *And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

We will never attain to the holiness of God by struggling to understand and obey 613 commandments. However we will attain to the holiness of God if we serve one another in love, in the power of the Holy Spirit! As we do this, God's holy and heavenly love will be poured out within us, and we will serve God in reverence and awe.

It is not up to us to decide what love is like. That is God's job. Our life of love is fully His to control. We do not go around "figuring out" how to love people (that only leads to exhaustion). Instead God Himself tells us who to love, when to love, how to love, where to love and so on. Our love is Spirit-led and somewhat of a mystery.

Love is an abiding, holy, interior spiritual state of the conscience, that listens to God, and which produces practical benevolent action as the Holy Spirit directs. Love is not an exterior set of laws, rules and regulations. It is not a "code", a book, a program, or "of the letter". Love is of the Spirit alone. Yet neither is love a capricious, lawless, will-of-the-wisp spontaneous emotion that justifies every moral outrage under the sun!

Thus an unemotional person who gives generously and helps the hungry is far more loving in biblical terms than a warm , friendly, highly emotional person who blesses with the lips alone! Love is both disciplined enough to be holy and strong enough to accomplish some real good.

Blessings,

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