

Pursuing Love & The Great Commandment #5

Loving the Household of Faith

I. Introductory Remarks.

John 13:34-35 *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

In this series of messages we have been looking at what it means to pursue love in all the relationships God has established in our lives. This begins with our relationship with God and includes our spouse, family, extended family and even unbelievers.

In this message I want to talk about what it is to practically pursue love with your brothers and sisters in the Lord or the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

We find a strong command throughout the Scriptures to love one another as Christ has loved us. This is a preeminent quality or characteristic that God is looking for in our lives. It is the preeminent quality or characteristic that will help to establish the fullness of God's kingdom in our midst.

1 John 4:7,11 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

1 Peter 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart...*

1 Thessalonians 3:12 *And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,*

As we can see, from these passages of Scripture, God is very serious when He commands us to love one another. It is the preeminent characteristic that He desires to work out in our lives. As we will see, it is also the major ingredient for building up the Body of Christ.

It is our love for one another that shows that we are true disciples. With this in mind let's explore how Christ's love is worked out in our lives as we relate to one another

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in the Body of Christ. It is when we are truly loving the members of Christ's body that we are loving Him as well.

Matthew 25:45 *"Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'*

II. Practicalities Walking In Brotherly Love.

I want to give you seven practical aspects of walking in brotherly love with one another in the household of faith today. These are principles that will help us build the kind of church that will glorify the Father.

1. Loving One Another Involves A Desire To Walk In Unity.

Amos 3:3 *can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*

Our love for one another in the Body of Christ is based on the commonality we have in our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

Philippians 2:1-2 *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Ephesians 4:1-4 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling...*

Walking in unity with one another involves the idea that we don't just associate with those people who are our favorites. We need to have a genuine desire to include in our lives those we are not naturally drawn to.

Romans 12:16 *Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.*

2. Loving One Another Involves A Sincere Desire For Friendships.

Malachi 3:16 *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name.*

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The fullness of love that God desires to flow into our lives from the lives of other believers needs a bridge to flow across. That bridge is friendship.

One of the great friendships in the Bible is that of Jonathan and David.

1 Samuel 18:1 *And it was so, when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*

What is really unique about this relationship is that Jonathan was next in line to be king, but he recognized the hand of God on David's life and made the necessary sacrifices to promote David's well-being. This was only able to happen because of the great friendship they had formed. Without the bridge of friendship they would have been enemies in competition for the throne.

In the Body of Christ there are many such examples that come up in various gifts and ministries being expressed.

It takes walking in love and friendship with each other for these ministries to be fully appreciated and released in each other's lives.

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

3. Loving One Another Involves a Commitment to Resolve Conflicts.

When the Bible exhorts us to endeavor to walk in unity and love with one another, we have to consider the fact that offenses and conflicts will come in any relationship. Adversity in the relationship will come.

Proverbs 17:17 *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

As Christians we are all imperfect and incapable of doing the right thing all the time. We will offend and hurt one another from time to time. To love someone with brotherly love is to speak the truth in love and have a forgiving heart towards the other person.

Colossians 3:12-13 *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

4. Love Shows A Genuine Care And Concern For Others.

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When you are part of a church there will always be people in the church that are doing well and some who are not doing so well. Love will show a genuine care and concern for those who are burdened down with various needs.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 *that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

God has designed His body in such a way that through relationships we are able to be sensitized to the needs around us. When it is in our power to do good we should. If we are not able to, we should go to someone; elders, pastor, etc. to make the need known.

5. Love Will Minister To The Physical Needs Of Others.

1 John 3:16-18 *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

God's desire is for His body to be cared for no matter what the need may be. It is through love that the body ministers to itself and allows someone's lack to be supplied by your abundance.

2 Corinthians 8:14 *but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack; that there may be equality.*

6. Love Is Hospitable.

1 Peter 4:9 *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*

Romans 12:13 *distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.*

It is through hospitality that we are able to get to know other members of the Body of Christ and come in contact with their gifts and ministries as well as their needs.

7. Loving One Another Involves Serving One Another.

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John 13:14 *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."*

Mark 10:43 *"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant."*

Servanthood translates into love. We see this when Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. Jesus response to Peter each time was to serve Him.

John 21:16 *He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."*

III. Concluding Remarks & Summary.

We must keep in mind that the kingdom of God and the church are community of people who are walking in God's divine plan to see His body glorified on the earth. We are to be a city set on a hill, whose light shines brightly all around us. This happens as we purpose to love the members of the household of faith.

The seven practical aspects of walking in God's love were:

- **Having a Desire to walk in unity**
- **Having a sincere desire for friendships in the body.**
- **Making a commitment to resolve conflicts.**
- **Having a genuine care and concern for others.**
- **Ministering to the physical needs of others.**
- **Showing and being hospitable to one another.**
- **Serving one another in humility.**