

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 14- The Second Line **1John 3:11-18**

130. Distinguishing Between Love and Hate- Part 14

WAOY Tuesday 01/08/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Distinction Between Love and Hate". So, let's read **1John 3:11-18** again together:

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Now over the last several broadcasts- we have been looking very closely at verses 14 & 15 of this passage- and today I want us to read those verses again:

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Now we have been discussing just how we are to manifest this great love toward one another and refrain from descending into a place where we no longer care about each other by looking at a forgotten but very scriptural concept called Church Discipline.

Now many of you have called and written about this issue and so I felt the need to discuss this issue in a little more in depth.

I fully realize that the subject of Church Discipline and of being accountable to one another and having to love one another is a sore subject for many of you because many times these things have not been carried out properly and some have been hurt. It seems that there is a lot of misuse of this precious gift that Jesus gave to the Church out there and either there is no accountability at all between the members of a Church or else the leadership of the Church skips over steps one through three and goes right to step four. I agree and I understand that there are some people who hold positions of leadership who view this issue as simply a means by which they can manipulate and abuse the sheep. All I can do about this is tell you two things:

First- there is no excuse for any person or any Church to misuse Church Discipline or abuse people in the name of Church Discipline. Anytime that this happens we must be quick to reject it and say that it is wrong. And I realize that some of you have been the recipient of this process being used wrongly on you. Let me say to you that so have I. Both me and my family have been abused by wayward people who were in leadership in the Church.

I think that most people who have been in Church for any length of time has been hurt in Church in one way or another.

But let me also say that that is one of the reasons that I am trying so hard to teach God's Word properly- because we *cannot* say that simply because someone didn't handle this issue correctly or because we got hurt in Church that now we are not going to be accountable to one another at all. Jesus Christ- the Lord of the Church- *commands* us to love one another- this is not optional. And Jesus Christ- the Lord of the Church – has said that we are accountable to each other and so we need to learn *how* to lead and *how* to submit to each other- so that we may fulfill the law of Love. We must remember, brothers and sisters, that

Jesus Christ- the Lord of the Church- initiated Church Discipline Himself- and it is clearly recorded for us to read and examine in **Matthew 18**- and so we will either be faithful or unfaithful to carry this out.

So we really don't have much of a choice here. We are either going to humbly submit to that which Jesus has clearly commanded us to do or we will be found to be disobedient. Church Discipline is in the Bible. About that- there is no doubt. All of the Apostles of the Church practiced it. It has been practiced by Bible believing people and Churches of every denomination for over 2,000 years. It isn't new; it isn't strange and it isn't mean- it is simply the love of God manifested. So Church Discipline as outlined in Scripture should absolutely be a part of our daily life in the Church.

Secondly- let me say that as believers we must strive to follow that which Jesus taught. Those who don't even *try* to obey the Bible are hard pressed to prove that they are really saved. But in our effort to be obedient- we will periodically fail- and we will fail even in our effort to love each other and to be accountable to each other and to administer Church Discipline. We are going to come short of the mark that our Lord has set for us. And when we fall short- our only option is to repent and learn from our mistakes.

I believe that we can learn from others who have come before us and so reading and learning from Church History is a really big help- especially in this area of loving each other and being accountable to each other. So I encourage everyone to read as much Church History as they can. Christianity is 2,000 years old, beloved, and there is not a single subject that we can find in the Bible that has not been talked about; researched; analyzed; and carried out by many other people long before we were ever born. We do not have to reinvent the wheel here. Every pastor worth his salt has had to deal with this issue and some have done quite well and others have made terrible mistakes. But we can read about all of that and learn from it if only we would.

Even though many of the things that I talk about on these broadcasts may seem to be new to some of you- I assure you they are not new. I didn't invent these issues- I do not have the right nor the intelligence to create these things- God did- and I am certainly not the only one who is trying to faithfully carry them out.

Many today would say that to actually obey what Jesus clearly taught in **Matthew 18** would be impractical because we are so different today. Some would even say that to obey **Matthew 18** would be mean or cruel or unloving or even unchristian- and that *any* church that actually did obey **Matthew 18** would be a truly horrible Church. But I don't buy that for a second. I believe that Jesus was God's Love personified and so if Jesus commands that we do something- then it is right and it is love.

For example- how did the Reformers- those men who brought the Church back from man-made religion in the 16th Century- feel about the issue of Church Discipline? How did the giants of our past obey **Matthew 18**? What did the fathers of the Christian Church teach about loving each other and being accountable to each other and about Church Discipline? Get the books; go online; see for yourself how men like Charles Spurgeon; Jonathan Edwards, Martin Luther; and John Calvin handled these things.

Those of us who lead in the Church in the 21st Century are certainly not the only people who have ever struggled with these issues- so if we would simply read and learn from our past- we would not make as many mistakes.

Read about how the Reformers set up a system of accountability for those in the Church. Read about how in the second century- just after the Apostle John died- how the Christian Church obeyed **Matthew 18**.

A very good source of information- especially about Church Discipline and accountability is to read what the Puritans wrote. God truly raised up these people who spent their entire lives analyzing and researching individual verses of Scripture and we have most of what they wrote available to us today.

When we do our best to try to obey what Jesus taught about how to handle sinning members- and we find that we didn't handle it properly- then I suggest that first we repent and secondly that we write down our experience so that we may learn from it- but for goodness sake don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

We live in a day when individuality is praised as a virtue. This has gone on for so long that it has spilled over into the Church. So the result of this false belief is that many today truly believe that God is *obligated* to receive us any way that we choose to come to God- and that

it really doesn't matter how the individual members of the Church live as long as we just believe.

But that is not what the Bible teaches and so we must not teach that. As a sinner- coming to God for Salvation- of course we have to come "just as we are"- because we have no other plea except that Jesus' Blood was shed for us. So to be saved- we *have* to come dirty and filthy and sinful and we have to beg God for forgiveness and fall upon His mercy. It is precisely *because* we have lived lives as individuals that has gotten us into all the problems we are in- so yes- we must initially come to God as rebellious individuals who are the victims of "doing our own thing".

But after we are saved- we are clean! After we are saved- we are no longer renegades; we are no longer living unto ourselves; we are no longer supposed to do what is right in our own eyes- and the key word for believers in the Church is not "individuality" but "conformity".

As believers- we are to put on Christ; we are to be conformed to His image and His likeness. We are to walk as Jesus walked; speak as Jesus spoke; and live as Jesus lived; and any deviation from that conformity- is sinful.

So to live my life as I see fit *after* I am saved is wrong. To go through life and feel as though I am not accountable *to* anyone or responsible *for* anyone else is to be just like the pagan world. As a Christian- I must follow Jesus; I must change and I must submit and I must humble myself to the authority of Scripture and I must conform. That is what the Church is all about. But this submission is not simply submission to God. The Bible teaches that not only are we to submit to God- but we are to submit to each other; that we are to love each other and that we are accountable to each other. That is what makes the Church so different from the world.

You see, the Church is an oasis in the midst of a dry desert. It is a shelter from the storms of life; it is a covering from wind and hail. In the Church- there is love and mercy and forgiveness and longsuffering and restoration. But the *reason* that this is true is because we don't act and live and function as those out in the world. We follow what Jesus said to do. That is precisely what makes us different. And if we stop doing what Jesus said and we begin to put on the world- the Church will not be any different than the world.

You see, to be "in the Church" is supposed to mean the same thing

as being “in Jesus”. Those who are genuinely saved have been adopted into the family of God and are members of God’s Church. So as members- we are accountable to God and to each other as to how we live and what we do and say.

Much is made over the fact that those in the Church are supposed to love one another- and that is good because we are to love one another. But that love is manifested in other ways beside simply saying, “I love you.” once a week.

For example- **Romans 15:7** says that we are to “**receive one another**” in the same way that Christ has received us. So, we are to pay no attention to the social status, color, monetary or educational level of other believers. **Romans 15:14** says that we are to “**admonish one another**”. The word admonish means: *to warn or to exhort*. So if we say that we love each other- then part of expressing that love is that we receive each other without prejudice or bias and it also means that we are to warn each other and to exhort each other on a daily basis. That is love.

In **Romans 16:16** God’s Word says that we are to “**salute one another**” with a holy kiss. **1Corinthians 16:20** and **2Corinthians 13:12** says that believers are to “**greet one another**” with a holy kiss.

Galatians 5:13 says that we are to “**serve one another**”. **Ephesians 4:2** says that we are to “**be kind to one another**”. **Ephesians 4:32** says that we are to “**forgive one another**”. **Colossians 3:16** says that we are to “**admonish one another**”; while **1Thessalonians 4:13** says that we are to “**comfort one another**”.

1Thessalonians 5:11 says that we are to “**edify one another**” while **Hebrews 10:24** says that we are to “**stimulate one another**” to love and to good works.

So we can see that if we truly love each other in the sense in which John is talking about here- that exhortation; comfort; edification; provoking to good works; admonishing; serving and forgiving will all be a part of what goes on in the Church among believers.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.