

Intro: One problem that has been a thorn in the side of Christianity since its inception is Christians that do not live according to their profession. Paul addresses Jews in Ro 2:24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." In Titus 2, he speaks to young women, men and slaves, talking of the importance of a lifestyle that matches good doctrine, In Tit 2:5b "that the word of God may not be blasphemed" or Tit 2:7-8 "in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you" or Tit 2:10b that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. James goes so far as to say that if you do not have a life that proves your profession of faith, you do not have faith - Jas 2:14-26. Jesus spoke in a more positive manor in Mt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Many think that doctrine is useless and divisive. Within the first 11 chapters of Hebrews, we do not have specific commands for Christians. Most of the book is speaking to Jews that have associated themselves with the Church, but have not yet trusted Christ. There is a lot of doctrine. This is how most of the letters in the NT are written. They start with doctrine and switch over to behavior that comes from that doctrine. When we arrive in chapter 12, we find some general exhortations for Christians, but nothing specific. When we come to chapter 13, we find specific exhortations for Christians. These specific exhortations will affect how the world views Christianity and therefore Christ. We start with one that Christ spoke of specifically in John 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

XXXVII. Christian Behavior: In Relation to Others

A. Sustained Love- vs 1

1. The primary moral standard for Christianity is Love

a. The kind exhorted here is *philadelphia* - fraternal affection:--brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren.

b. made up of two words

i. *phileo* - kindness, tender affection

ii. *adelphos* - brother, near kinsman; lit. from the same womb

c. three words for Love

i. Agape - People qualify as a 1st class of love

- God's type of love

- self sacrificing love

- we are to love everyone with this type of love

ii. Phileo - People qualify as a 2nd class of love

- see above and below

iii. Eros - People qualify as a 3rd class of love

- sexual love

- where we get the word erotic

- we are to love only our spouses with this type of love

2. Love for the Brethren

a. two possible significant applications in NT

i. Could be speaking to unbelieving Jews

ii. Primarily speaks of love for fellow Christians

b. Let brotherly love **continue**.

i. indicates that it already exists

ii. A natural part of being saved - Ro 5:5; 1Th 4:9;

- cannot be generated - let it
- can be nurtured - 2Pe 1:7;
- is commanded to be done - Ro 12:10; 1Pe 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; 1Jo 3:11; 4:7,20-21
- b/c it can be stifled - Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Tit 3:2-3; Jas 4:11; Heb 12:15; 1Pe 2:1

- iii. Don't need to ask God for more, need to use what He already gave us
 - basic principle of brotherly love is found in Ro 12:10
 - Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love,
 - in honor giving preference to one another;
 - care for fellow Christians more than ourselves based on humility

3. The Importance of Brotherly Love

a. What brotherly love does

- i. It reveals to the world that we belong to Jesus
 - Jo 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - the world is watching and has been given the right to evaluate us on the basis of love
- ii. It reveals to us our true identity
 - 1Jo 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.
 - It gives assurance of our spiritual life in Christ
- iii. It pleases God
 - parents love to see their kids loving and caring for each other
 - Ps 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!
 - 1Jo 3:16 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.

b. What it is based on

- i. Not based on sentimental superficial affections - 1Jo 3:17 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?
- ii. Based on truth - 1Jo 3:18-19 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

c. The cause of lovelessness among Christians

- i. love is dampened by sin - Mt 24:12
- ii. A major sin problem in our society is found in the self esteem teachings
 - a high self esteem is found in one that thinks more highly of themselves than they should
 - a low self esteem is found in one who is still self centered and thinks more about themselves than they should
- iii. Self-love and brotherly love are mutually exclusive
 - Pr 30:15a The leech has two daughters-Give and Give!
 - a large worm with a forked tongue and sucks blood
 - would often gorge itself to the point of exploding
 - spiritually, the leech could be self-love which is never satisfied and has two daughters
 - self-righteousness

-self-pity

iv. Any pride (self-centeredness) is resisted by God - Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5

v. as we walk in humility, love for the brethren will flourish

4. Loving Strangers

a. Strangers

i. can refer to believers or unbelievers

- first responsibility to the brethren - Ga 6:10b ... do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

- but still have responsibility to all men - above; 1Th 5:15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

ii. The danger of being taken is no excuse

b. entertain strangers

i. **philoxenia** - hospitableness:--entertain stranger, hospitality.

- **philos** - dear, i.e. a friend; actively, fond, i.e. friendly (still as a noun, an associate, neighbor, etc.):--friend.

- **xenos** - foreign (literally, alien, or figuratively, novel); a guest or (vice-versa) entertainer:--host, strange(-r).

ii. Stranger

- by definition is someone we do not know personally

- therefore it is easy to be deceived by a stranger - some say they need money to buy groceries for their family but might use it for drugs or alcohol

-we should use common sense

-but we should help

iii. Hospitality

- a standard for NT overseers or bishops - 1 Ti 3:2; Tit 1:8

- a work of a spiritual woman - 1 Ti 5:10

- is one of the ways of showing brotherly love - Ro 12:13

- should be a mark of all Christians - 1Pe 4:9

-not incidental or optional - Mt 25:35

-a basic characteristic

b. for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

i. we can't know how important or far-reaching a simple act of kindness might be

ii. We minister b/c of need not b/c of any consequence or benefit we might foresee

iii. Abraham and Lot as examples

- Gen 18:2-3 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

- Gen 19:2-3 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

iv. When we minister to others, we minister to Christ - Mt 25:40

v. To turn our backs on those in need, is to turn our backs on Him - vs 45

B. Sympathy - vs 3

1. Remember - *mimnesko* - to remind, i.e. (middle voice) to recall to mind:--be mindful, remember.

2. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them

a. The Golden Rule

i. Mt 22:39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

ii. Mt 7:12 "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

b. it is always easier to consider how someone feels when we have been through something, but we are to treat them as we would want to be treated if we were in their situation

2. Remember those who are mistreated

a. *kakoucheo* - to maltreat:--which suffer adversity, torment.

b. some eastern religions teach that the more spiritual you are the less you feel pain,

i. the Bible does not

ii. since you yourselves are in the body also. - how would you feel - 1Co 12:26

c. when we are hurting, the best thing sometimes is to minister to others - Paul and Peter ministered from prison

3. we can minister in three ways

a. we can be there - Ro 12:15

b. we can give direct help

c. we can pray - Col 4:18

4. Bearing each other's burdens fulfills the whole law - Ga 6:2