

HOW TO REALLY LOVE ONEANOTHER I THESSALONIANS 4:9-10

Read I Th. 4:9-12.

In God's book a lack of love is the worst situation a person could enter. In fact, God considers loveless living much worse than things we consider repugnant. Love is critical to God, a lack of it is fatal.

In Ezekiel 16.49 the Lord tells Israel their condition is fatal because of their lack of love!

Ezekiel 16:49 *"Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.*
NKJV

What does the love of Christ look like? It is utterly transforming. Listen to a modern portrait of Christ's love in action.

Boris Kornfeld: A Russian Doctor

No reporters have visited the prison camps of Soviet Russia, unless they have gone as prisoners. So to this day we have little information about the millions who have lived, suffered, and died there, especially during Stalin's reign of terror. But from time to time, scraps of information have filtered out about a few. One of those few was Boris Nicholayevich Kornfeld.

Kornfeld was a medical doctor. We do not know what crime Dr. Kornfeld committed, only that it was a political crime. Perhaps he dared one day to suggest to a friend that their leader, Stalin, was fallible; or maybe he was simply accused of harboring such thoughts. It took no more than that to become a prisoner in the Russia of the early 1950s; many died for less. At any rate, Kornfeld was imprisoned in a concentration camp for political subversives at Ekibastuz.

Ironically, a few years behind barbed wire was a good cure for Communism. Stripped of all past associations, of all that had kept them busy and secure, behind the wire prisoners had time to think. So it was that this Russian doctor abandoned all his socialistic ideals. In fact, he went further than that. He did something that would have horrified his forebears.

Boris Kornfeld became a Christian.

While few Jews anywhere in the world find it easy to accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, a Russian Jew would find it even more difficult. Yet following the Revolution a strange alignment occurred. Joseph Stalin demanded undivided, unquestioning loyalty to his government; but both Jews and Christians knew their ultimate loyalty was to God. Consequently people of both faiths suffered for their beliefs and frequently in the same camps.

Thus it was that Boris Kornfeld came in contact with a devout Christian, a well-educated and kind fellow prisoner who spoke of a Jewish Messiah who had come to keep the promises the Lord had made to Israel. This Christian - whose name we do not know - pointed out that Jesus had spoken almost solely to Jewish people and proclaimed that He came to the Jews first; and, he explained, the Bible promised that a new kingdom of peace would come. This man often recited aloud the Lord's Prayer, and Kornfeld heard in those simple words a strange ring of truth.

The camp had stripped Kornfeld of everything, including his belief in salvation through socialism. Now this man offered him hope -but in what a form! To accept Jesus Christ - to become one of those who had always persecuted his people -seemed a betrayal of his family, of all who had been before him. But Kornfeld pondered what the Christian prisoner had told him. In one commodity, time, the doctor was rich. And the more he reflected upon it, the more it began to change him within.

Though a prisoner, Kornfeld lived in better conditions than most behind the wire. Other prisoners were expendable, but doctors were scarce in the remote, isolated camps. Kornfeld's resistance to the Christian message might have begun to weaken while he was in surgery, perhaps while working on one of those guards he had learned to loathe. The man had been knifed and an artery cut, While suturing the blood vessel, the doctor thought of tying the thread in such a way that it would reopen shortly after surgery. The guard would die quickly and no one would be the wiser.

The process of taking this particular form of vengeance gave rein to the

burning hatred Kornfeld had for the guard and all like him. And at that point, Boris Kornfeld became appalled by the hatred and violence he saw in his own heart. As Kornfeld began to retie the sutures properly, he found himself, almost unconsciously, repeating the words he had heard from his fellow prisoner. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Strange words in the mouth of a Jew. Yet he could not help praying them, Having seen his own evil heart, he had to pray for cleansing. And he had to pray to a God who had suffered, as he had: Jesus.

Doctors in the camp's medical section were also asked to sign decrees for imprisonment in the punishment block. Any prisoner whom the authorities did not like or wanted out of the way was sent to this block solitary confinement in a tiny, dark, cold, torture chamber of a cell. A doctor's signature on the forms certified that a prisoner was strong and healthy enough to withstand the punishment. This was, of course, a lie. Few emerged alive.

Like all the other doctors, Kornfeld had signed his share of forms. What was the difference? But shortly after he began to pray for forgiveness, Dr. Kornfeld stopped authorizing the punishment; he refused to sign the forms. Though he had signed hundreds of them, now he couldn't. Whatever had happened inside him would not permit him to do it. This rebellion was bad enough, but Kornfeld did not stop there. He turned in an orderly.

The orderlies were drawn from a group of prisoners who cooperated with the authorities. They became the cooks, bakers, clerks, and hospital orderlies. They stole food from the other prisoners and would gladly kill anyone who tried to report them or give them trouble.

While making his rounds one day, Kornfeld came to one of his many patients suffering from pellagra, an all-too-common disease in the camps. When the doctor asked the dying patient his name, the man could not even remember it, just after leaving this patient, Kornfeld came upon a hulking orderly bent over the remains of a loaf of white bread meant for the pellagra patients. The man looked up shamelessly, his cheeks stuffed with food. Kornfeld had known about the stealing, had known it was one reason his patients did not recover, but his vivid memory of the dying man pierced him now. He could not shrug his shoulders and go on.

It was preposterous to stand on principle in the situation, particularly when he knew what the orderly might do to him in return. When Kornfeld reported the orderly to the commandant, the officer found his complaint very curious. The doctor had arranged his own execution.

Boris Kornfeld was not an especially brave man. He knew his life would be in danger as soon as the orderly was released from the cell block. So the doctor began staying in the hospital, catching sleep when and where he could, living in a strange twilight world where any moment might be his last.

But, paradoxically, along with this anxiety came tremendous freedom. Having accepted the possibility of death, Boris Kornfeld was now free to live. He signed no more papers or documents sending men to their deaths. He no longer turned his eyes from cruelty or shrugged his shoulders when he saw injustice. And soon he realized that the anger and hatred and violence in his own soul had vanished. He wondered whether there lived another man in Russia who knew such freedom!

Now Boris Kornfeld wanted to tell someone about his discovery, about this new life of obedience and freedom. One gray afternoon he examined a patient who had just been operated on for cancer of the intestines. This young man with a melonshaped head and a hurt, little-boy expression touched the soul of the doctor. So the doctor began to talk to the patient, describing what had happened to him. Once the tale began to spill out, Kornfeld could not stop.

The patient missed the first part of the story, for he was drifting in and out of the anesthesia's influence, but the doctor's ardor caught his concentration and held it, though he was shaking with fever. All through the afternoon and late into the night, the doctor talked, describing his conversion to Christ and his new-found freedom.

The patient knew he was listening to an incredible confession. Though the pain from his operation was severe, his stomach a heavy, expansive agony of molten lead, he hung on the doctor's words until he fell asleep.

The young patient awoke early the next *morning* to the *sound of* running feet and a commotion in the area of the operating room. His first thought was of the doctor, but his new friend did not come. Then the whispers of a fellow patient told him of Kornfeld's fate.

During the night, while the doctor slept, someone had crept up beside him and dealt him eight blows on the head with a plasterer's mallet. And though his fellow doctors worked valiantly to save him, in the morning the orderlies carried him out, a still, broken form.

But Kornfeld's testimony did not die. The patient pondered the doctor's last, impassioned words. As a result, he, too, became a Christian. He survived that prison camp and went on to tell the world what he had learned there.

The patients name was Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

In I Thessalonians Paul notes God's love seven times. Each is a reminder of the wonderful work His love has in us.

- 1.3 His love is our motivation
- 1.4 His love was our origination
- His love is our production 3.6
- His love is our direction of life 3.12
- His love is our confirmation 4.9
- His love is our protection 5.8
- His love is our submission 5.13

Where does this kind of love come from? I Jesus 4.19 from God

THE PROCESS OF LOVE:

1. LET HIS LOVE OUT Abound in love Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, (NKJV)
2. LOSE YOUR RIGHTS Be consistent in love (Phil. 2:2) Philippians 2:2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. (NKJV)
3. LAVISH HIS LOVE ON OTHERS Be fervent in love 1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." (NKJV)
4. LOOK FOR WAYS TO SHARE HIS LOVE. Be sincere in love 2 Corinthians 8:8 I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. (NKJV)

Homework: Love this week by:

- Stop a quarrel by you initiating making up with someone.
- Call and talk to a friend you haven't seen for a long time.
- Choose to trust someone you have had an unfounded suspicion about.
- Ask the Lord to reveal all bitterness in your life and remove them.
- Write a surprise letter expressing your love to someone.
- Express to someone you know well, how much they have meant to you.
- Keep a promise you have made.
- Forget a wrong someone has done to you and ask God to forgive them.
- Stop being overly demanding of your family members.
- Be expressive of your gratitude to others throughout the day.
- Pray for someone who has hurt or tried to hurt you.
- Send a check to someone in need.

- Ask God to help you to love as Jesus loved.

THE TEST WHO DO YOU LOVE?

“Love the Lord your God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 6:5

“Do you love Me more than these?” John 21:15

DO I REALLY LOVE GOD?

“Of all the people in the records of history, past or present, if I had to choose one person - if I had the opportunity - who would I choose?

1. Who would I rather spend time with?
2. Who would I admire the most?
3. Who would I respect the most?
4. Who would I think could help me the most with difficult problems?
5. Who would give me the best counsel?
6. Who would comfort me the most?
7. Who would tell me the truth?
8. Who would give me the greatest courage?
9. Who has done the most for me?
10. Who will do the most for me?
11. Who do I count on for the most important things, such as; life after death, physical life now, abundant life now?
12. Who forgives me the most?
13. Who provides for me the most?
14. Who thinks the highest of me?
15. Who is always there?
16. Who intrigues me and fascinates me the most?
17. Who has the answers to life and living?
18. Who feeds my thoughts with the highest and the most exciting intellectual adventures?
19. Who makes my soul sing with deepest emotion?

JESUS MY LORD AND MY GOD!

If your answer to these questions was Jesus, then you DO love Him.

the love of Christ is:

FILLING LOVE Eph 3.19
GIVING LOVE Eph 5.2
DISCERNING LOVE Phil 1.9-10

Secondly He says to us, STAY AWAKE in v.8 or “be vigilant”. This means to be watchful as we walk through life. Ephesians (2:2, 10;4:1, 17; 5:1, 8, 15) describes this walk as:

- Walk of new Master (2:2)
- Walk of good works (2:10)
- Worthy walk (4:1)
- Walk of new mind (4:17)
- Fragrant walk (5:1)
- Light walk (5:8)
- Wise walk (5:15)

1. Take your thoughts captive. 2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (KJV)
2. Wear the helmet God gave you. Eph 6.17 Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (KJV)
3. Lock your affections upward. Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (KJV) [Remember locking your rates on mortgages and so on. You put in and establish you are serious and plan to follow through.]