

Learning How To Love

Text : **Tit. 2:3-5**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. Jesus taught us that love is the most important element of Christianity.
1. **Matt. 22: 37-38** ... Love is the greatest command. (**key to relationship w/God**)
 2. **John 13: 34 –35** ... Love is the identifying mark of N.T. church. (**only one stated**)
- B. Apostle Peter taught us :
1. **I Pet. 1: 22-** Fervently love one another from the heart.
 2. **I Pet. 4: 8-** Keep fervent in your love for one another. (Cf – **2:17 .. Brotherhood**)
- C. Apostle John taught us :
1. **I John 2: 9-11** ... The one who loves his brother abides in the Light
 2. **I John 4: 8-** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- D. Many Christians do not understand love.
1. They've allowed Hollywood to define love. (**Hollywood = Satan's Capitol**)
 2. They wait to fall in love with their brethren ...
- **Anything one can fall into, he can fall out of.**
- E. Apostle Paul taught that love is a learned behavior.
- Titus 2: 4-** Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children,

TRANSITION :

Let's take a few minutes to consider four practical ways that one learns to love.

1. Spending time with loving people.
2. Working together with the brethren to accomplish a common goal.
3. By bearing one another's burdens.
4. Considering others better than one's self.

I. First, We learn how to love by associating with loving people.

- A. Universally, salesmen and those in leadership are taught to become enthusiastic.
1. Trainees are admonished to seek out enthusiastic people and spend time with them.

2. They are taught to emulate their enthusiastic behavior.
 - a. It doesn't matter if you are not enthusiastic, act as if you are.
 - b. It will feel strange but do it anyway.
 - c. Eventually, you will become independently enthusiastic.
3. **Conversely** : Avoid negative people. (**Lemon suckers**)

B. People learn to love the people they are around.

1. We have learned that segregation creates social discord.
(**By nature people are suspicious of those they don't know and who are different.**)
2. **ILL.-** Danny wrote Sally a letter every day while he was off to war. When he came home he found that she had married the postman.
3. *"Birds of a feather flock together."*
 - a. **I Cor. 15: 33-** "Bad company corrupts good morals."
 - b. Good or bad ... We become like those with whom we associate.
 - c. Associating with loving people can assist us to become loving.
4. **James 4: 4-** **Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself and enemy of God.**

II. 2nd -We can learn how to love by working together to accomplish a common goal.

A. Common goals have long been used to unify peoples.

1. Nero unified Rome by falsely identifying Christians as a common threat within.
2. Learning from Nero, Hitler unified German to fight a common threat – the Jews.

B. A busy church is a unified church.

1. God's army is like national armies, they have morale problems when inactive.
2. Congregations are never more unified than when they are building a new building.
 - a. It requires a common effort and sacrifice.
 - b. When the building is completed strife will occur often if no other goal replaces it.

C. Christians have common goals assigned by God.

1. We are assigned to oppose every work of the devil.
 - a. In the church
 - b. In our lives and our communities
2. We are assigned to train and to develop every member for acts of service and evangelism.
3. The church / Christians are assigned to take the gospel into the whole world.
Truly evangelistic churches seldom have internal problems.

D. We learn to love by sharing our spiritual lives.

1. When Christians get together, they tend to talk about superficial things.
 - a. The weather, Sports , Current events, etc. (**Staying in comfort zone**)
 - b. These are not wrong, but they're not indicative of quality time.
2. We need to spend more time discussing the work and body life of the church.
3. We will never learn how to love each other until we get comfortable sharing our lives.
 - a. We tend to protect the image we project of ourselves.
 - b. Commonness must be developed ... **IT DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN**

III. 3rd - We learn to love one another by sharing each other's burdens.**A. Shared struggles pull people together.**

1. Older people talk about the great depression.
2. War veterans share a special bond.
3. After a natural disaster, people tend to pull together. ... **storms, earthquakes, etc.**

B. Just knowing about the struggles of others can create a caring relationship.

1. **ILL.- Story of childhood friendship developed from sympathy for his struggles.**
2. Weeping with brethren in their tragedy builds a bond.

C. We are wrong to hide our struggles from our brethren.

1. Christians should never act like dogs.
 - a. Dogs go hide when they are sick.
 - b. For a Christian to do so is both unloving and sin. (**prevents others' obedience**)
2. Christians are commanded :

Gal. 6:2- Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.
3. God instructed us to discuss our sins with each other and to pray with each other.

James 5: 16- .. confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that ...

*** Brethren, these are commands, not suggestions or recommendations.**

D. It's hard to be unloving to a brother while praying for him and assisting him.

1. **ILL.- To solve a conflict one elder assigned two brethren to pray 10 min. every day specifically for each other. They became friends.**
2. It is important for brethren to spend time together **in homes, not just at church.**

IV. We learn to love others by counting them as more important than ourselves.

A. We are commanded to place a value on others above ourselves.

1. **Phil 2: 3- 4** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
2. It is hard not to love someone you place above yourself.

B. This is a conscious decision that one must make which may defy perceived reality.

1. It's contrary to one's natural impulses.
2. It doesn't require that one feel all "warm and fussy" toward the one being elevated.
3. It doesn't require that you REALLY believe they're better, just that you value them so.

ILL.- I once had an old car that was a piece of junk, but I wouldn't have sold it for any amount because my father picked it out for me not long before he died. The value I placed on it wasn't based in reality.

C. This assigned value must be manifest in concrete terms – in ACTIONS.

1. **I Cor. 8:13-** If food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.
2. **I Cor. 9:22-** To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.
3. The Christian will alter his lifestyle, even his eating habits to avoid offending the weak.

D. This is the attitude that Christians must have toward Jesus.

1. **Gal 2: 20-** I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives with me; and ...
2. Love for Christ motivates the Christian to totally surrender himself to Christ.

CONCLUSION :

A. Love is a decision that one makes, not something he feels.

B. It is a commitment one makes to God, to others and to himself.

1. Love is often done regardless of what one feels.
2. Sometimes it is done INSPITE of what one feels.

C. Love is a learned skill. (One can be trained to do it. ... Tit. 2)

1. It is NOT something falls into.
2. It is not something one waits to happen.
3. Love is a conscious decision to which one commits himself.

D. We have seen four ways we can learn how to love.

1. Spend time with your Brethren outside structured church activities.
2. Work together toward common goals.
3. Bear one another's burdens and struggles. (and lives)
4. Count others better than self. (Place a higher value to them.)

E. Love is the most important thing for this congregation.

1. **Matt. 22: 37-39**
2. **John 13: 34-35**
3. Loving churches grow.
 - a. They draw people like a magnet.
 - b. Once one learns to love his brethren, **he will learn to love the lost.**
4. Loving churches are more enjoyable.

F. Church is not something we go to, it is what we are.

1. We are the body of Christ on earth.
2. God IS love.
3. Therefore, if we are to be the church of Christ, we must be love.
4. The church is a prelude to Heaven. (**Heaven will not have those who just attend.**)

INVITATION :

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