

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

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Number: 11

Verses: 1 Corinthians 5:8, Ephesians 6:24, Philippians 1:10

Topic: Love Must Be Sincere

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1 Corinthians 5:8 *Therefore let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Ephesians 6:24 *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

Philippians 1:10 *that you may distinguish between things that differ, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Jesus Christ,*

Love and truth hang out together. We are to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) and love must be "without hypocrisy" (Romans 12:9). We want and need both truth and love. True sincere love is what Christianity is about.

Sincerity is a bit more than "truth" as in the sense of merely being factual or straightforward. Sincerity is transparency of soul. Sincerity means that there is no hidden agenda. Love is simply given because you genuinely love that person and want the best for them. It is a straight-out gift with no strings attached. No games, no guile, no hidden payoff, no artful designs.

Sincerity indicates that the intention of the will and thoughts of the mind are "pure". The Greek word in 1 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:10 is *eilikrineia* which means purity, clearness, sincerity, and has the derivation "judged by sunlight" or transparency. In Ephesians 6:24 the word for sincere is *aphtharsia* meaning incorruptibility, purity and sincerity, it also has the sense of perpetuity, as things pure and incorruptible last forever.

Sincere people stand out clearly in a world full of games. Sincerity is such a clear Christian virtue that insincerity is almost a hallmark of the fake Christian. Insincerity devalues the whole person because once you detect it, you never trust them again:

Sincerity makes the very least person to be of more value than the most talented hypocrite. (Charles Spurgeon)

The insincere affections of the used-car salesman do not impress us much, no matter how skilled or well-trained they may be. Insincerity and gullibility go hand in hand. They thrive in each other and often are found in the same person. The best way to stomp out insincerity is to call it out. If you are tough, sharp and discerning and do not receive flattery even for an instant the insincere will realize that they have better prospects elsewhere!

Rebuke flatterers and they will eventually depart from you, and those around you will have a much better chance of being "true friends".

Thus a wise Christian does not believe everyone or everything but is discerning and understanding of people, doctrines and situations:

Philippians 1:9-10 *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and in all perception; (10) that you may distinguish between things that differ, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Jesus Christ,*

Colossians 1:9-10 *For this cause we also, since the day we heard, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, (10) that you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, being fruitful in every work and increasing in the knowledge of God,*

Hebrews 5:14 *But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Our great help in this is the study of the Word of God:

Hebrews 4:12-13 *For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (13) Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

Even Jesus was cautious about people and did not think that anyone was "good":

John 2:24-25 *But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people (25) and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*

Matthew 19:17 *And He said to him, Why do you call Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.*

Jesus in turn warned His disciples about hateful, deceptive and untrustworthy people:

Matthew 10:16-18 *Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. (17) But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the sanhedrins, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. (18) And you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the nations.*

While Jesus taught a lot about faith and about believing God, He does not expect us to believe in other people or their deceptive quackery (which is common in some circles):

Matthew 24:23-26 *Then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ! Or, There! **Do not believe it.** (24) For false Christs and false prophets will arise .. (26) Therefore if they shall say to you, Behold, He is in the desert! Do not go out. Behold, He is in the secret rooms! **Do not believe it.***

Sincerity needs to be tested. As they say in military circles" "In God we trust, everyone else we verify!". Or as politicians say: "The thing you most need in politics is sincerity, if you can fake that, then you have it made!"

Fake sincerity, fake faith and fake love are everywhere in religion. This turns many people off. But God is not fake and we should believe in Him and the Scriptures while testing all things by the Word!

1 John 4:1-3 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (2) By this the Spirit of God is known: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, (3) and every spirit which does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard that it is coming, and now is already in the world.*

1 Thessalonians 5:21 *But test all things; hold fast that which is good.*

Hypocrites and liars hate exposure. If you are wise and discerning and "show that you know" then they will have three choices A) Repent, B) Rage, or C) Retreat. Since repentance among liars is rare, you will generally find that they tend to rage or retreat.

Love must be sincere. But how can we be sincere ourselves?

1. Check and double-check your own motives, "examine yourself". Live in the light!
2. Let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no.
3. Repent of all forms of deceit and manipulation. Even if someone is very gullible, a Christian does not exploit them or lie to them or flatter them or use them.
4. Never promise anything you suspect you may not be able to deliver, just in order to make someone feel good. Don't "dangle carrots" that don't exist.
5. Don't make vague hopeful promises, instead make contractual commitments for which you can be held accountable.
6. Trying is lying. Don't say "I will try to" say "I will get it done.."
7. Don't hide stuff (agendas, the real financial situation etc) from those you love.
8. Be transparent and verifiable, allow people to check you out.
9. Determine to get rid of the lame excuses that you most often use.
10. Don't rely on charm, good looks, personality, wealth etc to "buy you a pass".

Blessings,

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