

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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The Power of Love

By Dee Bowman

The word love is perhaps the most commonly used and misused word in our language. Love has been so exhausted in definitions and quotations in this day, it has lost its effectiveness and its appeal. But love is a powerful word. It is defined as "an intense feeling of deep appreciation or fondness for a person or thing," but love means so much more than that.

Love—I mean true love—is best defined through its expression and demonstration. Love is the most prominent theme through the Bible. It is used when describing the relationships of fathers and sons, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters in Christ, etc. It is most accurately described in the relationship between God and His people. Through love God chose, and continuously forgave, the people of Israel. Through love God sent His Son in order that we may have a hope of heaven. Through love we serve God and we serve each other. Consider the power of love and what it can do for us.

The Characteristics of Love.

Love is from God.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not know love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8). Love is from God and is to be displayed in us. We were made in God's image, and God is love. Therefore we ought to be lovely and loving.

This love is powerful. The wisest of all men, Solomon, mentions in his poetry to his bride that love is as strong as death. Love is also strong enough to cause death. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:16-17).* Love is the greatest power of all. God's love for us is what saves us. It is only through His love and mercy that we will be forgiven.

The Effects of Love.

"Where love is in the home there's happiness, where love is in the home there's joy; the

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the fare may simple be, still it's very plain to see—where love is in the home there's joy" (Hymns for Worship, 308). The natural result of shared love is joy and happiness. Unity, peace and oneness are sure to follow. When considering Christian graces in , we read, "And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." Love has the power to bring families together and keep them there. Love is the foundation upon which the family is built and the glue which holds it together.

Love's power not only holds the immediate family together, but it is the fuel which drives the church family, too. We are to unite ourselves in love; "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" (). Throughout this chapter, Paul speaks of our need to be like Christ and have His attitude in us. It tells us how we are to treat one another. We are not to be selfish or puffed up, but we are to love and serve one another. By doing so we will be serving God and strengthening each other.

Love one another!

Quit Doing Nothing

By Robert F. Turner

The flamboyant evangelist, Dr. Sam Jones, was well known in some circles for his "Quitin'

Meetings." During his revivals he gave people a special opportunity to confess their sins and repent. many quit swearing, quit gossiping, quit drinking, quit smoking, etc. He asked one woman what she planned to quit, and she replied, "I ain't been doing nothing, and I am going to quit doing that!"

Assuming she was true to her word, that was a worthy change. Think what great works most churches could accomplish if about two-thirds of the members would "quit doing nothing."

Yes, I know. The illustration led to an exaggeration. Two-thirds of the members are not "doing nothing." Even those who sleep through the worship are absorbing sound waves, and that makes it easier on the speaker. I learned, long ago, not to expect every called-out person to be all that the Lord says they should be; but I hope and pray I will never give up trying to bring about this condition. When reality becomes cynicism we are done. Aren't you glad the Lord did not give up on you? The Lord was not blinded to the reality of a sinful world when he died for those sins. He must have known that many for whom He died would 'do nothing' about it.

Some brethren "do nothing" because they have been conditioned to think the church does it all — an erroneous institutional concept of church. Some equate the Lord's work with

public service, and think they have no talent for that. Some excuse themselves with the fear they may do something wrong. And some "tried once, but no one paid any attention to me." In all these, we are too much concerned with what people think of us, instead of acting in faith and with a view to pleasing the Lord.

Somehow we must reawaken the concept of individual and direct relationship of each saint to Christ. The "priesthood of believers" must be re-established in our thinking. I must know that regardless of what others do, or do not do; regardless of popularity or opposition, of affluence or famine; I must serve my Master in all good conscience (Rom. 14:4-12).

Failure of Disciples

By Robert Turner

When Jesus sent the twelve to introduce the kingdom of heaven he commanded, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. . . ." (**Matt. 10:7-f.**) But on one occasion they failed in this work.

Luke 9:40 says, "I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not." When Jesus had cast out the demon embarrassed disciples asked, "Why could not we cast him out?" and they were told, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." (**Mk. 9:28-29**) Matthew says Jesus also charged them with unbelief (**17:20**).

Jesus sought to teach his disciples about his coming death (**Lu. 9:44-f; Mk. 9:30-f.**) but they did not understand— language that is very clear to us. "And they feared to ask him." The disciples disputed among themselves "who should be greatest," and Jesus had to rebuke them for their lack of humility. (**Lu. 9:46-f; Mk. 9:33**).

John sought to evade the force of rebuke by telling how he had forbidden one to work miracles in Jesus' name "because he followeth not with us" (**Lu. 9:49-f; Mk. 9:38-f.**); and Jesus had to further rebuke John for his sectarian spirit. Truth and the promotion of Christ's cause are the standards of judgement, not one's social or party relations. John had the cart before the horse.

And then John and James became so indignant because the Samaritans refused to extend hospitality unto the Christ that they suggested, "Let's burn them up," or words to that effect. (**Lu. 9: 51-56**) This just wasn't John's best day. Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

Now consider carefully! Disciples of the Lord failed repeatedly, and for reasons that

may affect our work today. They failed in their work because they lacked dedication. (Faith, prayer, and fasting— a setting aside of time for spiritual matters.) They failed to understand clear teachings of the Lord because preconception or prejudices re. the "kingdom" blinded their eyes to truth. (**Cf. Matt. 16:21-23; Acts 1:6 ;Matt. 13:13-16**) They accepted many truths re. the kingdom but that Jesus should be crucified— never!! And such prejudices made it easy for them to fail with respect to the needful humility. Misconceptions concerning the kingdom led them to want to be "big shots".

A man could do a miracle, in the name of Christ, to promote the cause of Christ— worthy of no censure from the Lord— but be rejected by John on childish and sectarian grounds: "he followeth not us," i.e., does not travel in our party. Then James and John seemed to think they could serve the Lord with a vengeful carnal spirit. They failed to distinguish carnal and spiritual warfare.

If those who walked with the Lord literally, hearing him teach and seeing his wondrous works— if they could fail in these ways, and for these reasons—

what about us? Do we allow a carnal spirit, selfish ambitions, a sectarian concept of church, prejudices, and lack of dedication—to mar our life with FAILURES?