

WHEN DOCTRINE IS IRRELEVANT

There is nothing wrong with sound doctrine. Justification by faith, as expounded so beautifully by Paul, revolutionized the church world when Martin Luther discovered this. Then we have sanctification, redemption, the requirement to be born again, and of course, salvation. But is there a point where doctrine is no longer necessary? I believe there is, and it is when we become the Loving Beings we were predestined (Ephesians 1:11) to be.

We show this by examining some Scriptures that speak of Love:

1) Ephesians 3:17-19 (New International Version): And I pray that you, being rooted and established in Love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how HIGH AND WIDE AND LONG AND DEEP is the Love of Christ, and to know this Love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

This is my favorite verse in the Bible, and although the NIV didn't adhere strictly to the Greek here, I believe the translators captured the essence of what Paul was saying. It is, in fact, the passage I was meditating upon in the days leading up to my born-again experience.

2) 1John 4:7: Beloved, let us Love one another, for Love is of God, and everyone that Loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

This has become another of my favorite verses, and I believe it is one of the most important verses in the Bible. It has this importance for several reasons. First of all, it shows that he who Loves is born of God. Now I ask the reader, do you suppose that being born of God meets the requirement of being born-again?

Secondly, it shows that he who Loves knoweth God. How often we hear that Father is so hard to know; that He is so mysterious and beyond our comprehension. *But this is not what this verse says!* It says so beautifully and simply that if we Love, we KNOW GOD.

Finally, it tells us to Love one another, the command that Jesus gave three times in His final discourse to his disciples in the gospel of John, which we will turn to now.

3) John 13:34,35: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you Love one another; as I have Loved you, that ye also Love one another. (35) By this all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have Love one to another."

Sometimes what the Bible doesn't say is just as important as what it does say. Notice that Jesus doesn't say that if we go to church, know the Bible or quit bad habits that all men will know that we are His disciples. Why, he doesn't even say that by obeying the first and greatest commandment (to Love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and with all our strength...Mark 12:30) will all men know we are His disciples! Simply by Loving one another will all men know that we are His disciples.

4) John 15:12: "This is my commandment, that ye Love one another, as I have Loved you."

5) John 15:17: "These things I command you, that ye Love one another".

So we see that the most important thing on Jesus' mind as He was preparing His disciples for His departure from the world was that we Love one another. Now let's look at another of my favorite verses, 1John 4:16: God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

What a beautiful verse! But how do we dwell in Love? I have found that it is necessary to put ourselves in a position to Love as much as possible. This gets into the importance of works, which we do not do to be justified, but rather to exercise the Love of Christ that is in us. Look at what Jesus and Paul said of the importance of works:

Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Ephesians 2:10: For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is so very important to understand that doing good works is for us, that it is one way we become intimate with the Spirit of God, and how we eventually learn to dwell in Love at all times. My recommendation to the reader is to find out where your *compassion* lies, and begin a ministry in this area. Yes! You can have a ministry, you can be used by Father, and the simplest way to begin is to follow your *compassion*, which is closely tied to Love.

Another way to become intimate with the Spirit is to realize just how much Jesus Loves us, and we use another Bible verse to help us grasp this:

Romans 8:38, 39: For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

As we meditate on this verse and the other verses mentioned earlier in this article, we (sometimes slowly) begin to realize that Christ Jesus Loves us with an overpowering, all consuming, Infinite Love, and this enables us to Love ourselves despite all our faults, sins, bad habits, etc. Then we find the strength to boldly proclaim and exhibit the Love of Christ in our lives.

Another passage I want to discuss comes from the famous “Love chapter”, that is read at so many weddings and special occasions. It is 1Corinthians 13, and I quote it from the New International Version:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not Love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. (2) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not Love, I am nothing. (3) If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not Love, I gain nothing.

(4) Love is patient, Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. (5) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (6) Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the Truth. (7) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

(13) And now these three remain: faith, hope and Love. But the greatest of these is Love.

This passage is so helpful because it allows us to gauge our moment-by-moment behavior and ask ourselves if we are being patient or kind. The more we construct our lives along the definitions of Love given in this passage, the more we are dwelling in Love, and the more we know that Father is happy with us.

It was discussed above that the most important thing to Jesus is that we Love one another. So, for completeness, I close this article with all the verses in the Bible not mentioned yet where it says to do this:

1) Romans 13:8: Owe no man anything, but to Love one another, for he that Loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

2) 1 Thessalonians 4:9: But as touching brotherly Love ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to Love one another.

3) 1 Peter 1:22: Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned Love of the brethren, see that ye Love one another with a pure heart fervently.

(3)

4) 1 John 3:11: For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we

should Love one another.

5) 1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and Love one another, as He gave us commandment.

6) 1 John 4:11: Beloved, if God so Loved us we ought also to Love one another.

7) 1John 4:12: No man hath seen God at any time. If we Love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His Love is perfected in us.

8) 2 John5: And now I beseech thee lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we Love one another.

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