

Love Everybody, Always!

"What The World Needs Now" series- Part 04

Use the next few minutes to connect and fellowship with other members of the group by answering the following questions: What is your favorite waste of time? Why is it your favorite? Why is it a waste of time?

A "let's set the course" illustration:

I once read the story of a little girl who stayed for dinner at the home of her first grade friend. The vegetable was buttered broccoli and the mother asked if she liked it. The child politely replied, "Oh, yes, I love it!" But when the broccoli was passed she declined to take any. The hostess said, "I thought you said you loved broccoli." The girl replied sweetly, "Oh, yes ma'am, I do, but not enough to eat it."

In the same way, we could be asked, "*Do you love your fellow Christians in this church? "Oh, yes," we say, "the Lord commanded us to love one another. I love the Lord's people!"* But do we love them enough to: forgive them, serve them, give preference to them, understand them, or maintain a peaceful relationship with them, AND...to do this with ALL OF THEM? For many of us, our actions belie our true feelings: We love them, yes, but not enough to biblically love them?"

Can you share an example where someone insisted that his or her actions toward you were done in love, but you did not "*feel the love*"?

Within the context of the church, what are our options (negative and positive) when a fellow member is hypocritical, cruel, critical, gossipy, untruthful, and offensive toward us?

The Apostle Paul addresses the early church in Colossi and provides inspiration and instructions for "*loving everybody...always*":

Book: Colossians 3:10-15

Col 3:10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him.

Col 3:11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and He lives in all of us.

Col 3:12 Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Col 3:13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Col 3:14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Col 3:15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Discussion questions to "unpack" the truths of the above passage:

Why is it necessary to put on a new nature (Col. 3:10)? How do we go about doing that? (List the answers found only in verses 10-11)

In verse 11, Paul breaks down humanity into various groups: free, slaves, Jews, Gentiles, etc. How does culture, tribe, religion, station of life, education, etc. influence our ability to love everyone, always?

What thought(s) did Paul share in this passage that should supersede all of our bias and prejudices?

Looking at verse 12 and the 5 articles of “clothing” that Paul told us to put on, discuss some practical ways that each one can be done to the hurtful and offensive people that cross our path:

-tenderhearted mercy

-kindness

-humility

-gentleness

-patience

One article of clothing stands above the rest: Love. Why is it above the rest?

How has our cultural idea of love hindered or affected our obedience to biblical love?

How does verse 15 speak into your life?

Can we experience peace in times of conflict? How?

What could be possibly wrong if peace is missing?

Lets go on mission:

What group(s) of people are personal challenges for you to love...always? What one step can you take this week to live a more loving/grace-filled life toward them?

How can you, this week, love someone who has deeply hurt you? What will that look like?

How do you need to personally prepare yourself to complete the task?