



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Love and Knowledge, not Apathy

“Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).

Scripturally, there is a balance in the Church between teaching, discernment, discipleship etc. and good works, acts of service, fellowship, acts of love, etc. Imbalance is bad.

A church that focuses too much on good works at the expense of Scriptural devotion, for example, loses its foundation in Christ and discernment in His Word. Some modern churches go so far as to neglect the 1st Commandment (to love the God above all things) in place of the 2nd Commandment (to love your neighbor as yourself). This turns churches into “community service centers,” which don’t have *“the knowledge of God”* (2 Cor. 10:5b).

On the other end, a church that focuses entirely on teaching and discernment can neglect the love we are supposed to live through Christ to our Brothers and Sisters and to the lost. *“If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge...but do not have love, I am nothing”* (1 Cor. 13:2). “Nothing” is a strong word. If you don’t have love for your Brothers and Sisters in Christ or for the Lost, you don’t know God, regardless of how much you say you love God and despite your Godly knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures: *“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love”* (1 John 4:8).

To not love is apathy: “lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern” (Google Dictionary). Apathy robs the heart from churches. If you are apathetic towards people, you lack interest in their lives, lack enthusiasm for who they are and what they are up to, and you lack concern for what is happening in their lives. They don’t mean enough to you to be in your heart or on your mind in the good times or bad.

In the bad times, we are to be compassionate towards others. Jesus instructed the Pharisees to *“go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice’”* (Mat. 9:13a). Compassion is to have “sympathetic

pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.” Jesus told His disciples, *“I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat”* (Mk. 8:2). Jesus sympathized with their most basic needs.

Sympathy is “1. feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else’s misfortune. 2. understanding between people; common feeling. Support in the form of shared feelings.” David knew the value of sympathy: *“Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, And for comforters, but I found none”* (Ps. 69:20). In the good times and the bad, Believers are to have understanding and common feelings for one another. But as we already pointed out, we are told to love others as much as ourselves—just as much as we care about our lives, and we work towards satisfying our needs.

The Greek word “agape” means “to have a warm regard for and interest in another, cherish, have affection for, love.” Jesus not only taught and disciplined people, but also had compassion for their simple needs—even hunger. And we are, also: *“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me”* (Matt. 25:37-40).

Are we compassionate enough to be concerned after their lives and have interest in them, enthusiasm for their interests, and concern for their welfare? Or are we apathetic? We pray with Paul, *“that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ”* (Phil. 1:9-10). Even so, Amen.

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