

LOVE'S INCOMPATIBILITIES

INTRODUCTION: In the later years of his life, Robert Louis Stevenson, the famous author, went to the island of Samoa trying to return to good health. There he built a home on a small hill overlooking the sea. He worked his way into the hearts of the natives by his acts of kindness, love, and interest in whatever they were interested in. When Stevenson grew sicker and had more trouble getting around, the natives built a road from his house to the sea. It was called in their language "The Road of the Loving Heart." There is a sense in which every person must climb the road of the loving heart, for we all need love, and we know very well that there some things that are incompatible with love.

I. Love is incompatible with STINGINESS or SELFISHNESS.

A. I Jn 3:17, "Whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his compassion for him, how can the love of God dwell in him?"

B. vs. 18, "Love in deed and in truth."

Love is not merely theoretical, or merely emotional;
it is very practical, too.

C. "This world's goods" = ("bios") "the wealth, resources, or goods by which life is sustained"

"Need" = Gr. "chreia" ("cry-ah" = "the necessities of life"

"to shut, or shut up" = "to shut up compassion so that it is like a thing inaccessible to someone; to have no pity towards one."

Gr. "splanchnon" = "bowels, intestines (the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, etc.). The bowels, in this sense, were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger and love; but by the Hebrews as the seat of the more tender affections, esp. kindness, benevolence, love, compassion: hence our heart (tender mercies, affections, etc.): a heart in which mercy and love reside. Compare the expression "I love you with all my heart."

D. Genuine Christian love can not be reconciled with stinginess or selfishness.

1. What kind of person is a complete egotist? Ans: an infant. The baby is the complete egotist. He feels that all of life is to minister to his needs. Now, this isn't so bad in infants or little children. But it is very inappropriate in the full-grown adult.

2. Cain, with his selfish question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" represents the infantile self-centeredness which is the opposite of Christian love. In many ways we ARE our brother's and our sister's keeper, and our generosity and charity should show it.

II. Love is incompatible with FEAR

A. I Jn 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear; because fear has torment.

He that fears is not made perfect in love."

B. "Fear" = Gr. "phobos" = "terror, dread; that which strikes terror in someone." The word has the added meaning of "punishment." Sometimes we punish ourselves out of some sense of guilt. When we are incapable of genuine Christian love, we may have a psychotic guilt, for which we mistakenly feel that we should be punished. Of course, someone who has this low feeling of self esteem cannot experience true Christian love, and certainly has not been "made perfect in love."

There is a tormenting fear which goes along with a feeling of rejection.

You need to realize that to be rejected by others does not necessarily mean there is something wrong with you. There may be something wrong with them. They may be the ones who should feel guilty, but they don't. You could be the one who has no reason to feel guilty, but, under the circumstances, you do.

C. Real Christian love is inconsistent with fear.

1. As Christians, what do we have to fear?

- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)
2. "All we have to fear is fear itself" -FDR
 3. One of our problems today is that so many Baptist churches are afraid to stay in the historical tradition of standing firmly for the NT truths of the autonomy of the local church and the priesthood of the believer. They have observed that many of the rapidly-growing, efficient churches today are the non-traditional types led by autocratic pastors and executive boards that carry out his orders and give him whatever he wants. They desperately try to give the sheep what they want, even if it means following the ~~false~~ shepherd over the cliff.

III. LOVE is incompatible with HATE.

Coleridge said that "To be wroth with one we love works like madness in the brain."

We could add that to harbor hatred for anyone we know or don't know, works like a madness in the brain, which destroys our ability to love God.

- A. I Jn 4:20, "If a man says 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar..."
- B. "Hate" is a trans. of the Gr. word "miseo," = "to pursue with hatred, or to **detest** someone."
- C. Of course, hatred is incompatible with love. It is the opposite of Love. Often some Christians try to justify their own hatred by saying that God hates some things (Prov. 6:16), that the Bible implies in some places that it is OK to hate, to hate lying, for example, and to hate those who hate God. But the standard of Jesus Christ in the NT is higher than those standards and examples in the OT. It is a violation of sound principles of scriptural interpretation to equate these OT passages with the teachings of Christ in the NT. Jesus said it is no longer acceptable to hate our enemies, but we are to love them instead. We are no longer allowed under the law of Jesus Christ to hate those who hate us, but we are commanded to love them and do good to them (Lk 6:22,27). ~~The Psalmist boasted~~

~~that he hated the congregation of those who seemed to him as evildoers (Ps. 26:5), but Jesus taught his disciples to love and bless those who persecuted them, for those who were not against him were for him. We are taught by our Master to tolerate and love those who have a different way of worshipping God and a different way to express their faith in him. In no case are we allowed to call down fire from heaven upon them, either actually, or metaphorically in a pious religious attitude of self righteousness and bigotry.~~

- D. Christian love cannot dwell in the same heart as hate, whether it be hatred of another individual, or group of people, for any reason. It cannot be justified. But, on the other hand love for others, whether christians or not, will not insure that they will love you or treat you fairly in return. They may return your generosity by knocking you down, and then while you are down they may try to kick your teeth out. Jesus never said it would be easy to be a christian. And often the greatest obstacles will be other christians. But we should remember what Phil Lineberger, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Tyler Texas, said at the General Assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Fort Worth, just three months ago: "Jesus teaches us that there are no shortcuts to anyplace worth going. Until we (free and cooperative Baptists) make a daring, courageous commitment to go into this world with redemption in faith and hope, we will not be able to understand what it is to be a child of God."

IV. LOVE is incompatible with DISOBEDIENCE.

- A. I Jn. 5:2, "By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep his commandments." Also see vs. 3, "that we keep his commandments." Also see 2 Jn, vs. 6, "walk after his commandments."

B. The expression "to keep" in "keep his commandments" means to attend to carefully, or to observe, or obey."

1. The word "commandment" usually means an order, command, charge, precept, injunction; that which is prescribed to one by reason of his high office. In the OT it was often used in reference to the Mosaic Law or Jewish tradition.

2. Here in the writings of John in the NT it seems to be defined as essentially referring to believing in Jesus Christ and loving one another (I Jn. 3:23). His commands are not burdensome (I Jn 5:3). They are not a long list of "do's" and "don'ts." They don't include a long list of certain doctrines and dogmas and theories of inspiration which insult our divinely given intelligence and sense of morality.

3. Christ's commands are easily summarized: believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, love one another, and go preach and teach his gospel of love to the whole world. If we do that, we'll have our hands full. We can work together with other Baptists and other Christians who share the same faith, love, attitude and sense of mission. We'll support missions agencies and missionaries that work in mutual respect. We'll encourage the spiritual freedom in which the missions partners recognize and welcome differences of outlook and diversity of practice. These are the principles of missions which, sadly, many Baptists refuse to subscribe to. But we who are more moderate in faith, and open in christian love, are happy to state publicly, that this is the kind of christian missions we want to support and are happy to support.

That's the kind of church I'm seeking to be a part of, and if we can't FIND it, perhaps we should BUILD it for the glory of God and for the witness of the gospel in the years to come! That's the kind of journey I am ready to take with other pilgrims who are of like mind and heart. How about you?

D# 109
"Loveinc"

8-2-92 5:00 p.m. Fellowship Gr. Byrd's house, T.I.

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