

Buzz

Voting at the Box Office

Attending a movie on opening weekend sends a message to Hollywood.

Enemies of Love

When we learn to recognize the enemies of love, we become aware of the devil's strategies.

Love is the source of power for our successful Christian life. Galatians 5:6 even tells us that our faith works through love.

Satan is continuously sending situations our way to tempt us to yield to the opposite of love, which is selfishness.

As we study God's Word, we learn what authentic love is and what it is not. First Corinthians 13 reveals its attributes: "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (vv. 4-8, NKJV).

When we learn to recognize the enemies of love, we become

aware of the devil's strategies. When he tempts us with them, we can quickly respond: "No, devil! I refuse to do that. It's unloving, and I choose to walk in love!"

Some people don't realize that resisting temptation is that simple. Notice, I didn't say easy. I said simple. But it is.

Any attitudes or actions opposed to the character of love would be an enemy of love. Let's look at some of the perpetrators found in 1 Corinthians 13.

There are envy, jealousy, and feelings of discontent because of other people's advantages, success, possessions, or positions. Then there is pride, an inflated opinion of one's self evident through haughty or arrogant behavior. Bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness are enemies that can literally ruin us if we allow them to fester.

The foremost enemy of love, I believe, is strife.

"Strife" means "vigorous or bitter conflict, discord and antagonism; to quarrel, struggle or clash; competition; rivalry."

James 3:14-16 tells us clearly, "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (KJV).

Strife is devilish. It opens the door for the enemy to bring confusion and evil into our lives. When you were born again, the Bible says you were delivered out of the devil's control, out of darkness and into the kingdom of God's Son (see Col. 1:13). The devil lost his lordship over you and you received salvation.

Salvation includes all the blessings of God. Peace, healing, well-being and prosperity belong to you the moment you become a child of God.

But Satan doesn't want you to enjoy those blessings. He doesn't want you to be healed, happy, and prosperous because if you are, other people will notice and want the same quality of life you have. They'll give their hearts to God because of the goodness of God they see in your life. That's the purpose of the flow of God's love.

The devil can stop the flow only by tricking you into opening the door to strife. He brings you an opportunity to have a conflict with someone because he knows that the moment you step into strife, the moment love is compromised, he has prevented not only you but also someone else from walking in the blessings of God.

In every relationship—at home, work, school and church—make the commitment to keep strife out. Commit to walk in love. If at any moment you slip up and get into strife, simply make it right.

Say to the other person: "Please forgive me. I love you. I don't want to be in strife with you."

Then say to the Lord: "Father, I repent of that attitude. I refuse to yield to strife or to any enemy of love. I choose to walk in love."

Keep acting on what you know about love from God's Word. Keep identifying the enemies of love, and you'll continue to mature.

Walk in love. When you do, you will keep your faith strong and the blessings of God will be continually evident to everyone ... for love never fails!

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Jesus and the Immigrants

God's perspective isn't based on right-wing or left-wing rhetoric.

Saving Our Teens

How much time and energy are we willing to spend to evangelize our youth?

Let's Shift the Nation

If mobilized, Pentecostals and charismatics can make a big difference.

El Predicador Bilingue (The Bilingual Preacher)

Argentina-born evangelist Luis Palau is using high-energy festivals to reach a new generation with the gospel.

FeedBack

What If Jesus Doesn't Come Back This Year?

Think about it. God wants us to live our lives with a long-range view of the future.

I'm not a controversial kind of gal. Controversy's not my shtick nor is it a factor, for me, in what New York Times best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell calls "stickiness." In fact, I look forward to controversy about as much as I look forward to catching the Ebola virus or bird flu.

Why the aversion to debate? I find that although a small segment of the population tends to come alive at the smell of political, cultural or social disagreement, the vast majority of people I know are turned off or prematurely shut down at the whiff of conflicting ideas.

It's one thing to have an opinion. It's another thing to inflict it on someone else in the form of verbal haranguing.

That's why I always feel a little edgy when I'm cornered by someone who just has to know my opinion on a topic such as women in ministry, homosexuality and the church, or religious involvement in politics. It's at these moments that the idea of crawling under the table or running to the ladies room is most appealing. "Waiter, check, please!"

I used to think that people liked to ask me tough, controversial questions because I am a writer and speaker. Now I realize it's for a much less profound reason: I have a pulse. That little heartbeat qualifies me to weigh in on some pretty heavy issues.

One question that caught me a little off-guard recently—with no table or restroom in sight—was whether we are living in the end times. It's a simple question, but what surprised me most about it was not the question itself but rather who was asking it.

The person wasn't someone who had stayed up too late watching Jack Van Impe on TBN. Rather, he was a young, hip 20-something. I could tell from the sincerity in his eyes that he really wanted to know. And perhaps he was tapping into a question we all quietly ask ourselves from time to time.

Are we living in the end times?

I recognized something about the question. After you interview enough people you discover a simple but profound journalistic truth: If you ask the wrong question, then you'll get the wrong answer. So I gently prompted the 20-something to reword the question.

I think you mean, "What if we are living in the end times?"

Without an exit sign in sight, I continued, "And that begs the

question, What if we're not?"

"What do you mean?" he pressed.

"Well, I think when we look around, it's hard to deny that on many different levels—politically, socially, economically and religiously—things on the world's clock are slowly winding down. I think we all have a sense, a quiet wonderment, of, Could this be it? That means every day of knowing and following Jesus is all the more important.

"But what if we're not living in the end times?" I went on. "What if it's our children's generation or our children's children's generation? Or a generation 100 or even 1,000 years from now?"

"Then what are we doing to raise them up? What are we doing to reach out, impart and breathe life into their souls as vibrant carriers of the faith?"

"Whether or not we are living in the end times, we need to live with one arm reaching forward and one reaching back," I concluded. "We need to be learning and gleaning everything we can from the generation that has gone before us and at the same time imparting as much as we possibly can into those who will follow.

"In other words, regardless of what age we're in, we're still the plan. We're still the ones called and created to take the wildest good news to the ends of the earth and beyond. We're still the ones designed to transform our world, to embroider a God-infused design on the fabric of our culture and to raise up those who carry not just the message but the life of the message to the next generation."

I paused.

"Are you in?" I asked.

"Yeah," he replied.

“Me, too.”

And in that brief moment I realized that the presence of conflicting ideas—that which pushes us forward and presses us back—isn't so bad after all. Maybe there is something that can be learned from controversial issues. Maybe the next time one of those topics comes up, I won't be so quick to run away.

So, how do you feel about women in ministry?

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Enjoy Gifts from Heaven

God has given you spiritual gifts. But your life is also a gift—and so are the opportunities you have to serve Him.