

Projecting Love Requires Self-Examination

I believe we are living in a time of great opportunity. We are in a season when we are seeing the Word of God revealed in front of our eyes as prophecy is being fulfilled.

We are noticing the signs of the times. "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled. For such things must happen, but the end is still to come" (Mark 13:7). "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and glorious day of the Lord comes" (Acts 2:20).

We don't know the day or the hour (Matt. 24:36), but we are being warned. With this warning we are being given great opportunity to repent, forgive and extend God's love.

We don't have to be like the virgins who didn't have their lamps ready and filled with oil when the bridegroom came (Matt. 25). We have time to be ready, willing and prepared. We still have time to offer forgiveness to others, repent of our sin and disciple people to live a life for Christ.

In 2 Peter 3:14, it says we want to be found diligent by Christ, in peace, spotless and blameless when He comes. That is accomplished through forgiving ourselves and forgiving others. As we receive and offer forgiveness we will be found in agreement to the will of God.

As we approach the end times and people face challenges we need to be the light in the world. People in the world are going to look to us. We need to be so emptied of ourselves and our emotional bondage that we can be useful for the kingdom. We can't effectively be the light in the world when we are living in sin, when we harboring unforgiveness or have areas in which we need emotional healing. Our primary focus should be to get the junk out of our trunk (ourselves) so we can love

and serve God and people.

It is all about God's love, showing His love and being His love. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to come in and convict us and direct us into a place of holiness. The world needs love and God desires to use us to convey his love. When we truly begin to love in the fullness of God, we will be involved in fewer arguments, (just one example of the many benefits we will receive being love).

What once seemed important enough to dispute over now seems insignificant. The self-centered side of us will disappear. True love thinks of the other person before ourselves. We have been taught to love, but now we need to example how to truly extend both the *agape* love of the will and the *phileo* love of the emotion.

In order to be love, we must first self-examine and discover where we are living in sin and unforgiveness. Emotional ailments and ungodly physical actions hold us in bondage from which we need to receive deliverance. How can we truly manifest the love of God and teach others to do the same when we are harboring grudges, unforgiveness and offense?

In 1 John 2:9-10 it says, "Whoever says he is in the light but hates his brother is in darkness even until now. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling."

God needs us to release those transgressions so that He can fill us with an even greater measure of His love.

As prophecy continues to release, as the financial economy of the world is unstable, as tornadoes and hurricanes destroy land and people, as diseases continue to manifest, people are going to need hope and assurance. Hope and assurance is found in Jesus Christ, through us.

How can they find the solace they seek when we are dealing

with our own inadequacies and when they see us living in anxiety, stress and fear? What makes what we have (the love of God) attractive when we are displaying things that are not of God?

What attracts one person to another? People are attracted to a person who operates in love, a person who is caring, giving, longsuffering and patient.

These are some of the characteristics of love that we should emanate. When we put on love and take out the things of the flesh, people will be drawn to us, but more, they will be drawn to Christ in us. The Bible instructs us to put on Christ. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14). When we put on Christ and repent, we are putting on love. In the end times, people are going to be seeking support and strength from those who are love, those who are strong in their faith.

We are witnessing the indication that the end times are approaching. The good news is that we have been forewarned and still have time to repent and change our ways. When we remove sin from our lives, when we forgive those who have offended us, we can adequately be love to those around us. We need to exude the love of God in every instant, every situation and every moment. We need to seek God to remove everything that is unproductive and unfruitful in our lives. We need to allow Him to reveal to us and convict us of our sin in order to remove every unclean action, thought and word from our lives. We need to not rebel against Him when He reveals our sin to us.

Repenting is acknowledging the mistakes we have made, receiving the forgiveness Christ purchased at the cross and then extending that forgiveness to those who have wounded us. The sin we live in could be adultery, fornication, anger, unforgiveness or manipulation, just to name a few. In order for love to come into us at the measure that God desires, we

must remove what is not love, things such as bitterness, resentment, rejection and pride.

I was recently grieved as I studied the book of Revelation at the number of people that didn't repent. With everything that was happening, the bowls poured out and the plagues being released upon the earth, the people did not repent and change their behavior. They had seen the hand of God released and still chose not to follow Him. The thought that entered my mind was how this parallels to what is happening in the world today. People are living in sin and are unrepentant or even unaware of their sin.

In the book of Revelation people kept in their wicked ways and they kept rebelling even though they saw the hand of God. We have the Word of God right here in front of us! It is our great instruction book! It tells us what to do: repent and be love! We are also told of the blessings that those who follow Him will receive. The word of God says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). I want to see God. I want to get to heaven and hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23).

As we release people from the offenses against us, from the hurt, pain, the need to justify and the desire to get retribution, we not only release others, but ourselves. Christ extended forgiveness to us: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). It is an act of God's great love that he gave to us when we extend it to others.

When we stay in perpetual relationship with our Father, he will show us areas of our lives that need to be cleaned up and purged. When we are purged of the junk in our trunk, than we have more of him to give out! We cannot give out what we don't have. Therefore, "But above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14).

When we put on love, we can be help in the time of need to a hurting and confused world. People will desire what you have: the God of love. Forgive as you have been forgiven by Christ and put on Christ, the God of love!

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