

The University Heights Messenger

October 3, 2010

Just Thinking About Love

Wednesday evening's Bible class has me thinking about love. Whenever I find myself reflecting on that topic I tend to think about Romans 12:9a. "**Let love be genuine.**" This is agape love and according to Mr. Thayer it speaks of "*affection, good-will, love, benevolence.*" It is also something that is demonstrated in action.

Interestingly, Romans 12:9-21 is a very comprehensive list of the attributes and characteristics prominent in the life of every serious child of God. It is no coincidence that Paul begins this section by reminding us of the need to let our love be genuine for the remainder of the list cannot exist unless love exists first.

What does Paul mean when he tells us to let love be genuine? Some of your translations may say, "Let love be without dissimulation." The word for dissimulation is *anuprokritos* and literally means "*unfeigned, undisguised*" (Thayer). We must let our love exist free from hypocrisy. In other words, my love for the brethren must not be pretend, hypocritical love.

It might interest some, if you don't already know, to learn the origin of the term "hypocrite." Originally the word was used to describe the Greek actors who wore masks to play a role. They were pretending to be something that they weren't. Throughout the ages the word has come to define those who pretend to be what sincerely and genuinely they are not.

How can we show that our love for our brethren is real and not something feigned or pretended? **First**, we can make sure that we aren't talking about them in a negative fashion every chance that we get. Unfortunately there

are some Christians whose company I avoid because I know that if given the opportunity they will happily point out every flaw, real or imagined, of their brethren. If they say it *to me* when I'm present than I can only assume they say it *about me* when I'm not. That's not letting love be genuine.

The next verse (Romans 12:10) goes on to add a bit more detail to the command of verse 9. "**Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.**" Mr Thayer says about the term "brotherly affection," "*the love of brothers (or sisters), brotherly love...in the NT, the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren.*"

Don't you find yourself becoming defensive when someone begins to talk negatively about your family members? I know I certainly do. Because our brethren comprise our spiritual family we ought to treat them *as family*. I make it a point not to speak negatively about my parents or my sister. I have not always succeeded in that but I do my best. The same should be true in my relation to the brethren. I have determined that my brethren will never hear me gossip or speak in mean-spiritedness about my brethren. Don't I owe that to those I am to consider brothers and sisters? Don't we all?

Second, in making sure that our love for the brethren is real and not pretend, let us pay close attention to the instruction from the latter part of verse 10. "**Outdo one another in showing honor.**"

As I have researched this phrase, it seems that this may be a place where the ESV (the version of the Scriptures I use) perhaps does not best fit the meaning. Instead of outdoing one another, the more likely idea seems to be that of "*to go before and show the way, to go before*

and lead, to go before as leader” (Thayer). Through our own behavior, we ought to lead the way in setting an example to our fellow believers when it comes to showing honor.

As we consider this I cannot help but be reminded of Paul’s instruction from Philippians 2:3-4. **“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”**

Let’s consider what we’ve seen thus far. Our God wants us to love our brethren so thoroughly that we could for all intents and purposes consider ourselves having been born from the same mother. In strength of love and affection for each other, true brothers and sisters. Not only that, but He wants each of us to consider ourselves less significant than our brethren. I know that flies right in the face of what we are taught in our country with everyone complaining about their rights. Think about it, though. If we truly considered ourselves less significant than our brethren, why would we involve ourselves in constant criticism of them and insults to or about them? Also, if we truly considered ourselves less significant than our brethren, we would find ourselves less deeply hurt when they slip up and insult us.

Is it easy to develop this type of love? No, though it does get *easier* as we become more like our Lord. As we consider ourselves and our relationship to our brethren, let’s let our love be genuine. Please think about these things.

AL

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Janet Brundige continues to recover from her shoulder surgery.

Dennis Brennan, a friend of Sandra Russell, is experiencing significant health problems.

John Bennett, an acquaintance of Jim Edwards, has been transferred to Cardinal Hill after his accident.

Sara Phillips had surgery on her vocal cords last week and continues her recovery.

Our members: **Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin**

Others: **Robert and Sarah Brundige, Warfel family, Gail Hunter, Kay Montgomery, Jean Gartland, Ruel Baker, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt, the Shamas family.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The men’s meeting will be next Sunday at 3:30.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sunday: Job 35-36, Ps 59, Luke 23
Monday: Job 37-38, Ps 60, Luke 24
Tuesday: Job 39-40, Ps 61, John 1
Wednesday: Job 41-42, Ps 62, John 2
Thursday: Prov 1-2, Ps 63, John 3
Friday: Prov 3-4, Ps 64, John 4
Saturday: Prov 5-6, Ps 65, John 5

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. The Merging Image 6
“The times of ignorance...”
(Acts 17:22-31)

Sunday PM. Because It’s Good For You
(Philippians 4:4-9)