

Caring for the Needs of Others
Lesson 4 – Learning to Love my Brethren
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Introduction: God's forgiveness should change my attitude and relationship with others.

- A. Conversion brings forth a new creation. **(2 Cor 5:14-17)**
 - 1. When one repents and finds real forgiveness it *changes everything*.
 - 2. Once we die to self we now live for God. We want what God wants.
 - 3. Self must be crushed in conversion. This is the beginning of a lifetime battle.
- B. It should be no surprise that God now points us to serve our brethren. **(1 Pt 1:22)**
 - 1. This will be the ultimate battleground with our fight against selfishness.
 - 2. Love must be taught. Various levels of love must be learned in marriage.
(Titus 2:3-4)
 - 3. We must make a consistent effort to renew our minds in these things.

1. Love will look at the needs of others

- A. We need both teaching and examples to learn how to love. **(2 Pt 1:5-9)**
 - 1. Consider the diligence it takes to add these things to your faith. Failure to add means that you have forgotten that you were forgiven.
 - 2. Note that brotherly kindness and love is at the top of the pyramid.
 - 3. We need the kind of teaching that will produce character, self-control and an awareness of God's nature and presence *before* we can love as we ought.
- B. Because I am having continual blessings from God I can be motivated to consider others needs ahead of my own. **(Phil 2:1-4)**
 - 1. This is a very difficult thing to do without a *constant thankfulness* to God.
 - 2. We need to see others do this to help us learn. Consider how we learn at work.
 - 3. What are the needs of my brethren? I first must interact and listen.
- C. I must view my brethren as a fellow member of Christ's body. **(1 Cor 12:20-26)**
 - 1. When we truly receive a brother as we ought, we will show it.
 - 2. On what basis do I receive another? Will it be God's standard or man's?
(Rom 15:5-7)
 - 3. We are taught to be cautious in our relationships. Will we believe that another has become a Christian? Can we forgive as God has?

Questions

- 1. How does the conversion process change everything about us?
- 2. Is it optional to love our brethren? To what degree should we love?
- 3. Why do we need to be taught how to love? What is the best way to accomplish this?
- 4. What needs to be taught first before we can effectively love our brethren? Why is there a constant need of this kind of teaching?
- 5. What does a person do when he is vividly aware of what God is doing for him? How does this help us serve others?
- 6. What does it mean to be in the body of Christ? How does that change our attitudes?

II. Three basic needs of every Christian.

A. To be included without partiality. (James 2:1-5)

1. The world constantly rejects others on the basis of worldly standards.
2. The early church had to overcome and correct times where partiality crept in. **(Acts 6:1; Gal 2:11-13)**
3. On what basis are we tempted to exclude others? We tend to associate with those whom we have the most in common and with those who can help us.
4. We can easily have those who “are on the outside looking in.”
5. We need help to see those in need and to give others part of our lives.
6. How do we respond to the socially awkward person? **(1 Cor 12:23-25)**
7. Consider the needs of the different classes of people who obeyed the gospel. **(Gal 3:27-28)**
8. The weakness of my brethren is no excuse to discard them! **(Mt 15:22-28)**

B. To have others to associate with and share my life. (1 Cor 12:26)

1. The association of brethren occurred on a daily basis. **(Acts 2:46-47)**
2. This should occur because we *individually want to* and thus will take initiative.
3. A sure sign of a dying faith is when we *put off our opportunity to serve others* on the collective work of the church or on others.
4. Jesus knew that this kind of unselfish love and devotion to one another would furnish one of the most powerful signs to an uncaring world. **(Jn 13:34-35)**
5. We have to make wise judgments in how we use our time.

C. To have those who will care enough to teach me and correct me. (Rom 15:13-14)

1. A coward will tell you what you want to hear because he does not want to pay any price for your sake.
2. We cannot let our assemblies be off limits to warning and rebukes in the name of “positive” Christianity. **(Heb 10:24-25; 1 Cor 14:24-25)**
3. People can discern the worldly religion that costs nothing.

III. Be willing to pay the price!

A. This kind of love does not come naturally, it is hard.

1. When you love, you put yourself at risk.
2. When you love, you give of your life... your money, your time, your emotions.
3. When you love you invest in another without knowing that any good will come.

B. Why would one be so foolish to place these valuable things in the hands of another? Because that is what God did for us. (1 Jn 4:19-21)

Questions

1. How does the world justify excluding others? Have those standards come in the church?
2. Who do we tend to associate with and who do we tend to exclude? Who does the Lord want us to include?
3. Does worldly attitudes among Christians justify me in separating myself from them?
4. What happens to an individual who has no one to share their life with?
5. Why is correction and exhortation challenging? How do we find the strength to do it?
6. Why would we risk being hurt by others?