

Biblical Counseling Center's eCounselor's Weekly guide, encouraging counselors and all believers in discipleship and daily growth.

Sometimes it's Hard to Love *by Jeff Temple*

People rarely seek counseling immediately when a problem occurs.

Instead, problems fester and opinions about one another usually go from bad to worse. Often responding more by opinion than truth, they focus on offensive circumstances and experiences and how it affected them. This creates even more accusatory thoughts about the other person, promoting a cycle of harsh judgments and reactions.



Analysis of this cycle is that each person lives more by their own belief system than by convictions of their faith in Christ. Distrust escalates. From then on there is little hope unless each one chooses to love the other as Christ has loved them. Love has the greatest power to change our hearts and circumstances (1Cor 13: 1-8a; Prv 10:12; 17:9; 1Pt 4:8).

What does having the mind of Christ look like practically?

Jesus said, Love one another as I have loved you (Jn 13:34-35). Stopping to consider how Jesus loved us is clarifying. He modeled love by dying so that we might live (Jn 15:12-13; Gal 2:20; 1Jn 4:9). Love is terrifying because at times we must suffer at the hands of others. It is the greatest heartache imaginable when loved ones are the cause (Ps 55). Yet Christ endured such suffering as an example for us (1Pt 2:21-25) so we must learn to think and act like Christ as we relate to others.

The love of Christ is the only solution to relational conflicts.

We are to no longer live for self, thinking and doing whatever we want, but to have our minds reflecting HIS mind in all realms of life (Php 2:1-11).

First, we must change the way we view our life, remembering we were saved not only to have a personal and eternal relationship with Christ, but also to be in a community here and now with one another (Eph 4:1-16). Our command is to be imitators of Christ (Eph 5:1-2) so that those who are in opposition may be convicted and repent (1Pt 3:8-17, 2Tim 2:25) as we humbly model the character of Christ to a needy world.

Second, we are to make disciples (Mt 28:18-20) by teaching and admonishing one another and to present one another to Christ as spotless and mature (Col 1:28-29; 3:16-17; Eph 5:26-27). We are to reconcile others to Christ and to the Father (2Cor 5:18-21). Love is not to benefit self, but others. When we forget who we are in Christ, a member of His body, His Bride, the glorious Church, we begin to live for self instead of for Christ.

So how do we attain His identity and walk in His love?

First, read John 21:15-18 and insert your name for Peter's. "_____, do you love me?" How do you regularly show your love for Christ? In what ways have you rejected Him in your life? Has He forgiven you? If He has, then humility is the result and you should be willing to feed Christ's sheep.

Second, read Psalm 139 and find each verse that shows how God continually loves you. Meditate on Ephesians 1-2-3 and list all the ways God identifies you as His very own. Memorize Philippians 1:6 and then walk confidently in His grace.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6

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