

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:
Sunday, August 7th:

Bible Classes

Song Leader

..... Eddie J. Hammond
Bible Reading (2 John 1:1-13)
..... Eddie L. Hammond
Prayer
..... Jerry Dickey

Morning Worship

Song Leader

..... Eddie J. Hammond
Prayer
..... Ray Tucker
Lord's Supper
Presiding Rocky Rose
Assisting Larry White
Serving Rodney McCrary
..... James McConnell
..... Ethan Pressnell
..... Aric Butler
Closing Prayer
..... James word

Evening Worship

Song Leader

..... Phil Pressnell
Bible Reading (3 John 1:1-14)
..... Mike Rogers
Prayer
..... Brad Hammond
Lord's Supper
..... Rocky Rose
..... Larry White
Closing Prayer
..... Jimmy Glass

Volume XII

August 7, 2005

No. 32

Love's Motivation: Emotion or Volition?

Curtis Pope

All who have ever had parents take an active interest in their love life can testify to the fact that love, as we use the word in English, is very difficult to command or force. Whenever my parents would hint around about how some girl at school or church was so "attractive," or how she was such a "sweet girl" with a good "personality," it would almost always give the "kiss of death" to whatever chances the budding romance might have. I don't know why this was so, but I know it was; and my continuing contact with young people makes me believe that this is the contemporary conventional wisdom as well.

Modern usage of the word love gives the idea a completely emotional connotation, making biblical commands to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44) or to "love one another" (John 15:17) hard for us to understand. Therefore, when we as Christians try to feel this emotion toward those who are our enemies or toward brethren with whom we seem to have little in common, we often give up after growing discouraged. It's just as if our Heavenly Father has suggested that we feel an emotion toward one when the "chemistry" is not there. Realizing that the Lord would not expect of us something we could not do, the problem must rest in our understanding of the word love.

In the language which the Holy Spirit chose for the New Testament, there were several kinds of love, each expressed by a different word. Two of these words which describe love for one's family (storge) and passionate love (eros) do not appear in the New Testament. Two other nouns describing love and their verb forms are quite common in the Scriptures. These words describe human friendship or fondness (philia/phileo) and the kind of love which

God has shown toward us (agape/agapao).

From the meaning of three of these words it would appear that early Christians would have had the same trouble that we do understanding love as anything other than an emotion. However, the word used most often in the New Testament (agape) does not suffer from such a limitation. This kind of love is the kind that God showed toward us through a deliberate exercise of His will. This love was not dependent upon our worthiness to be loved, but simply on the Lord's choice to love us. I believe this love is best expressed in Romans 5:8 where Paul says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When we were at our most unlovable, when humanity was crucifying the Lamb of God, spitting in His face and cursing His name, Christ died for us. I must confess that, in a similar position, I would have decided that mankind just was not worth the trouble and sacrifice, and I would have called in the angels, nuked the place, and gone back home. But, instead, my Lord died alone for me.

Based on such a dramatic demonstration of love on the part of Deity, we have a wonderful example of how we are to fulfill our obligations to love. "Love one another" in John 15:17, in the light of Jesus' sacrifice, means more than just "like other Christians if they are likable." It means that we have the sacred duty to show our love for God by showing active good will toward His people in spite of their unworthiness, their eccentricities, or their personalities. When Jesus said, "Love your enemies" in Matthew 5:44, He knew that He would show us how by dying for the very ones who put the lash to His back and the nails in His hands. Our job, then, is to do good and pray for those who mistreat us, separating the sin from the sinner just as Christ showed His hatred for sin by being sacrificed for the ones caught in Satan's snare.

You see, once we remove love of our enemies from the emotional to the realm of the will, then

we are free to see even our enemies as poor human beings caught up in self interest and sin, desperately in need of the forgiveness made available in Jesus. Also, when we bless and pray for those who hate us, it becomes more difficult for us to develop attitudes that can keep us out of heaven. It is so hard to hate someone when you are praying for them.

Even "husbands, love your wives" in Ephesians 5:25 takes on a new meaning in the light of the love shown at Calvary. This command changes from one which most husbands believe that they obey, to one I am convinced most husbands do not. It means that your wife's welfare and happiness must be put above your own. Your will to love her must go beyond her appearance, her moods, or what she provides for you. Women are given their commands as well, but the Lord's demands on husbands goes beyond childish emotion or changing circumstances and speaks directly to the will of a Christian man to do what is right.

Jesus' command to "love the Lord your God will all your heart...soul...mind, and...strength" (Mark 12:30) also seems different when seen with the cross in the background. It means that my choice to serve God must go on in worship, study, prayer, and service in spite of fatigue, discouragement, or emotions. I am convinced that there were times that the Lord did not "feel like" suffering and dying for us, but He fulfilled His mission because it was God's will and our souls depended on it. With that in mind, how can we allow emotions or circumstances to get in the way of our will to serve Him?

Dedicating ourselves to Christ-like love in our lives may take quite a readjustment in our thinking and quite a stiffening of our will to serve God, but this is the only way to obey our scriptural obligations to love.

-via *Christianity Magazine*, Vol. 6 No. 5; July 1989.

Come join us as we study God's Word.

God Sees and Cares

Daniel Bailey

The beginning of Psalm 139 reads as follows: "*O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, a LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.*"

Many, if not all, godly people face situations and experiences which cause us to feel forsaken and alone. The Bible provides many examples of God-fearing people who suffered such loneliness. Hannah faced trials in solitude, as we read in 1 Samuel 1 and 2, suffering torment by her family because of her infertility. This godly woman had nowhere to turn for relief but to God who alone had the power to open her womb. Now, in light of the condition of Israel at that time, Hannah might have deemed her problems too insignificant for God to know and care. The priesthood was corrupt such that the people despised worshipping in Jerusalem. The nation was constantly threatened by the surrounding idolatrous nations. There was no unity amongst the tribes and no righteous leaders. Worst of all, God seldom spoke to them at all (1 Samuel 3:1). But despite these disheartening facts, Hannah went to God in prayer with faith in His might. We read that she was not alone after all: God was watching her, and He cared about her seemingly slight trials. He heard and answered her prayers.

In 1 Kings 19:14, Elijah hid in a cave and lamented before God that all Israel had forsaken the covenant, torn down the Lord's altars, and killed the prophets. He felt that his righteous efforts had gone unnoticed and without effect and that he stood all alone in righteousness, destined to sooner or later be killed by his ungodly brethren. However, God revealed to Elijah

that he was far from alone. The Lord was in control, and He had a plan for this holy man, even though the situation seemed dismal from a mortal viewpoint. Though Elijah felt forsaken, God was looking down upon him with love and profound concern. Many other wonderful stories of the Bible relay the same principle: God sees and cares for His children, no matter how dark the times, no matter what terrible trials and sufferings we face.

Sometimes Christians today face trials or times of stumbling in which we know we need help but feel that no one truly cares. Sometimes children of God grow discouraged in doing good because our righteous and charitable deeds go unnoticed by the world, perhaps even by our brethren. Sometimes our individual lives devoted to godliness seem insignificant compared to the ocean of ungodliness and suffering in the world. However, when we experience such feelings, we should not despair. We can find hope in the Biblical examples of holy men and women who walked this earth before us. We must consider the words of David in Psalm 139, and understand that we constantly have a Witness who sees all our deeds, even those done in secret. Our omniscient Creator genuinely cares about every aspect of our lives, no matter how negligible they may seem in the grand scheme of the universe. So take comfort and hope in the fact that our lives lived in holiness go far from unnoticed, but are constantly and perfectly observed by Him who will reward each person according to his or her deeds. In the words of David, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.*"

-via *College View Columns*, Florence, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Helen Stewart* is to have surgery on Thursday in Huntsville ... *Ronnie Phillips* is doing well following his surgery on Wednesday... *Glenda Phillips* is to have a biopsy done this week... *Sissy Clemmons* continues at home recovering from her broken ankle ... *Virginia*

Lovell has been down with her back this week and has been unable to be out ... *Leota Springer's husband, Bob Springer*, continues to deal with dialysis... *Myrtie Williams* is at home ... *Judy Williams' mother, Flossie Kazzaire*, continues in a nursing facility in Fayette ... *Tisha Thomas' mother, Shelia Johnson*, is at Vanderbilt Hospital undergoing her stem cell replacement ... *Monroe Pressnell's aunt, Mildred Pressnell*, is at home ... *Helen Stewart's grandson, Adam Stewart*, is awaiting a kidney transplant ... *Mattie Blanche Word* is at home... *Shannon Johnson*, continues at home ... *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski

OUT OF TOWN: *The Butlers Aric and Andrea* are visiting with family today... *Glenda Phillips* is also visiting with family today.

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to *Wanda Tucker and all the family* in the passing of Wanda's father, *Billy Letson*, on Wednesday. His funeral was Friday in Collinwood, Tennessee... We also want to extend our deepest sympathy to *James McConnell and all the family* in the passing of James' mother, *Della Mae McConnell*, this past Thursday. Her funeral was Saturday in Center Star.

THE RECORD: *Average for July 2005*

Sunday: Bible Classes 98
 Morning Worship 118
 Evening Worship 82

Wednesday: Bible Classes 86

Gospel Meeting

September 25 – 28

Cecil Cox, Speaking

Anderson church of Christ

Highway 207 South
Anderson, Alabama

Schedule of Services

Sunday
 Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday
 Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders
 Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (256) 247-1451
 Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons
 Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
 Mark McIntyre (256) 233-1953
 Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
 Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
 Larry White (256) 247-0988
 Brian Word (256) 229-5823

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