

GODLY AND SACRIFICIAL LOVE

I. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN – 1 John 3:9-15

A. The Christian is a child of God. He practices righteousness. He is a saint and on his way to heaven. He loves people, even his enemies. This love is one of the main characteristics of a Christian's life. Romans 12:18, 1 John 3:10

B. The non-Christian is a child of the devil. He practices unrighteousness. He cannot truly love people. The non-Christian hates the Christian. He is a sinner and on his way to hell, unless he turns from his sin and trusts in Christ, and then God takes his sin away.

II. LOVE MEANS THAT WE LAY DOWN OUR LIFE FOR OTHERS – 1 John 3:16-18

A. Jesus' example – He came from heaven to earth to lay down his life for us. John 15:10. Jesus laid down his life by dying for us, but we also see it in that He was thirsty and tired; He was never impatient or angry; He stayed up late and prayed. 1 John 4:19

B. Examples in the Bible – Moses, Ruth, David, Jeremiah, Paul - Acts 20:18-24, 31-32. 2 Corinthians 12:15 – *"I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls."*

III. LAYING DOWN MY LIFE MEANS DYING TO SELF & LIVING FOR CHRIST - Luke 9:23-24

A. It means taking up my cross and following the Lord. It means saying no to my own desires so that I can love others, give to others, and serve others. The Christian life is a life of sacrifice, of loving others, and living for others. It results in true blessing.

B. The Christian life is not about me, but about Jesus Christ, and about His life being lived in and through me. The secret is saying no to self and yes to Christ, and the result is that Christ's life will be seen in you. Philippians 1:21, 2:1-5; Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

C. Being compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, and forgiving – these are specific ways to lay down your life, and to love others. Colossians 3:12-13, Ephesians 3:14-17

IV. SHARING THE WORLD'S GOODS WITH THOSE IN NEED IS A WAY TO LOVE, A WAY TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR OTHERS – 1 John 3:17

A. The word "goods" is from the Greek "bios", and means life. It means the things that you need to have to live in this world, the basics - food, clothing and shelter.

B. A primary way to love is to share the world's goods with those who are in need.

C. The state and federal government does some of this, that is, helping those in need. They do some good, but it is hard to do this through the government, for there's bureaucracy, corruption and fraud. Our focus is on what the Christians should do. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

V. THE EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIAN CHURCH - 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

A. Some important principles for giving to others - "*abundance of joy*", "*wealth of their liberality*", "*beyond their ability*", "*earnestness*", and "*sincerity*" of their love.

B. Giving so that "*there may be equality.*" Those who have plenty are to give to those who are in need. In our church we do this by giving to missionaries, and by use of our deacon's fund. Acts 2:42-47

VI. PRINCIPLES ABOUT GIVING TO OTHERS WHO ARE IN NEED.

- A. Give to those who are truly in need. It takes wisdom and discernment. 2 Thessalonians 3
- B. We're talking about the world's goods, but it can also be done in a financial, monetary way.
- C. The Lord will lead you as to who you should give to, and how you should give. Psalm 32:8
- D. Give joyfully. Give cheerfully. Give willingly. Give bountifully. Give generously. 2 Cor. 9
- E. Give to godly Christian organizations who are giving to others. 2 Corinthians 8
- F. Remember, as you give to others, that you are really giving to the Lord. Proverbs 14:31
- G. Give to the church - this is one of your first priorities. 1 Corinthians 9:7-14, Galatians 6:6,10
- H. The Lord will bless you for giving to others. Luke 6:38, Acts 20:35

GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TO YOU,
SO THAT IN ALL THINGS AT ALL TIMES,
HAVING ALL THAT YOU NEED,
YOU WILL ABOUND IN EVERY GOOD WORK.
2 Corinthians 9:8

1. What is the main thing that you believe God wants you to learn from this lesson?
2. What are some of the differences between Christians and non-Christians?
3. What does it mean to lay down your life for others. Think about how God is teaching you to do this with others. Practically how can you do this with others?
4. Take some time to think about others who have laid down their life for you. Be thankful.
5. Go over some of the principles of giving? Which ones do you believe you need to apply more?
6. How can you specifically be giving to others who are in need?
7. How can the gospel be a motivation to you in this area of love, this area of giving.