

**I. Introduction.**

- A. Our mission is to build a community of gospel-centered people as we:**
- 1. Worship God in spirit and truth. John 4:24 Acts 2:42**
  - 2. Serve one another by exercising our spiritual gifts. I Cor. 12:4-6 Eph. 4:11-16**
  - 3. Proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Mt. 28:18-20 Acts 1:8**
  - 4. Live out a biblical worldview in all spheres of life. Jer. 29:7 Mt. 5:13-16**
- B. Our community is built on the foundation of the gospel. 10:19-21**

**II. Stimulate (provoke) one another to love and good deeds. v. 23**

- A. If we are saved solely by the work of Christ why do we need to be concerned about love and good works?**
- 1. We have been made perfectly holy through Christ's sacrifice. 10:10,14a**
  - 2. When God saves us He transforms us inwardly. 10:14b,16 II Co. 5:17 Eze. 36:26**
  - 3. We glorify God as we reflect His goodness and love. 10:14 Titus 2:14 I Jo. 2:3f**
- B. What is the unique focus of this exhortation?**
- 1. Our author is not merely telling us to practice love and good deeds.**
  - 2. We are told to provoke (incite, stimulate) others to action.**
  - 3. Different people require different strategies. I Th. 5:14**
- C. How, in practical terms, can you incite others to love and good works? Pr. 27:17**
- 1. Multiply their fruitfulness by commending and appreciating them for the love and good deeds they are already practicing. 10:32-34 6:9-10 I Th. 1:2f I Co. 1:4f**
  - 2. Set an example of love and good deeds. Jo. 13:13-15 Acts 4:34 II Cor. 8:1f**
  - 3. Initiate ministry and invite others to join you.**
  - 4. Draw those who are on the fringe into the center of the life of God's family.**
  - 5. Disciple a brother or sister who is younger in the faith. II Tim. 2:2 Titus 2:3-5**
  - 6. Meet regularly with someone for accountability, prayer, study, and service.**
  - 7. Encourage those who are in the midst of trials and tribulations. v. 25b,23**
  - 8. Gently restore those who are drifting into sin, lethargy, or error. 3:13 Gal. 6:1-2 Js. 5:19 Rom. 15:14 Mt. 18:15f**
- D. What particular works of love should we be trying to incite in one another? 6:10 3:13 10:32-34 13:2,3,15-16 12:14 Js. 1:27 I Jo. 3:17 Ro. 12:13,5-8 I Pe. 4:9 Ga. 6:2**
- 1. Helping those in need. 6:10 10:33-34 13:16,3**
  - 2. Showing hospitality. 13:2**
  - 3. Peacemaking. 12:14**
  - 4. Worship. 13:15**
  - 5. Evangelism.**

**III. Spend time with God's people. v. 25a**

- A. How does the concern of verse 25 fit relate to the exhortation of verse 24?**
- B. Why might people have been failing to gather with God's people back then?**
- 1. Some may have been drifting away because of persecution. 10:32-34**
  - 2. Some may have been losing their grip on their hope in Christ. 10:23**

- C. Why don't people regularly gather with the church in our day?
1. Some are unbiblically isolated and individualistic. Acts 2:47
  2. Some can't find a church which is good enough. Rom. 15:7
  3. Some have been hurt in the past.
  4. Some are drifting away from God and his people. v. 26f I John 2:19 Rev. 2:4
  5. Some have a selfish consumer mentality. Phil. 2:3-4
  6. Some wander from church to church without ever committing and becoming actively involved in the body.
  7. Other activities crowd out worship and fellowship on the Lord's Day. 4:9ff  
Gen. 2:2 Ex. 20:8-11
  8. Some are pressured by unbelieving family members. Acts 5:29

- D. How much time must you spend with the community of believers?
1. If you are asking this question, you have a problem. I Jo. 4:7-12
  2. God's people want to be together as much as they can. 3:13 Acts 2:46
  3. Join God's people when they gather on the Lord's Day for worship. Acts 20:7  
2:42,46 I Cor. 16:2 Rev. 1:10 Js. 2:2
  4. Most of the "one-another" commands are best fulfilled in other settings.

E. Is the gathering of God's people a priority for you and your family?

**IV. Encourage each other because the Day of Jesus' return draws near. v. 25b. 9:28**

- A. We are motivated by an eternal and heavenly perspective. 9:28 Rom. 13:11-13  
I Th. 5:2 II Pe. 3:10-11 Js. 5:8 I Pe. 4:7 Rev. 1:3 I Tim. 4:1f Eph. 5:6
- B. Our ultimate reality is not in this world. Mt. 6:20,24,44

**V. Concluding applications.**

- A. People are seeking community – a place where they belong.
- B. Jesus stimulates us to love and good deeds. 3:1 I John 4:19 John 13:12-17 15:12-17

**Discussion questions**

1. Why, if we are saved solely by Christ's priestly sacrifice, are love and good works important?
2. How is this exhortation different from other charges to love one another?
3. What are seven things you can do to incite others to love and good deeds?
4. How does assembling together (v. 25) relate to the exhortation to incite one another (v. 24)?
5. What excuses do people give for not coming to church?
6. How often should you meet with God's people?
7. Why are small groups so important?
8. How does the day of Jesus' return relate to these exhortations (v. 25b)?
9. How does Jesus stimulate us to love and good deeds?
10. Whom will you incite to love and good deeds this week? How will you do it?