

28. Learning to Stimulate One Another to Love and Good Works

In our last topic, we saw that one of the ways that we show the love of Christ is by learning to use our spiritual gifts to serve one another. We saw that we will be effective if we have speaking gifts if we share the Word of God in love instead of sharing our own opinions or convictions. We saw that we will be effective if we have serving gifts if we learn to serve in the strength that the Lord supplies instead of trying to serve in our own strength. Today, we will build on that topic by discussing how to help our physical and spiritual children learn to stimulate one another to love and good works.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” In these verses, we learn several key lessons. We will see how we are to stimulate one another to love and good works as we wait for the coming of the Lord.

First, the word that is translated “consider” means that we *choose to consider something attentively or to fix our eyes or mind on a certain thing*. Here, we see that we are to consider one another. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” This reminds us that as Christians we are all part of a body. Christ is the head of the body and we are to fix our mind on the fact that we are to work together so that we each do our share in the body of Christ.

Second, we see that we are to stir up love in ourselves and one another as we fix our mind on what Christ wants us to do to minister to other members (Christians) in the body of Christ. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” In this verse, we see that love is the opposite of fear. Once Adam sinned, Genesis 3:10 tells us how Adam answered when God called to him. That verse says, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” In this verse, we see that Adam was immediately controlled by fear, guilt and shame. Those three things controlled every one of us before we placed our trust in Christ.

However, we see here that perfect love removes that fear. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 tells us what then begins to motivate us when those verses say, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” We want to help one another learn to move from fear to love as we help one another grow and mature in our understanding of the love of Christ. We will help one another grow in that love as we help one another learn to take root in Christ (Colossians 2:6-7) and pray for one another that we will take root in the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19). Since the Old Testament is summarized by loving the Lord with our whole heart, soul and mind and loving our neighbor as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40) and the New Testament is summarized by the new commandment that Christ

gave us to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34-35), helping one another move from fear to love should be one of our greatest priorities as Christians.

Third, we read that we are to stir up good works in one another as well as in our own lives as we focus our thoughts on how to minister to one another as Christians. We live in a world where most people are very selfish. That is a direct result of the sin of Adam and Eve and was passed on to every person. That is why we are instructed in Philippians 2:4, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” People who are controlled by fear will always be focused on their own interests. They will do whatever they can to get their own way and please themselves. Only as we place our trust in Christ and begin to take root in His love will we become focused on the interests of others rather than our own interests.

Fourth, we go on to read one thing that we are to avoid because it will not stir up love and good works in our life and in the lives of others. We are told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. As Christians, we stimulate one another to love and good works by getting together with one another. In Genesis chapters one and two, we see that God created the heavens and the earth. We read several times in those chapters that God looked at what He had done and saw that it was good. Genesis 1:31 concludes the first chapter by saying, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

However, in chapter two, we suddenly see a verse where God says something is not good. In Genesis 2:18, we read, “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” God said it is not good for mankind to be alone. Then, God created Eve and brought Adam and Eve together. Genesis 2:25 says, “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” There was no shame separating Adam and Eve because they had no sin. However, Genesis 3:7 gives the very first result of sin. That verse says, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”

Once Adam and Eve sinned, they immediately experienced shame and tried to cover themselves with fig leaves (fig leaves dry up and begin to shrivel very quickly so their coverings quickly began to shrivel). Suddenly they again felt alone. They separated themselves from God and from each other. Genesis 3:10 shows that they became controlled by fear, guilt and shame. That verse says, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” In this verse, Adam speaks of his fear, guilt and shame. However, Adam chose to handle these things like sinful man. Genesis 3:12 says, “Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’” Sinful man does not want to accept responsibility for his sinful choices and so sinful man chooses to blame others for his wrong choices. This only creates further separation.

As we come back to Hebrews 10:24-25, we see that one of the things that we can now do with joy as Christians is to assemble together with one another without being separated by sin. When Christians are walking in fellowship with the Lord, they are able to look forward to fellowship with other Christians. It is when Christians have unconfessed sin in their lives that they start

avoiding other Christians. Like Adam before God created Eve, or Adam and Eve after they had sinned, it is still not good for mankind to be alone. As Christians, we need to share our lives with one another. That will be our desire when we are walking in fellowship with Christ.

Fifth, as we share our lives with one another, we see that the way we stimulate one another to love and good works is to exhort one another while we are together. The word that is translated “exhort” means *to come to the side of another to encourage and strengthen one another*. If Christians get together and discourage one another, it will not stimulate love and good works. In fact, it will do just the opposite. That is why we are to encourage and strengthen one another and not discourage one another when we get together.

We also see one other way that we strengthen and encourage one another in these verses. When we get together, we are to remind one another that the coming of the Lord is getting closer. In 1 Corinthians 16:22, as a part of his conclusion to the Corinthians, Paul said, “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!” In many Bible translations, the last phrase just uses the Greek word because the Greek word is “Maranatha” which means *O Lord, come or the Lord comes*. This particular word stimulates love and good works and it also stimulates hope. We strengthen hope in one another by reminding one another of the resurrection of Christ and the return of Christ. As a result, we will stimulate both love and hope as we remind one another that the Lord is coming.

During the time the New Testament was being written, the Christians were already being persecuted for their faith; in the next few years, many were killed for their faith. That made the reminder of the coming of the Lord even more important because it reminded Christians of the fact that even in difficult times we can look forward to the future because the Lord is coming. That message is needed even more today. In the last one hundred years, more Christians have been killed for their faith than in the entire previous nineteen hundred years. As Christians, we have a great source of hope that also stimulates us to love and good works.

As we help our physical and spiritual children learn to stimulate one another to love and good works, we are also helping them to develop in their relationship both to the Lord and to one another. This in turn will help them to begin to learn to help others develop in their spiritual lives. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” We want to help each one of our physical and spiritual children learn to become reproducing Christians that are sharing what they learn as they teach faithful men to teach others also. May the Lord richly bless you as you stimulate other Christians to love and good works.