

8. Learning to Care for One Another

In our last topic, we saw that one of the ways that we show the love of Christ is by learning to build up one another. Today, we will look at another way that we help our children learn to show the love of Christ to others. Today, we will focus on what the Bible teaches about the fact that as Christians we are all to care for one another. A key passage that speaks about this care for one another is 1 Corinthians 12:24-26 where we read, “But our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” Learning how to teach our children to care for one another will be our focus today.

The word that is translated “care” in these verses is used 19 times in the New Testament. Several times it is used to talk about *being troubled with cares or worries*. In Matthew 6:25-34, Christ used this word several times as He gave us seven reasons not to worry in those verses. It was used of Martha in Luke 10:41-42 where we read, “And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’” Philippians 4:6 tells us what we should do when care is used this way, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

However, the word has a second meaning and that is the meaning that we will focus on today in the passages that we will consider. The second use of care means *to seek to promote the interests of another or care for what is best for another*. That is the way that the word is used in 1 Corinthians 12:24-26 that we quoted in the first paragraph. Philippians 2:20 gives us another example of this use of the meaning of care. That verse says, “For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.” Paul was a prisoner in Rome but he had a great care and concern for the spiritual development of the Philippians. That was why he had sent Epaphroditus with this letter back to Philippi where the Christians had shown this care for Paul by sending Epaphroditus to provide the care they could not provide. That was also why Paul hoped to send Timothy to Philippi in the near future so that he could show the same care for the Philippians. This is the kind of care that we want to help our physical and spiritual children develop.

In fact, the book of Philippians shows this desire to seek to promote the interests of another or care for what is best for another in more than one passage in the book. Although the word “care” is not used in Philippians 2:3-4, we see that same concern emphasized. Those verses say, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” These verses give us the key attitudes that we need to help our children avoid and the key attitudes that we want to help them develop in order to show this kind of care to one another. We will look at the negative attitudes first that prevent Christians from showing this kind of care to others.

First, we are to do nothing through selfish ambition. The disciples showed this attitude of selfish

ambition in Mark 10 when James and John asked to sit on the left and the right hands of Christ. The other ten had the same attitude because they were much displeased when they heard about the request. Christ showed the attitude that is needed instead in Mark 10:42-45 where we read, “But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”

Christ explained the things that people will do when they have selfish ambition. They will lord it over others and try to make themselves the most important person. They will exercise authority over others and try to tell others what to do. These actions are both the results of a person pushing to get his own way. Instead, Christ explained the two attitudes that we will show when we have a care and concern for others. First, we will look for opportunities to serve others and help them grow in their understanding of the love of Christ for them. Second, we will become a bond slave to all so that we can help them develop their full potential. Instead of trying to get our own way, our focus will be to show the care and compassion of Christ to others.

Second, we are to do nothing through conceit. A person that does things through conceit is seeking his own glory. He is esteeming himself better than others. The world places a strong emphasis on self-esteem which is actually another word for conceit. This has become one of the key things that is emphasized in many schools. However, it makes self the center of a person’s world instead of Christ. Instead of being motivated by pride in self, we need to choose to be motivated by the love Christ. When we are motivated by the love of Christ, we will seek the glory of God instead of the glory of self. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Third, we are not to look out only for our own interests. This is actually the end result of selfish ambition and conceit. People become totally self-centered and think only of themselves. They have little or no love for others. 1 Corinthians 3:3 describes the actions that such attitudes produce when it says, “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” This makes it clear that Christians that are only concerned for their own interests are going to act like those that are not even Christians.

Then, we have the positive attitudes that will help our children learn to show this kind of care to others. First, we see that we need to model lowliness of mind to our children. The word that is translated “lowliness of mind” means *to have a humble opinion of self*. We need to constantly remember the words that Christ spoke in John 15:5 when He said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” When a branch is cut off from the vine it is worthless and can only be burned. We can accomplish nothing in our own strength. Galatians 2:20 explains, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Whatever happens through our lives happens because Christ chose to work through us so all glory belongs to Him.

Second, we are to esteem others better than self. When we have true humility, then it is a privilege to serve others and be a bond slave to others. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Christ has given us the liberty to show His love to others by serving them and helping them learn to let Christ work through their lives. Paul showed us that one way we serve others is by praying for them. He gives us an example by the five things that he prays for in his prayer for the Ephesians in Ephesians 3:16-19, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” We serve our physical and spiritual children by praying that:

1. They will be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.
2. They will have Christ dwell in their hearts by faith.
3. They will be rooted and grounded in love.
4. They will know the love of Christ that passes knowledge.
5. They will be filled with all the fullness of God.

Third, we are to be concerned about the interests of others or what is best for others. This is actually the final result when we have a humble attitude. We will be concerned to listen to our physical and spiritual children and get excited with them about the way that the Lord is working in their lives. We will be concerned about what is best for them. We will show them by example what happens as they are motivated by the love of Christ instead of being driven by fear. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “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.” When our children learn to live for Christ, they will serve others.

As our physical and spiritual children learn to show the love of Christ by having the same care for others that Christ has for them, the Lord will be able to work in their lives and through their lives in mighty ways. Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Here, we see that as we show our children how to develop the attitude of care for others that Christ has for them, Christ will work through their lives in ways far beyond what they can even imagine because they are bringing glory to God instead of trying to bring glory to self. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to take root in the love of Christ so that their lives bring glory to God.