

October 15, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman

SERMON NOTES:

1 John 3:14 (ESV)

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brothers righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴**We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.** Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, famous evangelist, noted that the New Testament records tell of forty people, each suffering from the same disease, who were healed by Jesus. Of this number, thirty-four were either brought to Jesus by friends, or He was taken to them. In only six cases out of forty did the sufferers find the way to Jesus without assistance. **Of the vast number of people who find their way to Jesus today, most of them reach Him because the friends of Jesus are concerned about the welfare of their souls.**

Love God, Love People, And Go all in Together is the mandate of the church.

Perhaps the greatest miracle that will happen in the last days is a church that will love each other.

The goal of our series this last month was to confront and correct the seemingly run-away train that is broken relationships in our American culture. The church needs to lead the way, by example, for what it means to be in healthy godly relationships.

The Word of God is full of the "ways" of God.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.

Notice the progression.

The way to the truth and the Life found in Jesus is surrendering to HIS WAY.

Precepts - a command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action.



Isa 28:10

For precept *must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.*"

You do not get to pick and choose what Kingdom Principle to follow and which not to follow. If you are a follower of Jesus, you must make the precepts of God, found in His word, first place in His life.

We spent last week talking about the precepts that involve stewardship according to scripture. There are precepts, or general ways about many topics in scripture, including the love we are to have towards each other.

Matthew 22:36-40

Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

We have all experienced how this is way easier in theory than it is in practice.

It is amazing, that almost every time someone walks through the door of love and walks in the path of generosity, **it happens**. The IT is offense. **Love and generosity combined not only change the world around us, but they also change us**. Our flesh gets confronted, and motives will always be challenged. **Love and generosity lead to vulnerability**. It's in the vulnerability that the authentic is challenging the motive. Am I doing it for the right or wrong reasons.

Maturity is found in the disciples of remaining in love rather than retreating to selfishness.

E. C. McKenzie

Some people make enemies instead of friends because it is less trouble.

Precepts surrounding relationships are all over the Bible.
Let me point out a few guidelines for healthy relationships.

- 1) Christians confront with grace and truth.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, **full of grace and truth**.

Jesus modeled what it means to love people correctly. It will take a person being full of the Holy Spirit with the fullness of grace and truth.

Matthew 18:15-17

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Proverbs 25:9-10

Debate your case with your neighbor, and do not disclose the secret to another; Lest he who hears *it* expose your shame, And your reputation be ruined.

This precept teaches us the following:

- Go directly to your brother or sister, **first**.
- Don't "flap your jaws".
- If someone flaps their jaws, expose them and correct them.
- The next step, find another mature believer to go with you and talk to them.
- If that doesn't work, take it to the church (leadership).
- In the end, treat them as an unbeliever.

E. C. McKenzie (repeated)

Some people make enemies instead of friends **because it is less trouble**.

2) Step first in Love.

You don't have to wait to get around right people to be right. Start now.

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

PL Tan –

If you really want to know who your friends are, just make a mistake.

I would add –

If you really want to know what kind of friend you are, inspect what happens to you when your friend makes a mistake.

Do you gloss over your friends' mistakes and never confront? When you confront, have you prayed for them? Do you audit yourself to make sure you are walking in grace and truth?



Proverbs 27:5-6 (speaking of Godly Friendships)

Open rebuke *is* better Than love carefully concealed. Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

In the end, healthy relationships start with individuals taking personal responsibility to following God's ways. This is how much God cares about us loving each other in a healthy manner.

Titus 3:10

Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Proverbs 6:16-19

There are six things that the Lord hates, **seven that are an abomination** to him: ¹⁷haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies, and **one who sows discord among brothers.**

If we are to ever see what God see for us, we must see and treat each other how God sees us.

Acts 2:46

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.

3) You must learn to love correction.

Psalms 141:5

Let the righteous strike me; *It shall be* a kindness. And let him rebuke me; *It shall be* as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.

There are things you can learn and there are things that you must choose. Learning to be teachable is a choice and a posture of a humble heart.

2 Corinthians 7:8-12

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did not do it* for the sake of him who had done



the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but **that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.**

When people who love Jesus confront you, it should be a sign to you of their care for you. Don't get defensive or put up your guard, just know you are loved.

Proverbs 15:23

A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And **a word spoken in due season, how good it is!**

That's what love and the power of God is all about. A word spoken in due season. Conviction to a unwilling heart is uncomfortable, but to a willing and contrite heart it is fuel for the soul.