



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – April 6, 2008

Heart to Heart...

We need to grow in our love for one another. I speaking of genuine, godly love, not a feel good love. A love that comes from God that affects our lives, relationships and marriages. A love that really is dedicated to the good of another no matter how they treat us. One aspect of the love of God is this: **"Love is not provoked."** (I Corinthians 13:5) To be provoked is to be stirred or aroused to anger. We need God's help to control our emotions and will (Galatians 5:22-23).

In Christ's body, there are many different levels of faith and love. But one thing that stands out is those who seem to be *"touchy."* You really see this in marriages. The smallest of things seem to *provoke* them. People in Christ that are hypersensitive live in agony, not the love of God! Not only are they burdened in their own heart, but they burden those they are around. Why? Because others have to walk as on eggshells so as not to upset them! Marriage conflicts cannot be resolved because some are so easily *provoked*. Issues that are real and genuine, that need to be dealt with in right ways, are swept under the rug, only to sit gathering force. At the assemblies, they leave many times upset because of something said to them. A person that is easily *provoked* cannot be reasoned with because they are self-consumed. In some cases, they can hold a congregation captive just because people are afraid of their reactions and attitudes. It seems they are in a chronic state of being offended! Their mind set is always about them and how they see things. They pick up on every little word and interpret them as an attack or snub. But the greatest problem they face, they think they are walking rightly with the Lord!

Until self is surrendered, love cannot enter! Jesus said it this way, **"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."** (Matthew 16:24) To follow the Lord, self has to be dethroned. To follow the Lord, one must yield to His Lordship and humble themselves. Only then can the love of God enter the heart. God's love is to soften us, helping us see that we died with Christ and it is no longer about us. It is about Christ and forwarding His cause. To live *"touchy"* or easily provoked is cut off the love of God from your own being!

How many marriages would greatly improve if the love of God was present? How many more people could we reach with the glorious gospel if people allowed the love of God into their hearts? How many would be happy and content because of the love of God? Many destroy their own well being by not yielding to Christ and His love. They destroy their homes, relationships and their own lives simply because they are *"easily provoked."* **"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."** (I John 3:16) That's the love of God! Without the love of God, there is no fellowship with God. How's your love? Think about it!!!

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