

# Church of Christ

## ... Heart to Heart ...

Each of us probably could say we have a long way to grow in our love. I would like to point out one aspect of love that God addresses. “Love is not provoked.” (I Cor. 13:5) To be provoked is to be stirred or aroused to anger. We need God’s help to control our emotions and will (Gal. 5:22-23).

In the body of Christ, the church, there are many different levels of faith and love. But one thing that stands out are those who are “*touchy*.” Anything and every thing seems to provoke them. Brethren that are hypersensitive live in agony, not the love of God! Not only are they burdened in their own heart, but they burden others as well. Why? Because others have to walk around as if on eggshells so as not to upset them! (You see it in marriages too!) They leave the assemblies feeling as if no one accepts them or their views. They can’t be reasoned with because they are so self-consumed. Many times, they can hold a congregation captive just because people are afraid of their attitudes. It seems they are in a chronic state of being offended! Their mind set is constantly about them and how they are treated. They pick up on every little word and interpret them as an attack or snub. What’s worse, they think they are the ones walking in love and loving the Lord!

Until self leaves, love can’t enter! Self can’t leave until one surrenders to the Lord. Jesus said it this way, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.” (Matt. 16:24) To follow the Lord, self has to be dethroned. To follow the Lord, you must yield to His Lordship and humble yourself. Only then can love enter the heart. The love of God is to soften us, help us see that it’s not about you and your world. It’s about Christ and helping His cause. To live “*touchy*,” or easily provoked, is to cut off the love of God from your own being!

“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) How do we know love? Because Jesus laid down His life for us! What if He were “*touchy*” about every decision made, every word said and every action interpreted? Jesus would never have sought our well being by dying. How does one know they love? They lay down their lives on behalf of the brethren. They don’t lay down the lives of others on their behalf, which is what provocation does! We need to grow in our love and realize the things that we find ourselves so “*touchy*” about will cost us our souls if we aren’t careful.

God is love (I John 4:7-8). To be in fellowship with God will only increase our love for His people. How’s your walk with the Lord? Do you love or are you easily provoked? Think about it!!!

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