



With hope that this page will bring glory to God and attention to His Word, you are invited to check this page every day for a piece of scripture, thoughts on the verse(s) and a prayer. May the ideas presented here bring you fulfillment as you continue your journey with Christ.

Tuesday April 30, 2024

Today's Scripture:

•1 John 5:1-2 -- Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

Thoughts on Today's Verse(s):

It's very easy to love God, isn't it? It's also easy to love Jesus and The Holy Spirit, am I right? However, it's not that easy to love our neighbors and sometimes it's especially difficult to love others in the church. Often because of that challenge, we may turn to violating one The Lord's Commandments so as to ease our troubled souls and soothe our egos. Any thoughts on which specific commandment to which I may be referring? Please read on.

St. John offers a bit of a test today; an "acid-test", if you like. The apostle who wrote so much about love in his epistles gives us a metric we can use to assess our love in action in the church. Essentially, John stirs us to reflect upon our claim to love God, His Son and The Holy Spirit in the shadow of His commandments. He writes, "***This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commands.***" At the heart of John's assertion lies the question we must all ask ourselves: "How can we say we love God and yet *not* love *all* His children?" We tend to so easily forget what Jesus said about The Second Greatest Commandment, to love Your neighbor as yourself. He didn't say it was *secondary*; He said it was "***like unto it***" (Matthew 22:39). Jesus was making it clear that loving our neighbors, especially in the family of believers, is just as important as loving God.

Ok, so have you figured out which commandment to which I am referring? Yep, it's #9. And if you had to look it up, it may be an indicator that it's the one to which we in the church pay the least attention.

"How?", you ask? Through *gossip*. Whenever we begin to talk about our friends in Christ in a disparaging fashion, we run the risk of breaking the commandment - and we often do. When we get together with friends over coffee or over a meal and then seize the opportunity to talk about others in the church, to spread gossip, we are on the verge of almost certainly *breaking* the ninth commandment. "***Well, I know they did that! I know they said that!***" Are you sure? Are you absolutely aware that what you are saying is truth? There's a difference between *believing* they said that and *knowing* they said or did that. "***Well, (name) told me that and I know s/he wouldn't lie?***" Really? Really?! You may not realize it but (name) may be telling you what they heard from someone else, not what they actually witnessed.

Friends, gossip is deadly. It can kill a church by killing relationships among God's children. Even to the point that we must ask ourselves why we feel a need to share something about someone else. We must look in the mirror, look deep inside, and question our need to spread gossip in the church. If we authentically do so, we often find that we are reflecting a missing link in our own character as much as in theirs. "***Ouch!***"

Prayer:

Forgive us Father, for the gossip we have spread. We are all guilty of talking about our brothers and sisters in Christ and we have not reflected the love for them You have commanded us to share and live. We have continually run the risk of breaking Your commandment to not bear false witness against our neighbors by being reckless and careless with our words. We have all spread unconfirmed gossip about our neighbors and it is wrong. Forgive us for doing such damage to our relationship with them, and with You. It is one of our worst sins. Stir us, O Lord, to do better. Help us to set aside our own personal grievances in favor of loving everyone as You have. May we grow, learn and mature to love as You do. In the Holy and Loving Name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Everyone who believes
that Jesus is the Christ
has been fathered by God,
and everyone who loves
the father also loves the
child fathered by him. By
this we know that we love
the children of God:
whenever we love God and
keep his commandments.

1 John 5:1-2