

## **Studies in I Peter (24)**

### The Responsibility of Salvation: We are to Love One Another

#### Introduction

- A. The basic need and desire of every person -- is to be loved. In times of trial the support of loving friends is a great encouragement. The Holy Spirit led Peter to emphasize this truth in writing to those in distress.
- B. Love, like other virtues, is not an automatic response. It is one of the most difficult to develop because as sinners we are self-centered. We must however, to be in the will of God, learn to love one another.
- C. In this section of I Peter we are told what it means to obey God. Peter has spoken of dedication in V13; holiness in Vs 14,15; and now he states in V 22 the third command: We are to love one another.

*Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, with all your hearts.* I Peter 1:22 NIV

#### **I. The Pattern of Obedience: "Obeying the Truth."**

- A. The Biblical principle: obedience is a practice of truth.
  - 1. Reminder # 1 -- The truth is the content of the Bible.
    - a. The Lord Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth." John 17:17
    - b. The Bible has been given to us as a blueprint for life.
    - c. Too often our relationship with one another is not based on the Bible -- but only on our emotions. Therefore, when circumstances change -- so do our emotions -- and so do our relationships.
  - 2. Reminder # 2 -- The truth is a Person -- the Lord Jesus.
    - a. The Savior said, "I am ... the truth." John 14:6
    - b. To obey the truth means more than a legalistic and formal practice of the Bible -- it includes fellowship with the Lord Jesus.
    - c. We cannot separate these two aspects of obedience. To do so makes one dictatorial or permissive.
- B. The Biblical promise: obeying the truth results in purification.
  - 1. The promise stated: "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" John 8:32
  - 2. Submission to God, on the basis of His Word, opens the door to the Holy Spirit Who will cleanse us from the bondage of sin and error. Only then can we live in the freedom we need to obey the truth.

## II. The Evidence of Partial Obedience: "Sincere love (phileo) for your others."

### A. Peter describes their relationship as one of love (phileo).

The believers in Asia Minor were caring one for another. Peter commends them for this. They were undoubtedly involved in supporting one another in the trials they were enduring. This may have meant helping those who had lost their jobs, caring for children while parents were in jail, encouraging those who were being slandered, and strengthening the weak and fearful.

The Apostle's use of the word "phileo" (love) in this verse indicates he wanted the believers to grow and improve their relationship. Phileo indicates a love of affection and companionship.

### B. Their love for one another was also "sincere."

To be sincere means to be without hypocrisy. The origin of this word had to do with the Greek theater. An actor played many parts by changing masks. Thus the word came to mean "playing a part" -- pretending.

Too often our love for one another is found primarily in words -- which indicates we are playing a role. Peter warns us about this.

## III. The Exhortation to Full Obedience: "Love one another deeply, with ... heart."

### A. What they were to do: "Love one another."

This verse would be confusing if we did not know that Peter makes use of a much stronger word for love in his exhortation. It is "agapao" which puts the emphasis on intelligent choice, planning, and sacrifice.

We must accept this command from God. We may not be content to merely have affection for one another. When we fail to love one another (agapao) we rob ourselves of divine grace, and weaken our unity in the church. We must learn to transcend our emotions and practice the truth: we are one in Christ.

### B. How they were to love one another: "Deeply, with all your hearts."

The emphasis here is on decision and action. It is a love that goes beyond emotions into the practice of the truth with sincerity and intensity. Too often we express something like love so we can have our own selfish way and manipulate one another.

True love among us must start with our surrender to God and to His Word. It is manifested between us only as we make decisions to practice the truth in sincerity. As Christians we must not allow ourselves to be friendly and play the role of love -- to get our own way.

Conclusion: In this section of I Peter we have been given three foundation stones for a successful Christian life -- or for a successful Church: dedication in V13; holiness in Vs14,15; and love in V22. If we disobey these direct commands -- we can only fail.

Victor M. Matthews