

A Study on Cliques and Virtue Love

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Table of Contents

FOLLOWING GOD	3
INTRODUCTION	3
OUR TRUE ROLE MODEL	4
THE PROBLEM OF FALSE HEROES.....	6
CLIQUES DEFINED	6
DISTINCTION BETWEEN A CLIQUE AND A NORMAL SOCIAL LIFE.....	8
IT BEGINS IN THE HOME	9
CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING AUTHORITY	11
WALKING IN VIRTUE LOVE.....	12
UNDERSTANDING VIRTUE LOVE	13
RELATING LOVE AND HAPPINESS	14
THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF PROMISCUITY	15
THE SOURCES OF MOTIVATION	17
CONCLUSION.....	18
GOD’S BIBLICAL TIMELINE OF HISTORY.....	19

Following God

(Eph 5:1-2)

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. (KJV Eph. 5:1-2)

Introduction

Being a ‘follower of God’ is the lofty endeavor set before us. The Lord also asked this of us in Matthew 5:48:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (KJV Matt. 5:48)

This mandate is given as the solution to a life that has been fragmented by arrogance. Paul gives some of the negative aspects of arrogance in Ephesians 4:17-32.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away

from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV Eph. 4:17-32)

In Ephesians 4:17-18, we see that we are not to walk in the 'vanity of' our 'mind' with a 'darkened understanding'. In other words, we are not to walk in 'ignorance' of God's ways. In this passage, he also presents the 'old man' or sin nature. In Ephesians 4:19, Paul teaches that the sin nature gives itself over to 'lasciviousness' or 'sensuality' with 'greediness'. The word 'greediness' is a reference to having a desire to always have more. Next, in verses 20-24 we discover the nature of the 'new man'. Then, in verses 25-32, we learn what the 'new man' practices. Paul states in verse 25, that we are to put away 'lying'. Verse 26 teaches that we are not to let anger outlast the day. Further, verse 28 states that the Christian is not to steal, but instead, should work and share with those in need. Paul then continues in verse 29 where he admonishes not to have harmful words to say but only words that will help build others up. Finally, he finishes this section with verses 31-32. In verse 31, he exhorts us to get rid of all 'bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking' and 'all malice'. Clamor is a reference to angry shouting and malice has to do with having hateful feelings. Instead, in verse 32 he tells us we are to show 'kindness, compassion' and 'forgiveness' one to another.

As we will discuss later, we are to avoid subjecting ourselves to all these forms of arrogance by following Ephesians 5:1-2, to be 'followers of God' and to 'walk in love'.

Our True Role Model

To begin our study, let us do a brief exegesis and afterwards work from there. In Ephesians 5:1 the word 'be' is translated from the Greek verb *ginesthe*, from *ginomai* meaning 'come to be'. The word means to become something. The present active imperative of *ginesthe* means to become something you were not before. The tendential present indicates a mandated action that is not taking place at the moment. The active voice implies that the believer in a state of Christian degeneracy produces the action, the action of becoming something that he is not at the present time. The imperative mood is a command, in which God makes a direct positive demand on the will and the life of the believer in some stage of degeneracy. The imperative mood implies a command, not a suggestion.

Therefore, the command is to become something that is seen in the next words of verse one, the words, 'followers of God'. In particular, the word 'followers' needs some clarification.

The word 'followers' is translated from the Greek noun *mimetai* and means, 'an imitator, one who is like another'. We get our word 'mimic' from this word. So, this noun implies that there is a true role model for all Christians to imitate. This role model is definitely not some false hero image of ourselves or others that we may create in arrogance. Looking in the mirror of arrogance can give individuals a deceitful image of themselves. However, as a Christian we should always remember that we do not have to compensate for what are our perceived inferior attributes by building up a false image of ourselves. Our sanity depends on seeing ourselves in the mirror of God's Word, which helps keep us in touch with true reality towards ourselves. Seeing ourselves in the light of God's grace always makes the difference and overrules everything else, whether it's an inferiority complex or a superiority complex. Of course, we must permit God's grace to determine our self-image as we always have the option to choose. Yet, in arrogance we always create a false image of ourselves which is related to the popular trend of the day, but we need to remember that just because something is popular does not mean that it is right.

Our role model is found in the genitive of relationship from the definite article *tou*, which is used as the possessive pronoun 'your' and the noun *theos*, translated 'God'. *Theos* is in the genitive case and here it is indicating possession. A proper translation should be 'your God'.

Therefore, Ephesians 5:1 should be translated, 'Be becoming therefore imitators of your God'. But is it possible to imitate God? Obviously there is no way we could ever be omnipresent (present everywhere) or omniscient (knowing everything) because we are beings with limitations. The point is, our role model is not to be the deity of the Lord, since this would not only be impossible, but utterly blasphemous. However, we are commanded to imitate the Lord's humanity as He resided in God's power sphere under the ministry of God, the Holy Spirit.

In light of the aforementioned mandate, then it should be abundantly clear that we are not to imitate other believers or other individuals whom we admire. Thus, we do not, as mentioned before, create a false hero image of ourselves, which our arrogance skills will cause us to do. Observe Romans 12:3, where Paul declares that we are not to think of ourselves more highly than we should:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (KJV Rom. 12:3)

The Problem of False Heroes

The word ‘soberly’ in Romans 12:3, refers to a sane mind. Self-conceit is actually a form of insanity. Therefore, it is imperative that we as believers and members of the royal family of God have something that is far greater than any image of ourselves that we can create in arrogance. The result of having a false image of our self is having a false image of others. This is exactly how we end up creating heroes. Arrogance tends to make heroes of someone who we aspire to be like. According to Ephesians 5:1, the Christian is to have one hero and one hero only. That hero is the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why would we want to settle for anything less when we have the best? The answer to that question can be summed up in the word arrogance.

A few years back a survey was conducted with young Americans, ages 18 to 24, about whom they considered a hero. By far, most of their heroes were entertainment or sports figures. Their choices are certainly understandable since this has tremendous appeal because of its money, fame and excitement. And while there is nothing wrong with appreciating an individual’s abilities in these areas, just remember that these fields are for entertainment value and nothing more. Our lives do not change after seeing a particular box office hit, or hearing a number one billboard song or even watching some major sports event. Think about this, afterwards we go right back to the real world and its mundane, daily routines. While most people have sufficient sense to distinguish between the human being and the image, there is enough influence for them to make a hero out of the images they create.

Now the question begs, how about having a more acceptable role model such as a respected teacher, a model community leader or maybe a successful business individual? Once again, for the Christian, Ephesians 5:1 tells us to be imitators of ‘our’ God and Him alone! In the following sections you will see the pitfalls of following other people. These pitfalls are most likely demonstrated by what we commonly call cliques.

Cliques Defined

By definition, a clique is a narrow exclusive group of individuals that are held together by an accepted set of interests, or by an abnormal loyalty to a particular person or persons. A clique can be broken down into three basic parts:

- The first part of a clique is those individuals that hold the leadership role.

- The second part is composed of those individuals that are close to the ones in the leadership role.
- The third part of a clique is the individuals that are considered the pawns, which are simply members who are used or manipulated by the leadership group.

A clique is generally composed of a person in a dominant role and at least one who is placed in an adaptive role where any conflict intensions between the two are removed when their focus is turned to someone else. For example, this would be a person who needs help in a certain situation and is vulnerable to their influence. Usually, this is someone who needs help in a disastrous situation or they may have some real or imagined complaint. Regardless of which of the two it may be, it is nevertheless a complaint in their mind. Thus, they become vulnerable to the influence of a clique, which is nothing more than a web that entangles the individuals who have these types of problems, simply because they find a sympathetic ear. However, the solutions that a clique offers are short term in nature. Short-term solutions only cause the Christian to sidestep the principles that the Bible offers, which are correct and permanent solutions, solutions that don't eventually fail. God's biblical solutions allow a Christian to live a victorious life, which come only by the Christian using God's problem-solving methods of the confession technique of First John 1:9, by maintaining an adjustment with God's grace and Word, to having a consistent pre-occupation with the one we are mandated to love, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The short-term solutions used by cliques only offer results within their control, manipulative techniques or dependency within the clique. Those who lead the clique are in control of those who are following. As a result, the dominant leader ends up counseling the followers, which allows for a steady increase of social dependency within the clique. Incentives such as flattery, attention and approbation (a pat on the back) are provided. As a result, there is a fear of rejection that becomes stronger than being oriented to the authority of parents in the case of children. This ends up causing the same children to undermine the authority of their parents because the clique takes priority. This type of orientation basically creates a family within a family in the case of children. The family under the authority of parents transfers to the authority of the clique leader. Thus the authority of the parents is undermined.

This same problem occurs in marriage when there is a clique dependency that is stronger than the orientation of authority of the husband from the wife. The result creates a marriage within a marriage. The husband's authority is undermined when the wife's friends take priority over her marriage.

In like manner, a church clique would cause the neglect of authority orientation to the pastor. Therefore, a church within a church would be created. Take the case of First Corinthians 1:12. Some of the Corinthians believers had developed cliques along personality lines. Paul wrote in this letter that he had received a report concerning divisions in the church. In this case, there were some who said, 'I am of Paul...I of Apollos...I of Cephas...' (1Cor. 1:12).

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (KJV 1 Cor. 1:10-13)

In First Corinthians 1:10-13, we see demonstrated that our dependency is to be related to the Lord and not to people. However, it should be understood that a congregation is to be dependent on the Pastor/Teacher to teach and indoctrinate Biblical principles to them as individuals.

Of course, another exception in regards to dependency on people is that of children recognizing the authority and dependence on their parents for their orientation to life. This leadership role of parents is by God's design in the divine institution known as family. But when there is a failure in this authority orientation, teenagers, young children, as well as single lonely individuals or unhappy wives are often victims of cliques. This neglect of authority orientation is the result of not having a personal sense of destiny, tranquility of the soul or occupation with Jesus Christ.

In a clique you will either have your eyes on yourself, on other people or on things. This is a wrong focus that results in having a human or worldly perspective instead of having the mindset of Ephesians 5:1—that is, having your eyes on 'your God', not on people!

Distinction between a Clique and a Normal Social Life

We would do well to remember that a clique is simply an abnormal emotional dependence on a group in contrast to having a normal social life among Christians. There is never a true friendship in a clique because true friendship always involves intimacy and advice where there is encouragement, understanding and communication. True friendship never involves being controlling, manipulative, possessive or being codependent.

In contrast to true friendship, in a clique the leaders have a lust to control the dependents, and in return, the dependents have a lust for approval from the leaders. The two lusts actually feed off each other, the lust of having the power to control working together with the lust of needing approbation or approval.

The components of self-esteem and spiritual autonomy (independence) inside the normal social life of a Christian, allows us not to be manipulated and helps us execute God's plan, having invisible impact. This is when we get to the point in our spiritual walk when the Lord becomes our best friend. This is the stage when He becomes our role model. These are the stages of spiritual growth where we remain righteous without becoming self-righteous. We are all products of God's grace; self-righteousness tends to forget this. This stage of the spiritual life is also the maximization of your spiritual maturity where there is a maximum contentment and capacity for life as well as a maximization of our problem solving spiritual assets that God has provided for us. This is the stage where the Christian has maximum control of their personal life and circumstances. The Bible calls it being '...filled with all the fullness of God' (Eph. 3:19).

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,
that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. (KJV Eph.
3:19)

It Begins in the Home

God designed the maximization of the spiritual life to begin in childhood with the mandates given in Ephesians 6:1-3.

Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first
commandment with promise), That it may be well with thee,
and thou mayest live long on the earth. (KJV Eph. 6:1-3)

For children, these mandates come with a promise. God uses our adjustment to parental authority to prepare us for all other forms of authority that we will encounter in life. Such authorities would include those found in school, at the job, in law enforcement, as well as authority in marriage.

Notice that the mandate in Ephesians 6:1-2 never commands children to love their father and mother, but instead, to obey and to honor them. Of course, true love for father and mother comes in time, but before that happens, there first has to be respect for their authority. It will be that respect and honor for father and mother that will prevent children from judging, criticizing or even being ashamed of their parents. It is this orientation to parental authority that is the basis for social and cultural

freedom as well as spiritual growth. Notice children are mandated to honor parents and not some clique leader that they have appointed as a surrogate father or mother.

Therefore, because of these mandates from the Lord, children are to reject the authority from all sources of clique leadership, which undermines parental authority. This is exactly why the Bible mandates a child not to have any role models except Jesus Christ. From childhood we are to learn to do things as unto the Lord, and not as unto some clique leader, so as to prevent this pattern from continuing into our adult life (Col. 3:23-24).

And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. KJV
Col. 3:23-24

Obedying and honoring parents gives children the highest motivation they can have before actually reaching adulthood. Thus a child develops a sense of honor, integrity and a sense of justice, simply because ‘this is right’, (Eph. 6:3). The sooner a child learns this concept, the better off they will be because the only true love that exists in life must have its base in integrity. A child can develop this integrity during their formative years when they are under their parents’ authority.

The developmental stages which are most important in an individual’s life occur first from childhood, ages one through twelve, and then, in adolescence, from approximately 13 to 19 years of age. If there is an improper emotional development during these stages, the results are detrimental, resulting in individuals with excessive social needs. These needs would include having a lust for approval, as is the case with the pawns within a clique, and lusts for power and control, as is the case of cliques’ leaders. There is a resultant self-esteem when children revere their parents as opposed to some clique leader who is full of flattery and negative attention. Consequently, this gives children their highest motivation before entering adulthood. Likewise, this same integrity from which children honor their parents will motivate these children to say no to things like drugs, alcohol, and sex, as well as prevent them from being controlled by such sins of arrogance that include hatred, anger, gossip etc. From a biblically based integrity, a child can understand to do something because it is the ‘right’ thing to do, and also avoid doing things that are the wrong things.

A child has failed the integrity test when they begin to be critical, judgmental or even ashamed of their parents. Likewise, a wife can also be guilty of this same failure when she undermines her husband or a worker who undermines their boss. As Christians we are mandated to do everything ‘as to the Lord and not unto men’ (Col. 3:23). We do all things from an integrity based on the Lord, which should begin in childhood. A lack of integrity only means that you will not have any capacity to love. Emotions

are not love; anyone can emote, but we need integrity to truly have the capacity to love. This is the very reason that most adults do not have any capacity for love, simply because they were destroyed as teenagers by having authority disorientation and getting involved in the lust pattern of their sin nature. When a lust pattern is developed in the formative years of a child, it carries over into their adult lives. Simply put, a fragmented child makes for a fragmented adult.

Therefore, obedience in childhood is the initial development of integrity, which is what gives us capacity for life and love. There is no integrity if a person places a clique or anyone before his or her parents. Young people who possess virtue and integrity in the formative years may sin and fall occasionally, but they will not have the problems of emotional instability that is so widespread today. They will enter adulthood stabilized with the capacity for life, love and true happiness with a long life; thus, the mandates of Ephesians 6:1-3:

Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first
commandment with promise), That it may be well with thee,
and thou mayest live long on the earth. (KJV Eph. 6:1-3)

Verse three lets us know that children not obeying and honoring their parents will result in a short and miserable life. It is imperative that every child understands these mandates because their adulthood is depending on it. This is their first step to walking in love, as the Lord did from following a virtuous position of integrity and honor (Eph. 5:2).

Consequences of Rejecting Authority

One of the worst decisions that a person can make in their life is to reject the authority of their parents. This is the first system of authority that we are all put under, and maladjustment to parental authority is quite damaging because our attitude toward our parents will determine whether we ever grow up or not. When there is a predominant rejection of parental authority, society is destroyed, and this is fairly obvious today.

Rejection of parental authority results in not being able to adjust to other forms of authority such as that of teachers, coaches, law enforcement, management, government and husband. A person who rejects all forms of authority actually has the potential to become a criminal. This also makes for a miserable individual who tries to impose their misery on everyone around them.

It is also important to remember that although parents have authority over their children, it is absolutely useless apart from training and discipline. This will eventuate in the child accepting their authority. As a

result, the child will develop love and respect for their parents later on when they develop the capacity for it. Otherwise, they will be misfits in society; they will be maladjusted when they go into marriage, when they become parents themselves, on the job or whatever other part of society where they may eventually function in. The responsibility of Christian parents includes, not only providing food, shelter and clothing, but also training and discipline in the Lord (Proverbs 22:6).

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old,
he will not depart from it. (KJV Prov. 22:6)

In order to be properly oriented to life, we have to be properly oriented to all authority. We will be subjected to all forms of authority throughout our life. No matter how high we go in life, there will always be a higher authority. This is how God perpetuates humility within us and it is humility that is the foundation of all virtue. Without virtue love as your motivator in life you will be miserable, unstable, distracted and reacting will be the name of the game in your life. You will be distracted by having the demand syndrome and from being disillusioned. You will be constantly frustrated over situations and circumstances in your life. That is, unless you imitate the humanity of our Lord and walk in virtue love as we are mandated to do in Ephesians 5:1-2.

Walking in Virtue Love

The first word in Ephesians 5:2 is ‘and’, translated from the Greek conjunction *kai*, which is connecting Ephesians 5:1 with Ephesians 5:2. In verse one we’re mandated to imitate the humanity of the Lord and in verse two we are told how to achieve this goal. We imitate the Lord by walking in love as He walked in love to the point of giving Himself as a sacrifice on our behalf on the cross. Let us therefore, try to understand the mechanics of the type of walking that the Lord set forth for our example.

The word ‘walk’ is translated from the Greek verb *peripateite*, which is the present active imperative of *peripateo* meaning either to, ‘go or move about; to live’, or ‘to conduct oneself’. The imperative mood, once again, expresses a command from God on the will and life of the believer. The present tense lets us know that it is an ongoing action portrayed as occurring in the present time with no assessment of its completion. In other words, we are to continually keep doing this, as a habit. The active voice implies that the believer produces the action of walking. We have to make the conscience choice from our freewill to continually perform the action of conducting ourselves in love.

The reason for this continual action is because, even after being saved, we continue to possess a sin nature and this means we will continue to sin. Even upon reaching maturity, we will still sin. It will be sporadic or occasional sinning, but still sin nonetheless. For someone to say that believers are sinless after salvation is unrealistic. The Bible declares in First John 1:8 and 1:10 that such a person deceives only themselves because the truth is not in them, and they make God a liar. Thus, we are to continually conduct our lives in the sphere of love.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (KJV 1 Jn. 1:8-10)

Understanding Virtue Love

There are many misconceptions that come along with the subject of love, mainly because people cannot really grasp the concept that the word truly connotes. What exactly is this thing called love? To ask someone to describe the concept of love would probably result in various forms of interpreting this subject. I have heard it described as it being a feeling to never have to say you are sorry. Yet, Ephesians 5:2 calls for the child of God to walk in a specific type of love and it is imperative that we understand what constitutes this love.

In Ephesians 5:2 the word ‘love’ is translated from the Greek noun *agape* meaning, ‘love (primarily of Christian love), concern, interest’; or ‘the sacred meal shared by the early Church (Jude 12)’. This type of love is not based on human standards, but on God’s standards. It is a love based on God Himself, and is the first step to understanding true love. Our next step is to realize that our love for the Lord is never based on emotions, human affection, nor is it based on any visual attraction. This is obviously so, since God is not visible.

Therefore, having love for God is based on knowing Him by capturing His thinking, and, of course, His thoughts are only found in the pages of Scripture. This is the reason First Peter 1:8 states:

Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (KJV 1 Pet. 1:8)

The unspeakable joy described here, and the love for God that’s directly proportional to it, are designed to go together. And for the Christian, this happiness is based on the Lord. So it stands to reason, if a Christian is

unhappy, that state of unhappiness is linked to (or connected with) their failure to develop love for the Lord, as can be seen in First Corinthians 16:22:

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha. (KJV 1 Cor. 16:22)

Relating Love and Happiness

The word ‘anathema’ in First Corinthians 16:22 means ‘cursed’ and ‘maran-atha’ is an Aramaic phrase meaning, ‘the Lord comes’. In other words, the believer who does not love the Lord is under a curse until the Rapture* of the Church. The curse is a result of a believer not being able to associate that love and happiness are based on the Lord. Personal love as a virtue is always directed toward God the Father and toward God the Son. As a result, millions of believers throughout the Church Age have lived under this curse. They are in a state of cursing simply because they live by their impulses, which ultimately results in such characteristics as bitterness, unhappiness and being miserable.

Relating happiness with the Lord is also how you have a balanced life in relationship to people, values and principles. This is the reason why Christians have an unbalanced life in these areas; take romance for instance. One of the reasons we are deceived by people who may allege to love us in the area of romance is because their words may be bound in hypocritical and false motivations. Simply put, they have no capacity to truly love. Thus, this is the reason it is so difficult to accurately capture the thinking of individuals. This is one of many reasons that the Bible prohibits pre-marital sex. Avoiding sexual intimacy in romance allows for an objective interpretation of the other individuals’ motivations and capacities. Sexual intimacy is not love, but an expression of love between one right man and one right woman in marriage (Heb. 13:4).

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (KJV Heb. 13:4)

The problem is that most of us fall in love based on compatibility, but in the back of our mind we are actually assigning perfection to that someone we love. Of course, when our perceived perfection sours, we have a problem with our ‘love object’. We end up wondering how in the world we could fall for the person’s imperfect ways while at the same time forgetting that we have our own imperfections, and have absolutely no room to talk.

* *The Rapture* occurs when the Church or Body of Christ is removed from the earth before the seven year tribulation period. See God’s Biblical Timeline of History, p. 19.

This is the arrogance that is pervasive in our sin nature, which corrupts human love and becomes the basis for the monstrous number of problems in life. As it turns out, arrogance manifested through lust and sensuality sets the pattern for our relationship between love and happiness.

Therefore, deriving your love and happiness from the Lord protects your personal love for people from such corruption as jealousy, hatred, bitterness, being vengeful and even having self-pity. Some of the most horrendous acts in human history have been a result of such attitudes, and if you look to the beginning of such a relationship, it all started with the words 'I love you'. The problem is rooted in the fact that the person uttering those words had no virtue since their love is corrupted by such attitudes as the ones Paul lists in Ephesians 4:31.

Let all bitterness, and wrath [rage], and anger, and clamour [angry shouting], and evil speaking [slandering] be put away from you, with all malice [desire to injure]. (KJV Eph. 4:31)

All of these factors of the sin nature make personal love weak, and hinders its perpetuation, since without virtue reciprocation will be demanded. Of course, when the attention is not returned, then there comes frustration, disillusionment and reaction. Finally, one of the major pitfalls of personal love without virtue leads to promiscuity. Its destructive effects are boundless.

The Destructive Effects of Promiscuity

Promiscuity destroys your discernment skills and causes an emotional revolt to occur in our soul. As a result, love is based on emotion, affection and visual attraction, which are nothing more than values that are based on sensation. When your values are based on sensation not only do you seek gratification in the area of sex, but also in drugs, and excessive alcohol. These are all forms of physical stimulation, not happiness! As a result, there is also depression, self-pity and even suicide.

Today, people seem to forget that we have a soul and not just a body. Virtue always emphasizes the soul. There has to be a unity of souls first and this is why God calls for virtue, not sensation! Men and women of virtue will always emphasize the soul and not the body. Emphasis on the body prevents you from ever entering the compatibility and rapport stages of romance. After the attraction stage comes the compatibility stage, in the sense that you are both a born-again believer and both live by virtue, not by sensation. This is what Second Corinthians 6:14 is referring to with the command to not be unequally yoked.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? (KJV 2 Cor. 6:14)

Once the compatibility stage has been determined, then you allow for the rapport or relationship stage. This is when a relationship is established, when souls are harmonized. This is the basis for building a marriage on virtue love, and the reason, as we have seen in Hebrews 13:4, that sex outside of marriage is forbidden. This is why Ephesians 5:3 also states fornication should not be part of a believer's life.

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; (KJV Eph. 5:3)

Therefore, we will do well to remember that a man of virtue will never take a lady past her own volition in the area of intimacy. Likewise, a woman of virtue should not respond to some man's sexual advances; this is not the right man for you. Remember that being motivated by your libido does not have any virtue at all because it has no conscience, no stability, nor is it rational. Personal love without virtue is unstable and creates a tremendous amount of problems.

Contrary to popular belief, abstinence is a virtuous thing because it protects you from soul damage and from body damage as well. For one thing, it closes the door on ever entering the compatibility and rapport stages of a relationship. Premarital sex abandons the virtue that is necessary for true compatibility and a soul relationship, and also causes the fornicators to base the relationship on either romance or just plain lust, in a state of deceit. A relationship should never be based on sex or on emotion.

We can get emotional from watching a movie or seeing an exciting sports event, or hearing a particular song, but it is nothing more than emotion, which is not to be confused with love. Premarital sex handicaps you from ever being the right person for marriage, simply because there is no understanding of genuine love, which is not a sensation.

Premarital sex also causes difficulty adjusting to one person in marriage, and it also contributes to a lack of sexual energy in marriage. This helps to explain the reason for so many dull marriages today as well as so many impotent men and frigid women. Not to mention the sexual diseases that can also result from promiscuity. Just because everybody is doing something in the movies, on television, at school, or on the job does not make it right. Small wonder our divorce rate has soared to at least fifty percent and is steadily escalating. We have become a society living on sensation rather than on virtue.

Today, sexual intimacy is portrayed as a normal healthy function of life, and it is, but only within marriage. God has designed sexual intimacy for one right man and one right woman in marriage as a beautiful reflection of Jesus Christ and His Church. Sexual restraint might seem impossible in our day and age, but it is entirely possible for the child of God who walks in virtue love. There are so many loser believers when it comes to the area of sexual restraint and, because they lack virtue, they are under the curse of First Corinthians 16:22. They are born-again believers destined for heaven, but will spend their life here on earth living by the curse of their impulses. This is a sad thing when you consider all the wonderful spiritual assets that the Lord has made available to every believer in the Church Age. Yet, many miss out on God's grace provisions because they have wrong priorities. Most believers never learn and understand what they have available in Christ because they simply allow the details of life to take precedence over their relationship with the Lord.

We are called to base our motivation on our personal love for God the Father and God the Son. This is what will insulate us against mental attitude sins and give us a life of virtue. We can get to the point in our life where we base our decisions simply on whether it is the right and honorable thing to do. Not only do we know it is right, but we also understand why it is right, as in the case of avoiding premarital sexual activity (2Cor. 5:14).

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge,
that if One died for all, then were all dead: (KJV 2Cor. 5:14)

The word 'constraineth' in this verse is translated from the Greek verb *synechei*, meaning, 'to surround, to control, to hold prisoner, to rule'. This is the love that gives us the proper motivation to be victorious. It is this love for the Lord that is supposed to control or dominate our thinking. This is where we are supposed to derive our motivation. This is what gives virtue to our motivations. Otherwise, we will react to injustice and unfair treatment. In return, the reaction will cause a loss of wisdom, common sense and discernment.

Love for God the Son is supposed to emphasize our correct priorities and love for God the Father emphasizes our correct motivation, which is a vital part of the Christian life. True motivation is supposed to come from the Lord and not from our impulses or from people. Again, this is what gives virtue to our motivations.

The Sources of Motivation

Motivation is the part of our soul that provokes our actions, whether good or bad. Proper motivation comes from God's Word in our soul along with being under the filling of the Spirit. This is what produces personal love

for God and gives virtue to our motivations. Improper motivation, on the other hand, comes from the lust pattern of our sin nature and living according to Satan's world system. The first promotes our growth and the second hinders our growth; it is up to us to make the choice.

We are products of our own decisions, and good decisions from a position of strength will accept authority. This is how you will develop true capacity for life, love and happiness—having virtue. However, when you make bad decision from weakness you will have a problem with authority. Scripture is clear on the law of taking responsibility for our decisions (Gal. 6:7; Col. 3:25; Prov. 22:8; Hosea 8:7).

Be not deceived; God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (KJV Gal. 6:7)

But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. (KJV Col. 3:25)

He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail. (KJV Prov. 22:8)

For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. (KJV Hosea 8:7)

Galatians 6:7 along with the other verses teach that we always have to take personal responsibility for our decisions and actions because our sins have natural consequences in our lives. Be firm in choosing to walk in virtue love as mandated in the scriptures, and thus find true happiness.

Conclusion

By no means is the mandate to imitate Jesus Christ by walking in virtue love an easy accomplishment; yet, as we have seen in our study of Ephesians 5:1-2, not doing so carries with it an extreme amount of negative consequences. As believers, it is up to each one of us to decide to conduct our life in virtue love or to live under the curse of our impulses. I hope this study has emphasized the importance of deriving our motivation from the Lord and not from our circumstances or from people. The diverse alternatives that Satan offers through his world system cannot compare to the system of virtue that the Lord has provided each one of us who are His children. May the Lord bless your efforts as you strive to consistently imitate Him in virtue love; you will not be disappointed.

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God's Biblical Timeline of History



