

Loving One Another

MP messianicpublications.com/daniel-botkin/loving-one-another/

6/19/2012



Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, “Master, which is the great commandment in the Torah?” Yeshua answered him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’ ([Mt 22:35-40](#) 📖)

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ([1 Jn. 4:71](#) 📖)

During the past decade or so, we have been witnessing a move of the Spirit among Bible-believing Christians who are re-examining the Law (Torah) of God. People are looking into things such as the Sabbath, the Feast Days, and the dietary laws. These inquisitive seekers are dissatisfied with the inadequate answers that church leaders have given them when they have asked about these subjects. As this Messianic movement continues to grow, a great number of disciples are discovering the joy of following Yeshua in a way that honors the Torah ([1 John 5:3](#) 📖).

Those of us who are a part of this movement want to honor the Torah by worshiping on the days set aside by our Heavenly Father. We want to eat foods that are Biblically kosher. We want to dress modestly. We like to see women wearing dresses and head coverings, and men wearing beards and *tzitzytot*. We want to live moral, upright lives of integrity that are not corrupted by the world. We want to be honest in our business dealings and pay our bills on time. We want to live and worship in a way that honors all the commandments of the Torah, because all the commandments come from our Heavenly Father.

While all the commandments are important, we must remember that they are not all of equal importance. Some of the commandments are far more important than others. Yeshua spoke about “the weightier matters of the Law” and He spoke about “the least of the commandments” ([Mt. 23:23](#) 📖 & [5:19](#) 📖). In our relationships with one another, we must remember that the commandment to love one another outweighs all other commandments. Loving God is the greatest of those commandments that deal with our vertical man-to-God

relationship; loving one another is the greatest of those commandments that deal with our horizontal person-to-person relationships.

Those of us in the Messianic movement may worship on the right days, eat kosher, dress modestly, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world, but if we fail to love one another, all of our Torah-keeping is meaningless. In fact, it is worse than meaningless. It is a clanging noise, an annoyance to the ears of God: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1 [L](#)). If the Apostle Paul were alive today, he might rewrite 1 Corinthians 13 this way for Messianic believers:

“Though I speak all the Hebrew blessings and prayers fluently, and understand all the words and phrases perfectly, and have not love, I am a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I can teach endtime prophecy, and understand all the mysteries of the Torah, and have perfect knowledge of precisely how and when and where the sabbaths and new moons and holy days should be celebrated, and how every little commandment should be observed, and though I have enough faith to afford to buy the best glatt kosher food for every meal, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I give tzedakah generously and though I would give my body to be burned rather than disobey the Torah, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”

Why is the commandment to love one another so important? “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn. 13:35 [L](#)). If we love one another, the world will know we are His disciples; if we don’t love one another, it is proof that we are not truly His disciples. He did not say, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye keep the Sabbath and Feasts and eat kosher.” As important as these things are, they are not the proof of our status as His disciples. The Sabbath, the Feasts, and the dietary laws must not be minimized, but the proof of discipleship is not found in these things. The proof of discipleship is found in our love for one another.

Years ago the pastor of a church in South America said, “Our church grew from 200 people who didn’t love one another to 600 people who didn’t love one another.” This pastor was honest and humble enough to admit this. I want to see the Messianic movement grow and I want to see the size of my own congregation increase, but not without brotherly love.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to 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” (Eph. 4:29ff [L](#)).

Paul’s instructions to the Ephesians implies that there will be times when believers in a congregation will have to forbear one another and forgive one another. It’s easy to love people who agree with all of our theology and doctrines. Yet even in a small congregation of people who agree on something like keeping the 7th-day Sabbath and the dietary laws, there are bound to be disagreements about exactly how the Sabbath and dietary laws should be kept. What activities are appropriate or inappropriate on the Sabbath? What constitutes excessive over-scrupulousness in keeping the dietary laws, and what constitutes carelessness? We can expect differences of opinion even among godly men, and that is why we are told to forbear one another and forgive one another.

“Judge not according to the appearance.” Yeshua said, “but judge righteous judgment” (Jn. 7:24 [L](#)). In other words, do not judge things by the way they appear, because the way things appear is not always the way things

are.

“He said _____ to me!” someone complains. “He said that because _____.” Fill in the blanks with whatever you will. You have made an assumption about a brother’s motive. You presume to know the reason that he said or did something. Instead of going to him to be reconciled, you listen to the voice of the accuser of the brethren. Instead of following Paul’s instructions to put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, etc., you nurture these poisonous seeds that the Enemy has sown in your mind. The Holy Spirit is grieved and you end up spiritually and emotionally crippled when those seeds bear their fruit.

Don’t make assumptions about why someone said or did something. Don’t even make assumptions about why a person sins. I am not saying to condone the sin; I am suggesting we take into consideration the fact that there are reasons that a brother or sister is weak. Here are two facts of life:

1. In general, with some exceptions, children who are raised in good, stable homes with godly, moral parents usually become good, stable, moral, godly adults.
2. In general, with some exceptions, children who are raised in bad, unstable homes with ungodly, immoral parents usually become bad, unstable, immoral, ungodly adults.

These two facts do not excuse sinful behavior, but they do explain much of it. Therefore when you see a brother who is weak, remember that there are reasons for his weakness. If he is making a sincere effort to walk with the Lord and to overcome his weakness, encourage him and pray for him instead of criticizing him.

If it’s a sin that is overtaking him, remember [Galatians 6:1](#) : “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Go to the weaker brother because you care about him, not just because you are annoyed. And remember Yeshua’s instruction about the speck and the beam in the eye. Helping a brother to overcome a fault is like helping someone to get a foreign object out of the eye. The eye is very sensitive. You must not use a wire brush or a power drill to remove a speck of dirt from someone’s eye, and you must not use harsh criticisms and accusations to help someone overcome a weakness. Above all, do not slander, backbite, and gossip about a weaker brother. In Romans 1, backbiting is listed as one of the marks of a reprobate mind. It brought the wrath and judgment of God upon Miriam and Aaron. ([Num. 12](#) )

Francis Frangipane, in his book *The Three Battlegrounds*, has a chapter called “Beware of the Stronghold of Cold Love.” As a springboard for this chapter, he uses [Matthew 24:12](#)  (“Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold”). Frangipane writes about the dangers of letting our love for the brethren grow cold:

Every time you refuse to forgive or to overlook a weakness in another, your heart not only hardens toward them, it hardens toward God. You cannot form a negative opinion of someone (even though they may deserve it!) and allow that opinion to crystallize into an attitude. For every time you do, an aspect of your heart will cool toward God. You may still think you are open to God, but the Scriptures are dear: “...the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” ([1 Jn. 4:20](#) ). You may not like what someone has done, but you do not have an option to stop loving them. Love is your only option.

What do I mean by love? First, I do not merely mean “tough love.” I mean gentle, affectionate, sensitive, open, persistent love. God will be tough when He needs to be, and we will be firm when He tells us to be, but beneath our firmness must be an underground river of love waiting to spring into action. By “love” I mean a compassion that is empowered by faith and prayer to see God’s best come forth in the one I love. When I have love for someone, I have predetermined that I am going to stand with them, regardless of what they are going through...

Many people will stumble over little faults and human weaknesses. These minor things are quickly pumped up by the enemy into great big problems. Oh, how frail are the excuses people

use to justify withdrawing from others! In reality, these problems, often with a church or pastor, are a smoke-screen which mask the person's lack of love.

We need to overcome our hang-ups about commitment, for no one will attain the fullness of God's purposes on earth without being committed to imperfect people along the way.

"Well, as soon as I find a church that believes as I do, I will be committed. " This is a dangerous excuse, because as soon as you decide you do not want to forgive, or God begins to deal with the quality of your love, you will blame your withdrawing on some minor doctrinal difference. The Kingdom of God is not based on mere doctrines, it is founded upon relationships — relationships with God and, because of God, with one another.

The Apostle John wrote: "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 Jn. 3:14 ). If we cannot keep the Torah's great commandment to love one another, all of our other scrupulous, letter-perfect Torah keeping will not give us spiritual life. It will only sink our roots deeper into death and serve as a witness against us on the Day of Judgment when our lack of love is exposed for all the world to see.

Copyright © 2017 Messianic Publications, All Rights Reserved.