

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

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The Great Motivator

What is the greatest motivator in all the world? A popular song of the 60's likely gave the correct answer. *What the World Needs Now is Love* was first recorded by Jackie DeShannon in 1965. The lyrics were written by song writer Hal David, and the music was composed by tunesmith Burt Bacharach. It climbed quickly to near the top of the pop music charts and has been extremely popular ever since, having been recorded by well over 100 other artists during the last 50+ years. I'm guessing most everyone can recite at least the first line of the song: "What the world needs now is love, sweet love, it's the only thing that there's just too little of..."

I'd have to agree with Hal David, Burt Bacharach, Jackie DeShannon and all the other musicians who have covered the song, that the world needs a lot more LOVE. However, I wouldn't agree that it's the only characteristic in all the world of which there is a shortage. It seems to me there are many things we could certainly use more of, like: civility, kindness, patience, mercy, grace and sacrifice, just to name a few. But today let's think about love, as a motivator, and maybe another time we'll come back and look at some of these other characteristics which may be in limited supply in our wicked world.

Wouldn't you say that LOVE is the essential element, emotion, attitude, and motivation of Christianity? Without true love, our lives are worthless and empty, and all of our spiritual gifts and sacrifices are in vain. But, the external signs of love can be feigned or faked, and men can sometimes be fooled by a hypocritical façade of love. However, God can't be fooled.

Consider the premier Scripture about love (1 Corinthians 13), where the Apostle Paul paints a vivid word picture of the essential motivation we call "LOVE." Note that Paul describes a "Christian" who possesses great spiritual power. Not only that, we observe them giving of themselves to others in sacrificial ways, and we know they would willingly die for Christ, because we've heard them say so! From all the external evidence, we would judge them "faithful," but God knows their heart, and pronounces a different judgment - empty, profitless, worthless and vain. What's the difference between God's judgment and man's? The answer can be found in genuine, heartfelt, agape "LOVE!"

(Continued p. 2)

The Great Motivator (Continued)

We're talking about the kind of love that says "I'll do what's best for you, even if it hurts." The kind of love that wants no other reward than to see your soul lifted out of the miry depths of sin, guilt, depression, heartache and slavery to Satan, so you can begin traveling the road to glory!

Of course it's very easy for one to say he loves God, his brethren, his neighbor, his fellowman, the lost, and even his enemies, but saying it is one thing, really doing it is quite another. There are preachers, elders, and members who preach, order, and demand a cheap love, which means never confronting sin, never disagreeing with their opinions, and never ever saying anything of a negative nature by way of reproof or rebuke. There are those who go to great lengths to prove they are more loving than others. You'll find them doing high visibility things to receive the praise of men, so that their egos can be stroked, thus reassuring them of their tremendous love for others. They have their reward (Mt. 6:2, 5, 16).

You may fool most of the people all of the time, but you can't fool God even some of the time, and you won't fool those who have really studied the Word, because it describes to us the characteristics of real Godly love. According to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (ESV), Christian love is "patient and kind." It's "not envious, boastful, arrogant or rude." It "does not insist on its own way." It's "not irritable or resentful." "It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth." Finally, "love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things." It seeks only to bear the other's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:1-2).

Indeed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, Christian **LOVE** is the greatest motivator in all the world, and we surely need more of it! Is your love genuine or counterfeit? God knows! Does the fire of your love need rekindling? If so why not return to your first love through repentance and renewed faithfulness. Why not do so today!

David A. McCain