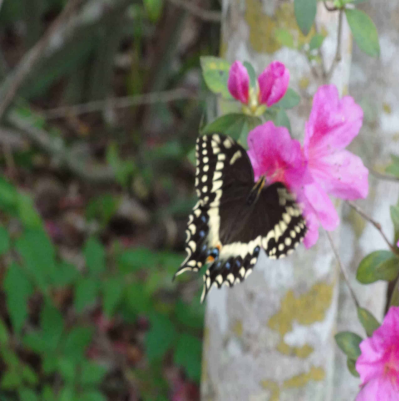




Behind the Mask

Description

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (Romans 12:)

I love verses like this in the Bible. They are small, but they pack intense power in their meaning. This passage of Scripture gives us three commands in 13 small words. It is so easy to skim the Bible and miss small verses like this. We need to slow down at times and find out what God has for us within a short portion of words. What does it mean to have sincere love, to hate evil, and cling to what is good? Let's take a deeper look into this passage of Scripture!

1. Love Must Be Sincere!

The word sincere comes from the Greek word *anupokritos* which means "unfeigned, undisguised, without hypocrisy". This same word was used to describe those who would act on stage in Greece. It was a tradition to go on stage and hide behind a mask. It was easy to become someone else and act the part of the character that needed to be portrayed on stage. This is what the Greek word is trying to describe here. We are to have a love that's not an act. A love that doesn't disguise itself behind a mask. A love that is real! What does real love look like? Well, take the love test below and see how love looks in your life. See what areas you have to work on and what areas might be strengths for you.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It ALWAYS protects, ALWAYS trusts, ALWAYS hopes, ALWAYS perseveres. LOVE NEVER FAILS. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

How did you do on the love test? I know each one of us has strengths and weaknesses when it comes to loving others. Let's be encouraged about our strengths and motivated to work on our weaknesses. May we learn to stop acting like we love others and actually start doing it. "Love never fails." Is that true in your life? Will people experience God's love through you or will it always be an act? I'm choosing to quit my acting career! I'm leaving my mask on the stage and getting ready to embrace the fulness of God's love. May people experience the realness of God through me and may they come to

know what True love is!

2. Hate what is evil.

Notice this part of the verse says “what” and not “who”. People love to get hung up on the sin that their neighbor is in. Let me just remind you that the Bible says, “*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in our own eye* (Matthew 7:3, NIV)?” I could spend more time on this, but I think this is clear enough for right now.

The Greek word for hate actually means “to shudder with horror”. We are to shudder when we look at sin within ourselves. We should be so persuaded to love God and follow His ways that our sin should physically cause us to shudder. Again this is not someone else’s sin. Oh how easy it is to become distracted and look at someone else’s sin. We don’t have to see or be convicted about the sin in our own lives if our finger is busy pointing out the sin in someone else. But God’s Word wants us to take stock of our own lives. What needs to change in me? What kind of evil exists in my heart? Is there greed, self-centeredness, unforgiveness, bitterness, hate, selfishness, lust, etc. Let’s clean it all out and find more room for God’s goodness in our hearts!

3. Cling to what is good.

Take notice that we are to love sincerely, hate evil, and cling to what is good. These three things are to be happening simultaneously. One does not happen without the other. In fact, they work much better with each other. The more you learn to love the way God calls you to love, the better equipped you will be to recognize the evil that does not belong in your life. Now this third thing is very important. This is the one that holds it all together.

In fact, the word cling comes from the Greek word *kollao* which means “to glue together”. God wants us to be glued to His goodness. He wants us to stick to it like super glue and never come loose. When we are glued to God’s goodness and desire to operate from this goodness, we find ourselves overflowing with God’s love. Soon the evil desires inside of us start disappearing. The more we cling to God, the less everything else matters. So what do you say, will you get glued to God and His goodness?

Dear Father God, I pray my love will be sincere. May You help me see any evil deeds inside my heart and purify me daily. I cling to Your goodness and desire to be glued to Your ways. I desire more of You and less of me!

Clinging to God,

Category

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