

LOVE IS NOT THINKING EVIL

By Nick Bibile

1Co 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

As we are studying Christian love, how it is related to one another. Here the apostle says, it does not think evil. It means true Christian love does not think evil of others. Thinking badly of others, criticizing others, condemning others, and judging others without knowing the truth. Suspecting others of wrong and coming to quick rash conclusions, something bad about them, without knowing the truth. Apostle says, true Christian love does not think evil.

If you have judgmental spirit of people, always seeing their mistakes and errors and it really bothers you, then you have a censorious spirit. What is a censorious spirit? It comes from the word censor our English word comes from the Latin censor and censeo. The background meaning is an officer in Rome whose business was to draw up a register of the citizens to keep watch over their morals. He is the man with the critical eye. Also an officer who has the power to examine all manuscripts, pamphlets, newspapers and books before they are published so there is nothing harmful to the readers, he is the fault finder.

However when it comes to Christian love within the body Christian love is opposite to a censorious spirit. The only one who knows the heart of the children is God yet many times we do not know what the other person is going through and it is very easy for us to look down and think evil and to have a censorious spirit of our brother. Remember Job's three friends condemned Job, they thought it was the failure of job, his fault, yet it was God's providence for Job to go through this severe sufferings. In the same way it is easy to condemn our brothers and sisters not knowing the real circumstances.

They do not have grace to the others. The unbelievers they judge others from their standard so many Christians get caught up like the worldly and judge others from their perspective, their experience and

their standard. Jonathan Edwards said, “A censorious spirit appears in a *forwardness to judge evil of the qualities of others*. It appears in a disposition to overlook their good qualities, or to think them destitute of such qualities when they are not, or to make very little of them; or to magnify their ill qualities, and make more of them than is just; or to charge them with those ill qualities that they have not. Some are very apt to charge others with ignorance and folly, and other contemptible qualities, when they in no sense deserve to be esteemed thus by them.”

Ps 15:1<<A Psalm of David. >> LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

The word reproach means to charge with a fault, to blame. This is what the unbelievers do; the true Christian spirit is different. If you think someone is in a sin we are to speak to the brother or sister privately first. We are to rebuke someone who is in false teachings, and correct them in sound doctrine. But we are not to have a censorious spirit that is not from God that is from the flesh because we do not know what the other person is going through.

This is what Matthew Henry said on verse 3. “He is one that contrives to do all the good he can to his neighbors, but is very careful to do hurt to no man, and is, in a particular manner, tender of his neighbor’s reputation. He *does no evil* at all *to his neighbor* willingly or designedly, nothing to offend or grieve his spirit, nothing to prejudice the health or ease of his body, nothing to injure him in his estate or secular interests, in his family or relations; but walks by that golden rule of equity, To do as he would be done by. He is especially careful not to injure his neighbor in his good name, though many, who would not otherwise wrong their neighbors, make nothing of that. If any man, in this matter, bridles not his tongue, his religion is vain. He knows the worth of a good name, and therefore *he backbites not*,

defames no man, speaks evil of no man, makes not others' faults the subject of his common talk, much less of his sport and ridicule, nor speaks of them with pleasure, nor at all but for edification. He makes the best of every body, and the worst of nobody.”

Ps 12:2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

Here flattering lips means, the tongue cuts and hurt more than a weapon.

Ro 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, **inventors of evil things**, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Is all judging is evil? No. So where do you draw the line? When there is plain and clear evidence of wickedness in a Christian we are not to keep silence, and we are not forbidden to judge them of their wicked actions. One thing we need to be careful is that we should not come to hasty, rash and condemning others. We need to be prudent and make sure that we need to see the matter very clearly and plain before we speaking, we need to control our tongue, keep quiet not just lashing out someone with our tongues without clear plain evidence. We need to listen before we talk.

Pr 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

Matthew Henry said on this scripture. “It is folly for a man to go about to speak to a thing which he does not understand, or to pass sentence upon a matter which he is not truly and fully informed of, and has not patience to make a strict enquiry into; and, if it be folly, it

is and will be shame.” John Gill said, “without weighing and considering, and thoroughly understanding.”

Let us see some incidents on this matter. Joshua 22:1-6 Joshua blesses the Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh.

Joshua 22:9-12 Israel angry as they heard these tribes have built an altar in the land of Canaan. They thought they have turned away from the Lord. Without thinking and seeing the whole story made a quick, rash decision to go to war against them.

Joshua 22:23-28 They did not built an altar to another god, but an altar to God almighty, it was not an altar of grain offerings, burnt offerings but an altar of witness between them.

Verse 29. (Read) Here we see on the contrary they build an altar for a good end to worship God and give glory to him.

How many of us come to quick conclusions, thinking evil of someone because you do not know the whole story, when you see a person in the church, you have a different attitude to that person as you have come to some rash conclusions of that person.

Do not be like Eli who judged and condemned Hannah as Eli saw only the outward.

1 Sam 1:10-17

When you go to a restaurant, the waitress spills the coffee on the table you get mad. You instantly condemn her for her act. You do not really know what she is going through in her life for that day, may be she is a single parent, she did not have sleep last night as her baby was sick. Always try to be in the other person’s shoes. Everyone is not strong and healthy like you. Everyone’s mind is not alert like you. We all have different bodies, different types of work, different trials so we cannot judge anyone according to our standard.

Do not look down at people and say, “man, am I the only good person here?” Take a lesson from form Elijah. Elijah judged the state of Israel saying there are no true worshippers of God except me. God

told Elijah there are seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Well, we are quick to judge what we see on the surface and come to a quick conclusion. How often we do this to hurt others, thinking of evil not knowing the truth. Jonathan Edwards said, "How often, on thorough examination, have we found things better of others than we have heard, and than at first we were ready to judge! There are always two sides to every story, and it is generally wise, and safe, and charitable to take the best; and yet there is probably no one way in which persons are so liable to be wrong, as in presuming the worst is true, and in forming and expressing their judgment of others, and of their actions, without waiting till all the truth is known."

Remember Joseph was put to prison. They believed Potiphar's wife. Quick condemnation and judgment made an innocent person to go to prison. We need to be careful not to magnify and to go to extremes on a matter without knowing the full reason.

Let me ask you something. If you hear something bad about your own wife, husband, children, closest relative or your best friend, will you be quick to pass judgment? No. You may not even believe it. If it comes to the worse you will slow to believe and take time to see the full matter before you condemn and pass judgment. Why is it different here? Because you love them. Then what about your Christian Brother or sister? We are talking on the love chapter right? The same principle applies to your brother or sister in the church. We are to love them as we love ourselves. Love does not think evil.

Mt 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Mt 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

He does not forbid those private judgments that we are compelled to form the wrong-doers, for he himself tells us that we are to judge men

by their fruits. What he is saying is to prohibit rash, uncharitable judgments, a faultfinding spirit, and a disposition to condemn without examination of charges.

“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things” (Rom. 2:1)

Before we pass judgment on someone, go and look at the mirror how perfect you are. Usually we like to see the faults of others, we like to see the external, instead of looking internal within you and seriously examining our own hearts and lives, and then we see we are worse than them.

When you think of evil of someone and judge them what you are doing is you are setting yourself above others and we are going to be the prideful judge to judge our fellow servants.

Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

And so in Rom. 14:4, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” God is the only rightful judge, do not dare to
Come against his sovereign power.

Ps 50:19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

Tit 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

1Pe 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The bottom line is we need to speak with grace. Look at ourselves we do not deserve salvation, we have sinned against God, in our thoughts, words and action, we deserve the wrath of God, yet it was the grace of God that brought salvation to us. God could have judged us instantly, yet it was his grace that saved us, how wonderful and marvelous is the word grace. In the same way let us not think evil of our brother or sister in the Lord, cause us not to have that judgmental attitude but to have grace towards them.

Eph 4:29 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.

When we speak, men will profit from our talk and not get hurt.

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