

How to Keep Your Love from Growing Cold

Dealing with Unrighteous Judgments

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This will break up the fallow (untilled) ground of your heart, so bear with me. The purpose for this is to expose a major inroad the devil has made into the body of Christ that would cause our love to grow cold.

Matthew 24:

Jesus emphasized this as being one of the signs of His return: “(10) And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. (11) Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (12) And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. (13) But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

Human love versus God’s love. Human love tires because it never endures if it is not being reciprocated. It can easily be frustrated and put out. Who can endure unrequited love and personal rejection? God’s love, beginning with His mercy, endures forever (Psalm 106). God’s love always first comes to us as mercy because of our sinful, rebellious, self-ruling, self-absorbed, and helpless state. Even as a redeemed-from-sin people, we still must come before the Lord to obtain mercy first before finding grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). We will never not need God’s mercy even after Jesus’ return.

Until we understand the difference between the two, we are pretty much useless for God’s Kingdom purposes in the world.

“The kind of prayers to which our Heavenly Father will most likely respond and speedily answer are those saturated with His loving-kindness and tender mercies. Why? Because such a wondrous love would have already convicted the one praying of the futility of trying to pray without it. Such a wondrous and potentially intimidating love would have already produced brokenness and hope-filled desperation in them, aka, wholeheartedness.”

Staying brokenhearted over people...without it we disqualify ourselves from effectively ministering to those people.

Definitions

Self-righteous:

Having or characterized by a certainty, especially an unfounded one, that one is totally correct or morally superior.

**It is should never be about who is right in opposing views but about what is right before God.*

Disapproving: having or showing a strong belief that your own actions, opinions, etc., are right and other peoples are wrong

Smug:

Disapproving: having or showing the annoying quality of people who feel very pleased or satisfied with their abilities, achievements, etc. They base their judgments of others on an outward show of success or greatness and are oblivious to what is really happening.

Unrighteous judgment:

It is judging by our natural eyes and ears and not by the Holy Spirit. It always involves judging by appearance and comparison. As in comparing success based on numbers or on some outward standard that can be measured with the eyes and calculated with the mind.

The standard used with such judgment is narrow-minded, not understanding God's ways.

Elaboration

Even the Prophet Samuel had to be instructed by the Lord not to judge by appearance when choosing which son of Jesse would become the king of Israel (1 Samuel 16). When the first son (of eight) came before Samuel, the Lord told him: "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." So, the Lord directed Samuel as each of Jesse's sons came before. He knew from the Lord in his spirit that the first seven were not God's choice and inquired concerning the youngest son, David, who happened to be the chosen. Samuel knew it the moment he laid eyes on David. This sets a precedent revealing how righteous judgment works. Our natural tendency is to judge by outward appearance either for or against, but such judgments are blind to the true condition of the person's heart. Like Samuel, we must allow God to bear witness in our spirits concerning the true nature of things. Natural thinking cannot see the whole picture, nor does it have a

true heart of love for those being scrutinized. Of course, there are those who will twist this by dismissing people who they say are judging them with: "Only God knows my heart." Yes, He does, and He also knows you are using that statement as a false cover for your sins.

Those who are bound by such judgment (which is sin) are more devoted to outward procedure and conformity to what they deem as right, pure, or not demonic. It's much easier for them to write people off or disassociate themselves from them than face the reality of their love-void hearts. Such a state is usually caused by their failure to allow God to deal with them deeply to a level in which it touches their identity and solidifies it only in God as their Father. Here are more characteristics:

- The intimate worship of God is not easy for them because that kind of love is so foreign. It makes them restless, wanting to distract themselves in outward preoccupation or they instead choose to disassociate themselves mentally.
- They hide behind a self-righteousness that operates in fault-finding and judgmentalism or...
- The flip-side is a self-consoling compromise, tolerance, and over-protectiveness. The compromising and tolerant usually hide behind statements like "You shouldn't judge me." That is another form of self-righteousness. They judge everyone as unworthy to judge them and will not submit even to God's judgments because they love their sinful lifestyle.
- Either way, until they expose themselves to God's loving truth, freedom will never come. They will never know the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. Only His blood can cleanse our conscience from the awareness and power of sin. (Genesis 3 after Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden) God said, "Adam, where are you?" Continuing on...paraphrased: Why are you afraid of being exposed to my light, making for yourself your own coverings, hiding from My eyes that search out all things and leave nothing undone? Only I can provide for you the covering that you need? Adam and Eve used fig leaves to cover the shame of their nakedness, but God killed an animal(s), shedding its blood, giving them their skins to cover their shame. So, the carnage began because sin entered the human race. How awful it is.
- Such people are usually performance driven and restless, lacking true purpose apart from their performance.
- Much energy is spent trying to get from their familiar, dysfunctional, and tangible surroundings what they should only be getting from God.

- Self-importance in them is never satisfied. It can only find its end and fulfillment at the foot of the cross of Christ. If God applauds you because of your faith in His Son, should anyone else matter?
- They are quick to tell you what's wrong with you or another based on their knowledge of good and evil and THEIR application of it. By which tree that was in the Garden of Eden are we living. Which is our point of reference? Fast forward to 2 Corinthians 3...mere knowledge of good and evil or Holy-Spirit-ignited and discerning loving-kindness and tender mercies which bring life.
- They are quick to judge others based what they believe is an appearance of evil and point it out to them.
- They are quick to argue and question. Skepticism and cynicism are common in their thinking along with opinions designed to legitimize the same as a righteous cause.
- They are quick to take Scripture or information from other spiritual sources and apply it as they see fit. In accordance with 2 Corinthians 3, they are ministers of the letter (death) instead of being ministers of the Spirit that gives life.
- They compare your associations and affiliations with theirs to see if you add up.
- Their claim to fame is usually based on their associations and affiliations because they lack in submission to the love of Christ, so their self-importance is their priority.
- All of this will disqualify those who operate in it from ministering the life and love of Christ and for speaking in His behalf. Those who continue to operate in such things will become a source of discord in families, church meetings, and society. That is one of the things God hates the most (Proverbs 6:16-19).
- They lack in a broken heart and contrite spirit and have little-to-no capacity for love because self-importance is their rule, and they don't even realize it.
- They carry offense wherever they go and are propagators of it.

Examples:

Growing up in Christ, I read many-a-book on revival and revivalists who God used in past. These became, in my thinking, the standard or litmus test for success as far as ministry and church services go today. Well much to my frustration and of those people on the receiving end, that kind of judgment by comparison was not of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, (27) "and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does

not know how. (28) “For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head” (Mark 4).

First comes the sprouting of the seed, then the head of the wheat, and finally the full grain in the head. If we apply the same standard of judgment and expectation to the sprout that we would to the full-grown wheat, would that not be foolish, narrow-minded, and unjust? How would that make the sprout feel (if it indeed could feel)?

I recall someone trying to tell me once that painting pictures of Jesus was breaking one of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 30. Specifically, they were referring to (v.4), “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;” At first glance, they would appear to be right but the next verse proves their judgment was unjust: “...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.”

The whole point of the commandment was to forbid the worship of hand-made idols and not for painting pictures of Jesus that portray who He is. That would be another way of preaching the Gospel through art. This would apply to anything, including statues, classified as legitimate artwork. I once had a picture on a plate of an artist’s rendition of Jesus standing among sheep with a rod in one hand and a lamb in the other arm. As does the written word of God, it reminded me of who Jesus is every time I looked at it. It was one of my favorite gifts. Was it an idol? Absolutely not!

Something the Lord addressed in me many years ago in reference to ministry was that no five-fold ministry gift (Ephesian 4) should ever attempt to make other people as passionate about their calling as they are. If people are not as passionate about my emphasis as I am, my responsibility before God is not to make them that way but to make sure Christ-likeness is being produced in them. I cannot beat other people over the head with my passion expecting them to respond in a positive way or respond at all. If I emphasize the importance of what I am preaching above everyone else’s message, I am insecure in my identity with my Father in Heaven and my ministry calling is feeding my self-importance. That would put me in danger of judgment because of being more devoted to my self-importance than to the cross of Christ. The highest calling of all is not going to church, soul winning, worship, sermonizing, teaching, or book writing. It is honoring Christ as the Father honors Him in Heaven in all we do in accordance with the grace God has given us. We have been set apart for Him in His service and not for the people. This determines our status with God. Why do we do

what we are doing and for whom are we doing it? Not the one-upmanship game too often played in modern ministry. Such is carnal and childish.

I have met people who were introduced as Christians from a particular church with some other credentials thrown in, only to be troubled in my spirit about them. Any time this has happened, it turns out that they were not what they appeared to be. They end up causing trouble. Always listen to the witness of the Holy Spirit in your spirit. Do not accept anything or anyone based on just what other people say or on appearance. Add discernment to your Christlike love and be broken-hearted over their true state and that God would make them whole.