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THE GREATNESS OF FRIENDSHIP LOVE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 133
HEBREWS 13:1

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The basic concept we receive from the Word of God is that every believer is in full time Christian service. You do not have to be called to this kind of service. Every believer in the Church Age is in full time Christian service. As a believer you are an ambassador and a priest.

Look at an outline of Hebrews 13

Verses 1-9--Here we have the function of the Royal Priesthood.
Verses 10-19--Here we have the sacrifices of the Royal Priesthood.
Verses 20-25--The conclusion of the book.

We have studied the priesthood of every believer and we have studied Jesus Christ as our great high priest. Here we are to study the true meaning of human love. The majority of people have the wrong idea of love. They have the idea that love expresses itself by running around and trying to be a sincere do-gooder, trying to be helpful to everybody. They stick their nose in the business of everybody else and they call this brotherly love. This is absolutely ludicrous.

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN FRIENDSHIP LOVE

1. DEFINITION

There are three areas of love in which we as believers operate.

- a. Love toward God. We learn how to love God just to the extent of our knowledge of Bible doctrine. The only real way to love God is to come to know Jesus Christ through doctrine. The more you know the more you love.
- b. Love toward your right partner. This is love within the marriage relationship. If our love toward God is right, then we are capable of loving our right partner.
- c. Love toward friends. And this is the love we have in view in this doctrine.

We are commanded to have a love toward the entire family of God and in the Bible this is called "love the brethren." But the function of friendship love is limited to a smaller circle of true friends.

(I have a definition of a friend I want to share with you at this point. It goes like this--"A friend is one in whose presence you can reveal all that is in your heart, realizing that he will take the wheat and blow the chaff away.")

Don't be deceived

Just because people speak to you or pretend to be nice to you doesn't mean they are your true friends. True friendship cuts across all barriers. There are no sex or race restrictions on this kind of friendship. Please notice something. THIS IS A NON-TOUCHING FRIENDSHIP LOVE. There is no sex ever involved in this kind of friendship. It is based on mutual soul rapport and it is a two-way street. It can be between two males, two females, or between two of the opposite sex.

The Principle On Which This Friendship Love Is Built

PROVERBS 17:17 "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." This is someone who is always the same and stands by you in all kinds of circumstances.

PROVERBS 18:24 "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." This is true friendship love and it doesn't depend on circumstances or any other factor.

2. FRIENDSHIP LOVE PROVIDES PLEASANT RELAXING ENVIRONMENT.

PROVERBS 10:12 "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins." A selfish arrogant person can never have true friends.

ROMANS 13:10 "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

True friendship love means the absence of mental attitude sins.

Some Concepts That Come From This Relaxed Friendship Love.

- a. You can always relax around true friends. You don't have to be on guard and don't have to watch every word you speak.
- b. True friends are not competing with you and they do not stab you in the back socially or economically.
- c. Your true friends guard your privacy.
- d. True friends never gossip about you or malign you to others. There is an old saying, "True friendship is back to back." It means you never betray a true friend.

3. FRIENDSHIP LOVE IS FREE FROM HYPOCRISY.

ROMANS 12:9 "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

This says, "Let love be without hypocrisy."

This sets up the principle of soul rapport.

- a. In avoiding hypocrisy, true friendship is often established.
- b. When you have true friends, you cannot keep them as true friends if you deceive them.
- c. Anyone you fake out on any issue cannot continue to be your true friend.
- d. Some people never have true friends for they are arrogant, and they pride themselves on their ability to fake people out and deceive people. These people are to be avoided. When you find people who brag to you about how they faked someone out or deceived someone, you drop them immediately. They will do you the same way once they get a chance. This is the person who will laugh behind your back. They have no capacity for friendship love.

4. FRIENDSHIP LOVE IS OUTGOING AND OBJECTIVE AND NEVER SUBJECTIVE OR HYPER-SENSITIVE.

If a person is always hyper-sensitive, he will never have friends. He better keep singing, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" for Jesus is about the only true friend he will ever have.

2 SAMUEL 1:26 "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

This is a description of true friendship love. "I am distressed for thee" is not a verb. It comes from TSAR LI and it means "I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan." We have a qal perfect naam and it means "You have been very kind to me." Then it says, "Your love to me was very extraordinary, beyond the love of women." This is the description of a totally objective love. They were super grace believers, had noble character, and their love was one of the greatest friendships of all time. GALATIANS 5:13 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

This verse says literally, "For you were called to freedom, members of the Royal Family of God. Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the old sin nature, but through love, serve one another."

- a. Capacity for friendship love comes from knowing doctrine and causes you to have a relaxed mental attitude love toward all believers.
- b. Please notice the distinction. We as believers are commanded to love all believers. We are to have a relaxed mental attitude toward them, including the worst stinkers in the whole family of God. But we are not commanded to make friends with all believers. We can have only a limited number of true friends.

5. FRIENDSHIP LOVE IS A TRUE FUNCTION OF THE SOUL.

PROVERBS 27:9-10 "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off." Ointment and perfume rejoice the mind. True friendship is like a clean and neat person. A man's soul, if it has true friendship, is sweet to his friends.

We are never to forsake our friends or the friends our father or mother made for us. This is the capacity to love older people.

Some observations on this verse.

- a. We inherit friends from our father and mother.
- b. Some of the best friends you will ever have in your life you inherited from relatives. This is one inheritance on which you do not pay income tax.
- c. Friendship love overlaps generations, regardless of age.
- d. There is no generation gap in friendship love.
- e. Friendship love is closer than family love.
- f. As perfume is sweet to the smell, so is friendship sweet to our souls.

6. JESUS CHRIST COMMANDS LOVE IN THE ROYAL FAMILY.

JOHN 15:11-17 "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen

you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another."

This is an extension of friendship love. Friendship love is limited to a small circle of friends. But we are commanded to love all born again believers as an extension of friendship love. (I once thought I had to agree with people in order to love them. I also thought I had to approve of all they did in order to love them. I have come to realize this is wrong. If they belong to Christ and are believers, then I love them and ask no questions.)

The more doctrine you have in your soul, the more capable you are for loving all believers.

Verse 12 in this John passage is an order to me as a believer. This is not the same as friendship love.

The friends of Christ are those who reach super grace. Abraham was called "The friend of God." God has a few friends in every generation and many believers.

John 15:13--This is friendship love.

Being God's friend means you obey what he has commanded.

This kind of love brings a relaxed mental attitude toward all the Royal Family of God.

Get Some Principles Here

- a. This love command in this John passage is directed toward all believers.
- b. It is not category friendship love, but an extension of it and it includes all believers in the Royal Family of God.
- c. This extension is a mental attitude and not a social obligation.
- d. This is a relaxed mental attitude which comes from two things--The filling of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of doctrine.

7. GRACE DYNAMICS OFTEN INVOLVE AN APPEAL TO FRIENDSHIP LOVE RATHER THAN A DIVINE COMMAND.

PHILEMON 8-9 "Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ."

Paul here was speaking to his friend, a friend with whom he had true friendship love.

Verse 8--"Therefore, though I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee to that which is proper (free the slave Onesimus)."

Verse 9--"Yet for love's sake (this is friendship love)."

Notice Paul doesn't mention his rank as Apostle but says, "As one ambassador to another."

1. As an apostle, Paul had the authority to order Philemon to free Onesimus.
2. But rather than pull his rank on him and command him to do this, he just made an appeal on the basis of friendship love.
3. In this way the freeing of Onesimus became a grace function rather than obedience to a direct order.
4. Always remember this--friendship love is limited to just a few.
5. It takes both energy and sacrifice to have true love.

6. This energy and sacrifice is compensated by having in your soul the capacity to be a true friend.
7. In a lifetime you will have a multitude of people with whom you are acquainted, but you will have only a few real true friends according to the Bible standard of friends.
8. Learn to distinguish between loving the brethren and real true friendship love. They are related, but different. Doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit is the common denominator for both, but they are different.

8. FRIENDSHIP LOVE IS A GIVING LOVE.

1 SAMUEL 18:1 "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Jonathan loved David as himself.

1 SAMUEL 18:4 "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." Because he loved, he gave. Friendship love is a giving love.

9. FRIENDSHIP LOVE CAN BE NEUTRALIZED OR DESTROYED.

This can be done in three ways--By mental attitude sins, by verbal sins, or by national disaster.

1. Mental attitude sins.

JOB 19:19 "All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me." Here Job says, "All my business friends hate me and those I loved have turned against me."

Job's adversaries were his former friends. Job had sorry friends, a hypocritical wife and he sat on an ash heap scraping his boils.

2. Verbal Sins.

PROVERBS 16:28 "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." A pseudo friend can move into a group and soon he can have true friends hating each other. PROVERBS 17:9 "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." This is the gossip who can separate true friends.

3. By national disaster.

JEREMIAH 20:4 "For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold, it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword." National disaster destroys true friendship.

10. PSEUDO FRIENDSHIP LOVE.

PROVERBS 19:6-7 "Many will entreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him."

These are the people who pretend to be your friends but they are not. These are false friends. If you can buy a friendship it is not worth having. (The U.S.A. has tried to buy friendship all over the world and it never works. They hate us. Just be broke and then see how many friends you will have.)

11. LOSS OF FRIENDSHIP LOVE IS A PART OF INTENSIVE DISCIPLINE.

PSALM 38:11 "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off."

PSALM 88:18 "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

In the greek of Hebrews 13:1, it says, "Brotherly love must keep enduring." This is a present, active, imperative of meno. The word for love here is philadelphia exactly the way we spell the city in Pennsylvania. This is a third person singular and this is referring to an attitude of soul in the individual believer. The object of this word philadelphia is all believers, all members of the Royal Family of God. This is an imperative of urgent request.

So this verse says, "Royal Family love, love for all believers must keep enduring."