

## Healthy Churches Love

*Colossians 3:14, "But above all these things put on love..."*

Introduction: In "the love chapter," 1 Corinthians 13, Paul is writing to a divided church—the church at Corinth. His message is intended to change the culture at the church. These people were contentious, jealous, suspicious, rebellious and careless in their walk. They had a lot of problems to fix but at the heart of it all was their need to fix a major character flaw—a lack of love. Individually, our influence will not be nearly as powerful if the quality of love is lacking.

Yet, it is true of churches too. Of a church, we could say it does not matter how many people are members, how nice our building is, how talented our members or preachers are if we do not have love we limit our profit margins in the kingdom of God. Thus, if our church is to be considered healthy we must be a church who, above everything else, puts on love (cp. Colossians 3:14). So, in today's lesson, let's look at 10 things we will see When Healthy Churches Love...

### **I. Spiritual Compromise Is Overcome**

- A. There is a war which takes place in the heart of every Christian between the flesh and the Spirit—a choice between whether we will be loyal to God or to the gods of this world.
- B. Yet, love helps us overcome the temptation to compromise (Matthew 22:37-39).

### **II. The Truth Is Obeyed**

- A. Some argue we should preach about love but not about keeping God's commands.
- B. Yet, the two are intertwined by Jesus and His apostles (John 14:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:10).

### **III. Spiritual Leaders Are Esteemed**

- A. When others are working for our spiritual benefit, they deserve our respect.
- B. To esteem the work of our spiritual leaders is to love them (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17).

### **IV. Rebuke Is Administered**

- A. Rebuke, when necessary, is not offered because we hate someone but because we love them and seek protection from harm for them.
- B. When we love, we will discipline (Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:5-7).

### **V. The Lost Are Sought and Taught**

- A. When souls are lost, a Christ-like love will seek to bring them home (Luke 19:10).

B. For this reason, we are to be “*speaking the truth in love*” towards those who are “*carried about with every wind of doctrine*” (Ephesians 4:15).

## **VI. We Provoke Love In Our Assemblies**

A. We can be guilty of manufacturing an assembly that has a cold, business-like feel to it when it turns into a series of acts of worship without relationship.

B. Yet, one of the purposes of our assembly was not only to worship God, but to take time to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 12:10).

## **VII. Families Thrive**

A. If a healthy church loves, then love is also taught and apparent in the home and family.

B. Love is the template for husbands, wives and mothers (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4-5).

## **VIII. The Needy Find Relief**

A. God calls the church to help those who are in need among the saints.

B. When we love and have the ability to help others, we will not resist coming to their aid (2 Corinthians 8:7-9; 1 John 3:16-17).

## **IX. Hospitality Abounds**

A. A healthy church is not a closed clique who are unfriendly to outsiders, but we extend our love to strangers and those who may be new to the fellowship of believers.

B. True love is willingly hospitable (Hebrews 13:1-2; Romans 12:9, 13).

## **X. Forgiveness Is Extended**

A. One of the ways God shows our love to us is through His willingness to forgive us.

B. We must also be willing to extend forgiveness to others if we truly love (Ephesians 4:29-5:2; Luke 7:47; Matthew 6:14-15).

Conclusion: Healthy churches love. Love is at the heart of the gospel message. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). Three things will carry us through into eternity—faith, hope and love. God loves us. His love is what gives us great hope in Jesus Christ. Will you not respond in obedient faith to the Son of God who, out of love, gave His life to pay the ransom price for your sins?