

I. Introduction and review.

II. Stimulate one another to love and good deeds. v. 23

- A. Why is it important for us to practice love and good works if we are saved solely by the high priestly sacrifice of Christ? 10:16 Ezek. 36:26 Titus 3:5-6 2:14 I Jo. 2:3f
- B. What is the unique focus of this exhortation?
1. Our author is not merely telling us to practice love and good deeds.
 2. We are told to provoke (incite, stimulate) others to practice love and good deeds. Acts 17:16 15:39 I Co. 13
 3. We are to spend time and effort contemplating how to motivate one another.
 4. Be aware that different people require different strategies. I Th. 5:14
- C. How, in practical terms, can you incite others to love and good works?
1. Multiply their fruitfulness by commending and appreciating them for the love and good deeds they are already practicing. 10:32-34 6:9-10 I Th. 1:2f I Co. 1:4f
 2. Set an example of love and good deeds. Jo. 13:13-15 Acts 4:34 II Cor. 8:1f
 3. Initiate ministry and invite others to join you.
 4. Draw those who are on the fringe into the center of the life of God's family.
 5. Disciple a brother or sister who is younger in the faith. II Tim. 2:2 Titus 2:3-5
 6. Meet regularly with someone for accountability, prayer, study, and service.
 7. Encourage those who are in the midst of trials and tribulations. v. 25b,23
 8. Gently restore those who are drifting into sin, lethargy, or error. 3:13 Gal. 6:1-2 Js. 5:19 Rom. 15:14 Mt. 18:15f
 9. Sometimes you may have to be a bit nosey and pushy.
 10. Family members can encourage each other.
- D. What particular works of love should we be trying to incite in one another?
1. What is the relationship between love and good deeds? John 14:15 I John 3:18
 2. The Hebrew Christians had done well. 6:10 10:32-34
 3. Help those who are hurting. 10:34a Js. 1:27 I Jo. 3:17 II Co. 8-9
 4. Show hospitality. 13:2 Rom. 12:13 I Pe. 4:9
 5. Use your spiritual gifts to build up the body. Rom. 12:5-8
 6. Meet less visible needs in the body. Gal. 6:2
 7. Stimulate one another to do the good work of worshiping and praising God.

III. Spend time with God's people. v. 25a

- A. How does the concern of verse 25 fit relate to the exhortation of verse 24?
- B. Why might people have been failing to gather with God's people back then? v. 23
- C. Why don't people regularly gather with the church in our day?
1. Some are unbiblically isolationistic.
 - a. Some claim all they need is a "personal relationship" with Christ. Acts 2:47
 - b. Some hold "home church", or TV church, or read, or listen to tapes.
 2. Some can't find a church they like.
 3. Some have been hurt in the past. Ezek. 34
 4. Some are upset because they are not church leaders.
 5. Some are drifting away from God and his people. v. 26f I John 2:19

6. Some have a consumer mentality.
7. Some wander from church to church without ever committing and becoming actively involved in the body.
8. Some see the Lord's Day as one more day to pursue money and pleasure. Ge. 2:2f
9. Some are pressured by unbelieving family members. Acts 5:29

D. How often do you have to go to church?

1. If you are asking this question, you have a problem. I Jo. 4:7-12
2. God's people want to be together as much as they can. 3:13 Acts 2:46
3. You should join God's people when they gather on the Lord's Day for worship. Acts 20:7 2:42,46 I Cor. 16:2 Rev. 1:10 Js. 2:2
4. You can't fulfill your responsibilities as members of God's family by merely ducking in and out of a worship service.
5. Most of the "one-another" commands are best fulfilled between and after the worship services, in personal relationships, and in small group fellowships.
6. How does Grace Bible Church view its meetings?
 - a. Attendance at both the morning and evening worship services is important because these provide a "full meal" of worship and fellowship. Acts 2:42
 - b. You must regularly attend at least one worship service every Sunday if you wish to be a member (except for exceptional circumstances).
 - c. Sunday school classes and small groups are outstanding opportunities to grow spiritually and draw closer together to the church family.
 - d. Our concern is not to heap guilt upon you to force your attendance.
 - e. Rather our hope is that your love for God and His people will give you great delight in taking every opportunity you have to gather with us.
 - f. Beyond attendance, we seek your committed love as members of the body.

E. Is the gathering of God's people a priority for you and your family?

IV. Encourage each other because the Day of Jesus' return draws near. v. 25b. 9:28

- A. We are to be motivated by an eternal and heavenly perspective. 9:28 Rom. 13:11-13 I Th. 5:2 II Pe. 3:10-11 Js. 5:8 I Pe. 4:7 Rev. 1:3 I Tim. 4:1f Eph. 5
- B. Our reality is not in this world. Mt. 6:20,24,44
- C. God uses our mutual encouragement as a means of grace.

V. Concluding applications.

- A. Jesus stimulates us to love and good deeds. 3:1 I John 4:19 John 13:12-17 15:12-17
- B. **ASSIGNMENT: BEFORE TODAY IS OVER:**
 1. Choose three people whom you want to incite to love and good deeds.
 2. Write down ten things you will do to stimulate them.

Discussion questions

1. Why, if we are saved solely by Christ's priestly sacrifice, are love and good works important?
2. How is this exhortation different from other charges to love one another?
3. What are seven things you can do to incite others to love and good deeds?
4. How does assembling together (v. 25) relate to the exhortation to incite one another (v. 24)?
5. What excuses do people give for not coming to church?
6. How should you meet with God's people?
7. Why are small groups so important?
8. How does the day of Jesus' return relate to these exhortations (v. 25b)?
9. How does Jesus stimulate us to love and good deeds?
10. Whom will you incite to love and good deeds this week? How will you do it?