

Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 17

Be Gracious in Speech and Perception of Others

As recipients of God's grace, we need to be gracious towards others. We need to be gracious in our actions as well as be gracious when we talk to or talk about others. Graciousness in speech is to appreciate and affirm instead of to complain and criticize. When was the last time you affirm or appreciate the Sunday school teachers, the ushers, the DG leaders, the staff, the pastor and all who serve?

Graciousness in speech comes from looking at others with the lens of grace. Avoid focusing on the weaknesses and imperfections of others, what they had done wrong but look at each other's strengths and potential. Be ready to overlook each other's short-comings and faults and ask God to help us look at others the way He sees them. Our heavenly Father looks at all His children with favor; like a doting Father we are the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2: 8).

Read Matt 26: 30-35, 69-75; John 21: 15-19

Before Jesus' arrest, He warned His disciples that their faith would soon be tested; all would desert Him and Peter would even deny knowing Him. Peter protested that he would never do such a cowardly thing; yet he did what he claimed he would never do. Interestingly, when Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, nowhere was it recorded that Jesus reprimanded Peter and the rest of His disciples for their unfaithfulness. Instead, He entrusted the tremendous task of extending His Kingdom work to them. He charged Peter to look after those who belong to Him.

God uses imperfect people to accomplish His Kingdom work; He sees our potential and does not write anyone off. No matter how imperfect we are, His Spirit will transform us from glory to glory and He will enable us to be and to do what He has intended. Agape love is to look at others in the church with eyes of grace and be gracious in our speech and actions.

Questions to ponder

1. If you were one of the early disciples, how would you look at Peter after his denial of knowing Jesus? If you were Peter, how would you feel when you met Jesus after His resurrection? How would you feel when He asked you to feed and tend His sheep? How should this story change the way you look at others in the church?
2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 is lowest) would you say you are more 'C' – criticize and complain or more 'A' - affirm and appreciate others in the church? What should you do to be more affirmative and appreciative of fellow believers, especially the staff and pastors, regardless of how much imperfections you see in them?

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