

## DOES LOVE MEAN APPROVAL?

In recent weeks I have read several articles in the local newspaper concerning the lack of love being shown by many who identify themselves as Christians. I would be the first to acknowledge that there are those who claim to be Christians who fail to demonstrate the love they should for others. I have seen professed Christians walk out of an assembly when someone entered who did not have the same color of skin as themselves. James speaks of those who show respect to one who is rich over one who is poor (James 2:1-7).

If the afore mentioned articles were condemning such prejudice and respect of persons I would certainly agree that a lack of love was being shown. However, this is not what is under consideration in these articles. These articles deal with those who are speaking out against the immorality so prevalent in our society in the form of homosexual behavior.

One of these articles states, "With relentless attacks on homosexuality, conservative evangelicals communicate the message that diversity is dangerous and discrimination acceptable." The author of this article goes on to suggest that this opposition to homosexuality is "casting the first stone" and is a failure to "love thy neighbor."

It seems that some have the idea that the only way you can love someone is to accept and approve their behavior, whatever that behavior may be. A failure to accept this immoral behavior is referred to as "moral perfectionism" and "intolerance."

What is even more disturbing is the fact that these individuals want to appeal to Jesus and the scriptures to encourage the acceptance of this immorality. What they fail to acknowledge is the fact that the same Bible that reveals to us the love of Jesus for all mankind also contains God's hatred for sin, however it is manifested.

In truth, the love of God is manifested unto us to save us from our sins. Paul said, "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). Does this mean that He died for us so that we could continue in sin and still be pleasing to Him? Paul answers this question very emphatically in the very next chapter. Paul, in emphasizing God's mercy and grace, said, "*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*" (Romans 5:20). You can easily anticipate some carnally minded individual reasoning, "If where sin abounds grace abounds even more then the more we sin the more grace will abound." Paul also recognized the possibility of someone reaching such an erroneous conclusion so he says, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" (Romans 6:1,2).

Paul recognized that one redeemed by the blood of Christ must be "dead to sin." He can no longer live therein. Was Paul showing a lack of love by making such a declaration? Was he being intolerant? Certainly not!

Paul also said, "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). Note, the sin of homosexuality (abusers of themselves with mankind) is included in this list. Can the homosexual be saved? He surely can, but not by continuing in his sinful conduct. In fact, Paul noted that some to whom he was writing these words had been guilty. He said, "*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are*

*sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"*  
(1 Corinthians 6:11).

It is not an unloving act or an act of intolerance to condemn that which will cause one to lose their soul in hell. In fact, the greatest love one can show to one who is separated from God is to make that one aware of that which causes that separation (their sin – Isaiah 59:2) and to let them know how they can be cleansed of that sin.

Those who endorse acceptance of such sinful behavior not only show a lack of love, but also are rebellious to God. ✍ James Hahn