

## A Genuine Love

*"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." (Rom. 12:9-10)*

Many wonder what has gone wrong with our world, and what is to blame for all the hatred and increasing acts of violence we hear about on a daily basis. The simple answer is the world needs Jesus and His church! Paul says back in Romans 12:2, *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."* We may not be able to change everything that is going on in the rest of our country or the rest of our world, but we can make sure we and our families are not conformed to this world. We can allow the Lord and His Word to transform our minds. We can let go of what we think our purpose for living this life is, and make sure we are living for the purpose our Creator has given us! We can make sure our love is genuine! We can make sure we are learning to love and obey the Lord in our homes and within the body of Christ.

Genuine love for God, is what causes a person to hate evil. When a person hates evil, they will hold fast to what is good. It's what caused Joseph to tell his master's wife when she attempted to seduce him, *"...How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God."* (Gen. 39:9b) Joseph refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife because he had genuine love for God, and that love caused him to hate sin.

Sin is a love problem and when we sin it means we love the wrong thing. It means we love whatever sin we are committing more than we love God. We would rather please self, than God! Our world has a love problem, because it has a sin problem! That's why this world needs the influence of the Lord's Church and His people!

Too many folks in our world today are holding fast to what is evil and despising and even hating what is good! They are only looking out for self. The world needs to see courageous Christians loving God by living a pure, obedient life. The answer to the problems of our world begins with Christians having a genuine love for their Lord, which causes them to live for Him, to love one another, and to love their fellow man! To God Be the Glory!

- Billy Clabaugh, *Sayre Salute*, Sayre Church of Christ, Sayre, OK -



*Faith, hope, love; the greatest of these is love.*

## News Notes

**BIBLE MEDITATIONS:** Monday-Friday 12:30-12:35 p.m. on WOHI 1490 AM and 103.9 FM.

**CONVERT'S CLASS:** Resumes this Thursday, Feb. 12th at 11:00 a.m.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST:** Next Saturday, Feb. 14th, 8:30 a.m. at the Columbiana Church of Christ.

**LADIES DAY:** Feb. 28th at the Marlboro Church of Christ, Louisville, OH. Topic: "Digging Deep-Conversations" by Cindy Colley. Additional details on the back of our February calendar and on the bulletin board.

**PANTRY:** Peanut butter & jelly.

**REMEMBER IN PRAYER: SICK & SHUT-IN:** *Gable's Care Center, Hopedale, OH:*

*Ron Miller* (Bill's brother). *Pittsburgh Children's Home & Lemieux Center:*

*Isaiah Robinson* (Rich & Emily's baby). *Covington Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation:*

*Nancy Hadley*, 100 Covington Dr., Room 304, East Palestine, OH 44413.

*At Home:* John Sprout, Beulah Walker, Donna Stevens, Peggy Linger, Scharlotte Jones, Harry Huff, Nancy Cox, Barbara DeLong, Marlene Evans, Micheal Sabol (Karen Strum's daughter-in-law's father). *Serra Manor, Weirton:* Jean Haught (Skip's mother). *Fox, Chester:* Mary Johnson. *Elsewhere:* Christy Claypool, 204 Rio Pinar Drive, Warner Robins, GA 31088. *Jackie Brown* (Rico's mother), 4227 Prince Hall Blvd., Orlando, FL 32811. *Herman McHan*, 29 Jenny Lane, Columbiana, OH 44408.

## Which Soil Describes Your Heart?

Joe Slater

In His parable of the sower (Luke 8), Jesus described God's word as seed planted into four types of soil (human hearts). The seed's fruitfulness, or lack thereof, depended on the condition of the soil (heart).

First was the "wayside," literally the path or road surrounding the field (Luke 8:5). As seed cannot germinate and grow on hardpacked ground, God's word cannot grow in a hard heart. Satan easily removes the word from the resistant soul.

Next came the rock (v. 6). This doesn't mean stony ground, but a thin layer of earth atop bedrock. Seed might sprout on such shallow soil, but the tender shoot would wither and die, having no deep root to reach water. Just so, a person with shallow faith might joyfully receive the word of God at first, but would fall away in times of trial.

Third, Jesus spoke of ground infested with thorns (v. 7). Seed could begin to grow under such conditions, but the thorns would eventually choke out the good plants, rendering them fruitless. Thorns represent distractions – worldly cares, riches, and pleasures (v. 14). God's word produces no harvest in a distracted heart.

Finally, the good ground produced an abundant crop (v. 8). The good, noble heart isn't hard, has a deep and abiding faith, and steers clear of the world's distractions. Such a person not only believes God's word, but keeps it (i.e. obeys it, v. 15).

Which of these four soil types best describes your heart? Are you resisting God's word with a hard heart? Is your faith shallow, fading away when trials appear? Are you distracted with the deceitful world's cares, riches, and pleasures? Or do you have a deep, abiding faith that keeps God's word?

You control the condition of your heart!