

# The 'Discipleship Check List' Transcript

A GV247.TV Programme presented by Stewart Menelaws

## **DCL No11: Love, Forgiveness and Judgement:**

This series is for any Christian believer who is either at the very beginning of their journey with Jesus Christ or has been a believer for some years but lacks a sound understanding of the Christian faith. It should also prove to be a helpful aid which interlinks with all our resources for Shepherds, Overseers and Believers reaching out to others.

### **Love: (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)**

God is Love (1 John 4:8) and therefore love is the very foundation of the Christian gospel message and needs to be at the very heart of every follower of Christ.

It's important not to confuse worldly human emotion with the love of the Creator of the universe. The Bible teaches that God's love is perfect – it is without flaw - there are no grey areas of compromise, and it's completely and wholly just and true (Numbers 23:19).

It's because of this perfection that we can trust God, yet we must understand that where there is perfect love - there is perfect judgment. The bible teaches that mankind broke the law of the cosmos and the law demanded the removal of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and ultimately, death (Genesis 3:23-24).

Yet, God so loved us He sent His son to rescue us (John 3:16), taking our punishment upon Himself (1 Peter 2:24). When a person comes to Christ having had their sentence of death cancelled (Colossians 2:14) and given the hope of eternal life as a new creation (Rev:1-5), we are obligated to find out what is required of us (Ephesians 5:10).

### **Church – The Body of Christ: (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)**

Being part of a Church – a gathering of believers - is not always easy. We find many different characters from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures with diverse views and opinions. New believers often come with heavy baggage, others have been wounded badly within other spiritual environments. The role of leadership is to help every member in their journey with Christ training them in righteousness. For love is patient and kind, it is long suffering, it always perseveres and it always hopes (1 Cor 13:1-13).

The greatest act of love is to lay down your life for another (John 15:12-13). While this is often understood as the ultimate act of giving - a life for a life - we can also understand this from the everyday acts of selflessness where you put someone else before yourself (Philippians 2:3). Acts of selflessness should, where possible, be done quietly and not shouted from the rooftops for all to see your good works (Matt 6:1-4).

The Lord's servants must learn to serve, and Jesus Christ gave a beautiful example of service to His disciples when he washed their feet (John 13:1-17) teaching them that they must do likewise. Of note - is where Peter refused to be washed, as he clearly felt uncomfortable at His Master, The Lord, washing his feet. In this example we see both the blessing of serving and of receiving. Yet we must learn to both give and receive - or we can have no part in Christ's Body (John 13:8-9).

### **Love is obedient:** (John 14:15)

To love God is to obey His instruction. It's that simple. If you are obedient – you love. If you do not obey – you do not love (1 John 4:16-21). To love your brethren is the same as loving God. If you do not love your brethren you are self-deceived and you do not love God (1 John 3:14-15).

Is loving others easy? Some people are indeed easy to love while others can be demanding. Yet there is no distinction in love. The Lord makes this clear in Luke 6:32-36 where he explains that there is little reward in loving those who love you (the world does that), but the greater reward is in loving those who do not love you or who are a challenge.

In regard to love for an enemy (Matthew 5:43-48), Jesus Christ prayed for those who unwittingly sent Him to the cross. (Luke 23:34) Unbelievers are blinded by the god of this world (Satan) (2 Cor 4:4). It is the role of the Ambassador of Christ to show them the way – not to condemn them – for Christ did not come to condemn but to save (John 3:17).

The New Testament alone is packed full of exhortations, where disciples of Christ are to love each other deeply (1 Peter 4:8), help each other run the race (Hebrews 12:1-2), help each other to stand firm - for without love we are nothing more than a clanging gong (1 Cor 13:1-3).

### **Forgiveness:** (Matthew 6:12-15)

Every believer misses the mark every day - despite our best efforts (Romans 7:18-25). The Lord's Prayer teaches us to ask The Lord to forgive our shortcomings (Matt 6:14) and the apostle John tells us to confess - that we may find forgiveness (1 John 1:8-10). This is very important when we come to partake in The Lord's Supper as a wrong attitude will bring judgement on an individual (1 Cor 11:27-32).

Forgiveness is to be given, for without forgiveness we face judgement (Matthew 6:12-15). Instruction on how to go about reconciliation and the need to forgive a brother/sister 70 x 7 times can be understood from Matthew 18:22-35.

Un-forgiveness and misguided judgemental acts are sadly an everyday occurrence within the Church and you must never be a part of that. Where a believer has an issue with another believer the scriptures are clear... you need to put it right or you are in danger of being disqualified yourself (1 Cor 9:27).

Un-forgiveness leads to a bitter spirit which can be seen within an individual as being critical towards others. However, it's important not to be confused with the critical examination of sound doctrine which is imperative for the healthy building up of the Church (Titus 1:9 & 2 Tim 4:3).

A critical spirit is often seen outworking where a person talks about others behind their back. They will often misquote others in a bid to sensationalise their story, they are busybodies, usually quite lazy, they are slanderers and gossips and are completely untrustworthy. Scripture is clear that God hates this kind of spirit (Prov 6:16-19) and scripture instructs how to deal with individuals like that in the hope they will repent and walk upright before the Lord (2 Thess 3:6-15).

Difficulties will arise between believers, but love (this is a command) demands that whatever the issue, it is to be dealt with correctly. Where two believers are unable to reach an agreement, then an arbitrator will need to aid the meeting (Matt 18:15-17). Where a person is unwilling to resolve whatever the issue is, they need to be removed from the Church until there is a resolution (1 Cor 5:9-13).

### **Judgement:** (Hebrews 10:26-27)

God is perfection and there are no shades of grey. If we walk in the council of God's instruction there is freedom and a wonderful expectation of things to come (Matt 25:21), but if we rebel, fearful judgement awaits (Matt 7:21-23).

## **Judging:**

### **The difference between – to condemn / pass sentence and making a right decision**

When we cross the road we need to judge whether it's safe to do so. At the supermarket we may make judgements regarding food we can purchase in regard to its health benefits. Making decisions is part of everyday life and for the Christian, our spiritual life needs to be based in The Lords instruction (Psalm 119:105).

### **So what does the Bible say?**

In Matthew 7:1-3 we read an example where the verb 'to judge' means 'do not condemn' or 'do not pass sentence' - or you will be judged by the measure you have condemned, or that you have passed sentence. In this passage of scripture we must understand that we must never pass sentence or condemn another believer. God alone is the final judge - the scriptures are clear in regard to judging brethren (Romans 14:4).

However, where a decision is required, it is imperative to make a 'right judgement'. To do this, first remove any obstacle from your own life (Matt 7:3-5) before you attempt to address someone else's actions. Where separating truth from error is required (2 Tim 2:15), sound doctrine will be the bedrock for making the correct judgement (1 Cor 6:1-6).

### **To Conclude:**

The mature disciple of Christ must be able to make right decisions in line with God's Holy unchangeable instruction.

For all scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).

### **Next week (DCL No12) we look at:**

Warnings in the bible to the believer...

The 'Discipleship Check List' series has been produced with the sole aim of encouraging the hearer / reader to study the Holy Bible so that faith in Jesus Christ will be built on Him alone. Every human work is fallible and whilst every effort has been made to represent the truths of God Almighty's Holy Words, this series is but an aid to help encourage study so that the Christian disciple of Jesus Christ will go onto maturity in the most Holy faith.

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