

DRAWING NEAR TO GOD

Slander, Love, Strife, and Peace

BY DOY MOYER

Slander is a sin (Matt 15:19) and is listed in the company of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and malice—all of which are to be put away by the child of God (Eph 4:31; cf. Col 3:8). It unnecessarily injures another's name. This is true with respect to slandering others, but especially so when we rail against God. Satan's slander of God is among the first recorded evils (Gen 3).

Slander has always been a problem, but modern vehicles like social media can be a breeding ground for it. Think of the number of unverified reports that are put out there. "Fake news," as it has come to be called, makes its immediate rounds with seemingly little attempt at verification. We may easily fall prey to this as a headline alone might pique our interest, so we pass it along without realizing we may be spreading bad rumor, gossip, and slander. While we would condemn slander, we may be participating in

the very thing we say we hate. We must be careful.

Discussions can be rife with bad faith arguments, name-calling, and questioning one another's integrity.

We fall into this abyss of never-ending blaming, shaming, and hurtful insulting. The keyboard is as deadly as the tongue. What will I be saying and typing today? Are we watching?

The answer is love, and love is a not a side-issue to be swept under some rug of easy-peasy feel-goodism that stands opposed to real, heavy-hitting doctrine. Love is central to everything God desires from us. If the Lord said that loving God and loving others are the two greatest of all the commands, then we must not relegate love to some third-string optional idea that can be left scorched in the wake of a self-idolatrous version of standing for the faith. Whose faith are we standing for?

This is why it is imperative that we self-evaluate, taking a long, hard look inside of our own hearts to see whether or not our faith is

TWIN CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

810 Southwest Parkway East
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Meeting Times

Sunday Bible Class | Online
Sunday Worship | 10am or 5pm
Wednesday Bible Class | 7pm

Elders

Rodney Bane (281) 682-7912
Dana Degarmo (979) 777-0321
Jim Henson (936) 825-6682
Mike McCasland (979) 255-4135

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Curtis Pope (281) 655-7558

Sunday Bible Class

Online: *The Holy Spirit*

Wednesday Bible Class

Auditorium: *Christian Evidences*

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undergirded by an attitude of love for others—fervent, earnest love from a pure heart, as Peter put it (1 Pet 1:22).

Love is what makes faith practical, active, and attended by mercy. It must be founded upon truth (Eph 4:15). And speaking truth must never be devoid of love. Slander opposes both truth and love, so I must seek to uphold truth and I must seek to love others fervently and purely.

Slander works together with strife. Strife (discord, contention) is a work of the flesh, and those engaged in it will NOT inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21). It is just as bad as any sexual immorality, idolatry, and drunkenness; it is seen tied to jealousy and envy and is in the company of murder, deceit, and maliciousness. Strife is evil and ought not to be found among God's people.

You can see the term used in Rom 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Phil 1:15; 1 Tim 6:4; Titus 3:9.

If we will speak out against the other sins listed in these works of the flesh, then we must be speaking out against strife and discord among brethren. It has no place in God's kingdom.

On the other hand, Christians are told to pursue peace with others, especially their own brothers and sisters in Christ (see 1 Peter 3:8-12; 2 Tim 2:22; Rom 14:19). As with love, seeking peace is not an optional matter for those who wish

to glorify God. If we are not pursuing peace, then we are being anti-Christ. How else shall we see it? Not pursuing peace is a repudiation of the "gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15).

Yet how do we at the same time pursue peace while we are latching onto and defending worldly and material matters and causes that manifestly divide? How do we pursue peace while we mock and deride the very ones with whom we are to be at peace?

"But peace is a two-way street," we think. Yes, but "so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Rom 12:18). A good marriage is a two-way street, but we cannot tell a married couple that it is a 50/50 proposition—that if one person only gives 50, then the other only giving 50 is okay. It is not okay. We must all give 100, or, as my football coach would often say, 110!

For Christians, relationships are to be all in, giving 100 percent of the effort, even if the other person is not trying. If others do not want peace, that is on them: "so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." God gave His all even when we were His enemies. What shall we do?

Love one another. Reject slander and strife, and "let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (Rom 14:19).

WEEKLY MEDITATION

"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

JOHN 14:21 (ESV)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Prayer Groups

Monthly | Sunday PM

See group leader

Ladies' Bible Study

Wednesdays | 10:00 AM

At the building

College Ladies' Devo

Thursdays | 7:00 PM

At the building

College Men's Devo

Thursdays | 7:00 PM

At the building

College Students' Devo

Fridays | 7:00 PM

At the building