



The Lost Art of Loving, Covering, and Going

Lesson Eleven

Loving One Another is the **CONTEXT** in which the art of forgiveness is recovered and mastered.
Colossians 3:12-13; Ephesians 4:32-5:2

“Our ability to forgive is **BASED** on our ability to love.”

Recovering the Lost Art of Loving, Covering, and Going

1. What’s Love Got to Do with Forgiveness? **EVERYTHING** in Context!

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” *Ephesians 4:32-5:2*

- Love always strives to forgive in a **GOD-REVEALED** way. “just as God”
- Love always strives to forgive in a **CHRIST-EXALTING** way. “in Christ”
- Love always strives to forgive in a **GOSPEL-SAVING** way. “has forgiven you.”
- Love always strives to forgive in a **SPIRIT-EMPOWERED** way. “forgiving each other, just as God”

2. Love **MOTIVATES** Us to Cover Sins with Forgiveness Whenever We Can!

1Peter 4:7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. **8** Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

A Common Interpretation and Application of **1Peter 4:8** = Love **OVERLOOKS** a Multitude of Minor Sins.

Three Problems with the Common Interpretation and Application

- 1) It understands “cover” in a way that makes “love a blanket” that hides a multitude of sins and offenses of others while they continue to do them.
- 2) It removes love from the forgiveness process and often reduces it to a harsh and rigid process that lacks love!
- 3) It is not consistent with how “covering a multitude of sins” is used elsewhere in the Bible, including Proverbs 10:12; 17:9.

How Is “Covering a Multitude of Sins” Used in the Old Testament?

Psalms 32:1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! **2** How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

Psalms 85:1 O LORD, You showed favor to Your land; You restored the captivity of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin. Selah.

3 You withdrew all Your fury; You turned away from Your burning anger.

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

What Happens When We Do Not Repent and God Does Not Cover/Forgive Our Sins? *Psalms 5:10; Isaiah 59:12; Jeremiah 5:5-6*

How Is “Covering a Multitude of Sins” Used in the New Testament?

James 5:19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, **20** let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Conclusion

In these passages “covering” is not overlooking minor offenses but **FORGIVING** a multitude of serious sins.

How Is Love Related to “Covering a Multitude of Sins” in Proverbs 10:12; 17:9 and 1Peter 4:8?

- In **Proverbs 10:12** it seems that love **MOTIVATES** us to be forgiving toward all sins and **MOVES** us to give forgiveness to all who repent and ask for it.

“Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.” Proverbs 10:12

- In **Proverbs 17:9** it appears that we forgive the sins of others and keep the promise to not repeat the matter in order to **MULTIPLY** love.

“He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.” Proverbs 17:9

- In **1Peter 4:8** the fact that “love covers a multitude of sins” appears to mean...

Keep a Burning Love for One Another Because...

Love motivates us to cover a multitude of sins with biblical forgiveness to multiply loving relationships.

“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” 1Peter 4:8

3. Love **MOVES** Us to Confront Sin Whenever We Must!

*The need for **GOING** is clear from passages like these: Luke 17:3; Mathew 18:15*

*The need for going in **LOVE** is clearly laid out passages like these: Galatians 6:1-5; 2Timothy 2:24-26*

Going in Love Means...

- Go with **SPIRIT CONTROL**. “you who are spiritual” (6:1)
- Go with **HUMBLE GENTLENESS**. “in a spirit of gentleness” (6:1)
- Go with **CARING COMPASSION**.
“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ...For each one will bear his own load.” (vv. 2, 5)
- Go with **RESTORING HOPE**. “even if anyone is caught in any trespass...restore such a one” (v. 1)

Our Purpose and Hope in Confronting Sin Is...

- 1) To see God **CHANGE HEARTS** to do His will. *2Timothy 2:25-26*
- 2) To **FORGIVE** the broken and repentant. *Luke 17:3*
- 3) To **WIN BACK** a wayward brother or sister. *Matthew 18:15*
- 4) To be used of God to **DELIVER** people from future judgment. *James 5:19-20*

Love not only loves to cover sins with biblical forgiveness; it also loves to multiply loving relationships by going to those who sin in a loving manner.

What If They Are Still Unwilling to Repent?

Prayerfully Follow the Loving Process of Matthew 18:15-19 in a Loving Manner!

- **First Stage** is what we have talked about today.
- **Second Stage** is to bring “witnesses” who may have seen the offense or are “mediators” between the two of you.
- **Third Stage** is to involve the church including the leaders of the church.
- **Fourth Stage** is where the church as a body exercises discipline with the hope of repentance and restoration.

Let Love Motivate You to Cover a Multitude of Sins with Forgiveness and Move You to Confront Sin in a Loving Manner to Multiply Loving Relationships!

12 Questions

to Discern a Critical Spirit and Judgmental Heart

1. Am I more likely to see the sin in others than my own sin?
2. When I pray, am I more likely to pray for God's judgment on others rather than marvel at God's amazing grace toward me and toward them?
3. Am I overly critical toward others while I give myself a pass or an excuse and justify my own sin?
4. Does my own sin ever lead me to deep remorse and repentance?
5. Do I have people whom I allow to hold me accountable for my own sin, unforgiving heart, and/or critical spirit?
6. Do I have a tendency to be unforgiving while expecting others to forgive me quickly?
7. Do I find joy in exposing sin in others?
8. Do I find more joy in the "gotcha" moments of exposing sin or in sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
9. When others see how I deal with people, will they think God is mighty to save or that God would never forgive them and there is no hope for forgiveness?
10. Do I receive correction humbly?
11. Before I correct others, do I spend time in God's Word and prayer asking the Holy Spirit to expose my own sin, so that I might repent and be spiritually ready to restore others?
12. Am I controlled by the Spirit so that I bear Spirit-fruit when I seek to correct others?

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