

Learning Statements of Love – Your Calling in Christian Discord



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Hi Everyone, I am Tams Nicholson, the founder of Silent Communion and also of the soon-to-be (The) Beloved Institute. Here is the video transcript:

“I come before you today with a simple encouraging instruction/lecture for Christian vegans who face discord from other Christians.

I prayerfully base my work on 1 Corinthians after many years of scriptural studies leading up to 2014 when I launched Silent Communion.

So let us begin with reviewing 1 Corinthians 13 which actually turns out to be very important for this lecture as well as Silent Communion:

1 Corinthians 13 New American Bible (Revised Edition) (NABRE)

Chapter 13^[a]

1 If I speak in human and angelic tongues^[b] but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. **2** And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 ^[c]Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, ^[love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, **5** it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, **6** it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. **7** It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 ^[d]Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. **9** For we know partially and we prophesy partially, **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. **11** When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. **12** At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know

partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. ¹³ [e] So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

As Christians vegans, we are called to love our brothers and sister, the humans as well as the creatures we are being called to protect. There is no need to speak back in anger or despair if another Christian challenges your beliefs. There is no need to engage in scriptural battles or try to foolishly outthink one another through some sort of vain intellectual superior. We are not there to reassemble their scriptural beliefs. We are there to share the love of Christ.

Let us work through the process of learning to think in love.

First, the potential situations:

Some example situations: Their comment implies that you are putting creatures over humans or Jesus. There may be references to your beliefs are misplaced. There may be accusations that you don't love orphans, the disabled, or other suffering humans. There may be suggestions of you wasting money or resources that should be used to help children. There may be anger or belittling. There may be disdain involved in their expressions. The scenarios can be many, many, many but the main implication surrounding these discussions, or these comments, or these almost attempts to insult us are that your focus is somehow wrong or your actions are somehow wrong.

Consideration: First, we must consider this ... We must not live in some sort of dream world where we think everyone is going to accept our beliefs without insensitive comments. We must learn to expect insensitive comments to defuse our own sinful human nature in advance of any incidents.

Accusations or implying that your calling is misplaced may initially seem very threatening. They may lead your human nature to want to go into some sort of defense mode. In doing so, we sin. We do not need to defend our calling, our intellect, or anything about ourselves. What we do need to defend is the Love of Christ with simple statements of loving-kindness. It is the Love of Christ that is being violated not us. It is the Holy Spirit who is being grieved not us. We must keep our focus on God and the Holy Spirit and off of ourselves.

So let us think this through. Scripture does not say we should put mankind above any other calling. It says that there are a variety of callings for the common good. I ask you to begin this new formation of your mind by meditating on the following verse:

[1 Corinthians 12:4-7](#) ESV

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

That is really powerful when you think about it. So we each are called to serve the Lord as He calls us and there are a variety of ways in doing so. Now, does that mean one calling is better than another? How are we to view other gifts that don't align with ours and how are we to treat people with different gifts or callings? I ask you to then listen to the following scripture to help answer these questions:

Ephesians 4 New American Bible (Revised Edition) (NABRE)

Chapter 4

Unity in the Body. 1 [a]I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, 3 striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: 4 [b]one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Diversity of Gifts. 7 But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore, it says:

“He ascended[c] on high and took prisoners captive;
he gave gifts to men.”

9 What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended into the lower [regions] of the earth? 10 The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

11 [d]And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry,[e] for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,[f] to the extent of the full stature of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. 15 Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ,[g] 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.

Renewal in Christ.[h] 17 So I declare and testify in the Lord that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; 18 darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance, because of their hardness of heart, 19 they have become callous and have handed themselves over to licentiousness for the practice of every kind of impurity to excess. 20 That is not how you learned Christ, 21 assuming that you have heard of him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, 22 that you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and put on[i] the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth.

IV. Daily Conduct, an Expression of Unity[j]

Rules for the New Life. 25 Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger,[k] 27 and do not leave room for the devil. 28 The thief must no longer steal, but rather labor, doing honest work[l] with his [own] hands, so that he may have something to share with one in need. 29 No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as

is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption.^[m] ³¹ All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. ³² [And] be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

Again, that was Ephesians 4.

So from that we also know that our callings can be many different types of gifts and these gifts are meant to support one another to grow the body of Christ in love. Furthermore, we are to recognize that we are members of one another and are not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

By truly meditating upon these scriptures and any other references to gifts and callings, we will understand that each calling is different, and we are called to lift each other up. So we must not participate in arguing back in any fashion but turn, instead, to the truth of love.

The truth, especially in this case, is so very simple ... You don't need to overthink it and you certainly don't need to argue it. It is best to instead make statements of love. You could simply say the following when you find yourself confronted by a Christian who is in a state of discord:

“My calling is to show compassion to the Lord's creatures and model it for others. Some of us are called to help humans. Some of us are called to help creatures. Some of us are called to help the environment and the planet. Our loving Lord bestows many callings upon His children and it takes us all to act in love as members of the body of Christ.” And then, without arguing, you can simply state how much you appreciate all the different types of callings. They all have value and purpose.”

So what would that Christian say back to you? Well, they may say they have never thought of all the different types of callings and recognize that your calling might have some sort of value too. Or ... (the first would be the best case scenario) ... or they may attempt to retaliate against your statements of love. They may even cut you off at some point. But I plead with you that you should not antagonize them. You should not belittle them in any way. You should not belittle their calling or compare it to your calling no matter how they respond. Allowing yourself to participate in an argument is furthering their division and discord in the body of Christ. It is furthering grieving of the Holy Spirit. It is best to just be a broken record and hold firm in your statements of love for a second time, if needed, and then politely disengaging yourself from the conversation and walk away if they persist. Your actions in taking these statements of love, being a broken record, and then walking away by politely disengaging, if needed, teaches them that they can't push your buttons. And it teaches those around them who are listening to this interaction that you are the participant showing love.

I also suggest, since most of us are not vegan from birth, it might help for you to think back upon your own lack of compassion to help maintain your statements of love for them. Show them mercy. Be an example of the mercy you have for creatures. It must be mercy for all (creatures and humans). Mercy for just some, humans not creatures or creatures not humans, is the very selective battle that you are currently facing at the moment. You are seeing someone who is modeling mercy only for some. You, in return, **MUST** have mercy for all which is the true love of Christ.

With time and with practice, you can leave one of these insensitive encounters filled with peace and joy by the knowledge that you truly acted in a merciful and positive manner. The outcome of what they think should not be your focus. Your own behavior should be your focus. Your behavior will speak volumes. God has to be the one to work in their hearts.

This is what my heart felt to called to speak to you today about. So thank-you for listening to me.

Closing prayer.

Practice Time:

Now, here are some examples of discord to practice. Please practice your responses in a mirror or with a trusted friend (and even practice the body language of having to politely disengage and walk away) so that you can be confident and able to further the Love of Christ when the time comes.

Angry Unfair statements on screen while example plays:

“You vegans are fixated on animals while children starve and suffer!”

“You are trying to enforce your dietary restrictions on everyone. That is not Christian.”

“You have misinterpreted the scriptures and have been brainwashed.”

“You are participating in a worldly fad and are disobeying the Lord.”

“You think you are so much better than the rest of us.”

“God gave us animals to use as we please. Stop acting so naively.”

“You need to grow up.”

“Animals are stupid creatures to be used for whatever we want.”

Respond with Statements of Love and do not be drawn into the discord:

- “My calling is to show compassion to the Lord’s creatures and model it for others.
- Some of us are called to help humans. Some of us are called to help creatures. Some of us are called to help the environment and the planet.
- Our loving Lord bestows many callings upon His children and it takes us all to act in love as members of the body of Christ.”

And then, without arguing, you can simply state how much you appreciate all the different types of callings. They all have value and purpose.”

