

March 9, 2019

The Greatest Gift is Love: Love Covers

Jesus covers us with His covenant love no matter the condition of our heart. We in turn are to cover one another with covenant love, no matter the condition of their heart. **1 Peter 4:8** *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."* Peter said above ALL things love one another to the point of covering their sins. This doesn't mean we deny and sweep our sins under the carpet. **Covering is forgiving, protecting and restoring** someone who stumbled into sin. It also protects someone from the slander and verbal harm of others.

We are not perfect, we will never be perfect, but when we are **perfectly trained**, we know how to cover one another in covenant love. Agape love is a cover of protection that we place on someone...and never remove it. It is a **covenant friendship**, one that should not be broken. When Jesus instituted communion, He took a cup of wine and said it represented His blood that would be shed for our New Covenant. When we take communion with one another it is a reminder that we have entered into the New Covenant with Christ and one another. Communion means fellowship. **Rev 12:11** tell us we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimony and we love not our lives unto the death. Our words should testify of the love of Jesus, and the love we have one for another, even if it means we might look bad (laying down our selfish life and pride of self-image).

John 15:12,13 *This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.* We have to die to our own selfishness in order to help others. There are times when people have literally laid down their life in order to save another. Covering someone in agape love is like someone is being shot at and we cover their body with ours, knowing we will be shot.

When we go out to eat with someone, after the meal, we owe a debt. Sometimes one person will pay their own bill and the other person's bill saying "I got you covered" cancelling the person's debt. Sin is considered a debt, and the payment is death. **Rom 6:21** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Jesus died on the cross to give us eternal life and through His agape love in our heart, we can lay our lives down one for another and say "I got you covered!"

When a military unit is in a battle exchanging gun fire, one person will agree to step into harm's way releasing a barrage of bullets in order for another person to be able to move to another location. The person stepping into harm's way will say "I've got you covered!" giving the signal to the other person to move. This is literally trusting someone with your life.

Another expression we use is "I've got your back!" meaning **I will cover your blind side** to protect you from what you can't see coming especially from someone who wants to "stab you in the back." Most often this is protecting one another from rumors, gossip, criticism, slander and lies. "I know they are not perfect, but they are my friend, we stand together." A person will throw a fiery dart of slander at someone we love, but we step in front of that dart and defend our friend. **Prov 10:12** *Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.*

When we hear a rumor or even something bad that might have happened, we immediately step in to help the person who might have fallen into sin, or who is being attacked with lies. If we repeat the lie, "Did you hear about so and so?" we are stabbing our friend in the back by repeating the matter and it could separate our friendship. **Prov 17:9** *He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.* Sometimes people will not stick up for someone because they don't want to look bad, or they want to draw people to themselves being the hero. "Love does not parade" itself meaning it is self-effacing; willing to look bad at the cost of lifting someone else up (**1 Cor 13:4**).

James 5:19-20 *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

The #1 thing I ask of everyone is to honor your daily appointed time to pray with our Lord (however that looks for you). The second is to pray our prayer booklet because we are speaking and releasing prayers based on Scripture to cover our physical family and our church family in God's covenant covering; agape love. **Prayer booklet pg 18.**