

## A CHURCH WITH LOVE

Not many of us know the Greek language, so we have been dependent on translators to translate the Greek words into English. Did these translators translate the Bible to support God's will or man's will? Let us look at a few scriptures in the King James translation to answer this question:

1. In Acts 12:4 the Greek word, "pascha" (Strong's number 3957) is translated "Easter" instead of the correct translation of "Passover".
2. In Heb 4:9 the Greek word, "sabbatismos" (Strong's number 4520) is translated "rest" instead of the correct translation of "Sabbath rest". "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Instead of "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God." (NAS)
3. In Heb 4:11 the Greek word, "spoudazo" (Strong's number 4704) is translated "labor" instead of the correct translation of "be diligent". "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest". One does not "labor" in keeping the Sabbath rest. Translating the word as "labor" hid the correct meaning! It should be, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest" (NAS).
4. In Matt 7:23 Jesus said "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity". The word translated "iniquity" is the Greek word, "anomia" (Strong's number 458) and it is translated "transgresseth law" in I John 3:4. If the scripture had been translated "...depart from me, ye that transgresseth the law", there would be no doubt that he was talking about those who do not obey God's Commandments.
5. The Greek word, "anthropos" (Strong's number 444) means human being and includes both male and female. However, this word is translated "man" 586 times in the KJV. The Greek language does have a word that means "man/male"; however the writers of the scriptures used the word, "anthropos" to include both sexes. This bad translation of "anthropos" has influenced our thinking about the role of women in God's Church.

The original Greek scriptures had no punctuation so the translators had the power to punctuate. In Luke 23:43 the translators placed the comma after "thee" as follows: Jesus said to the thief, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise". This punctuation supports the idea of going immediately to heaven after death. Moving the comma after "today" completely changes the meaning of the sentence as follows: "Verily I say unto thee today, shalt thou be with me in paradise". With this punctuation, the word "today" identifies when Jesus made the promise not when the promise will be fulfilled. Punctuation can greatly affect the meaning.

The translators also had the power to select the English words that best fit their traditions (example: using "man" instead of "anyone" or "mankind"). The translators also had the

power to move words when going from Greek to English. This power can either be used to make the meaning more clear or it can be used to obscure the true meaning. In 1 Tim 2:11-12, if the Greek word “didaskain” (Strong’s number 1321 meaning “to teach”) was not moved by the translators, verse 11 would read “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection to teach”. The translators placed the period after “subjection” and moved “to teach” past several words into verse 12. This completely changed the original meaning of these two verses.

The above examples are just a few of the many bad translations in the Bible. With a personal computer and a good Bible software program it is now easy to identify where the translators strayed from God’s will in favor of man’s will and the traditions and beliefs of their Church at the time the Bible was translated.

Even with such aids many of the scriptures in the Bible are difficult to interpret. Paul’s writings are extremely difficult to understand. Even Peter had trouble with Paul’s writing as he warns us in II Peter 3:14-17. In some of Paul’s writings, he was answering questions about events that had occurred in different Churches. We have Paul’s answer to a question, but we don’t know what the question was. In these cases it is impossible to understand what Paul is really saying.

We know that the original Greek words in the Bible were inspired by God. However, the English words that we read were translated by men to satisfy man’s will and the traditions of man, not God’s will. Everyone wants to do God’s will, but because of the Bible translators, it is difficult to know God’s will. Everyone has his or her own opinion about God’s will.

How do we resolve this dilemma? Do we have to have someone between us and God to interpret the scriptures and tell us what God’s will is? People have different abilities – some are better at reading, understanding complex data, communicating, writing etc. God has made everyone different and unique. However, there is one ability or attribute that everyone has that enables them to be able to understand God’s word without depending on any other man or woman. This attribute is LOVE – the ability to give LOVE and the ability to recognize LOVE. This ability is with us at birth and remains with us throughout our life. A newborn baby can tell if he is loved and an elderly person no longer able to see or hear can still perceive love. This is the only attribute where everyone is truly equal and has the same ability. Yet how much LOVE we give others and how much LOVE we use to guide our lives is an individual decision. With LOVE God has given everyone an equal opportunity to understand His word and His will. We don’t need great religious leaders, commentaries, or friends to interpret the scriptures for us; because we are all equal when it comes to understanding “LOVE”.

Using our ability to recognize LOVE takes man’s will, influence, bad translation, interpretation, or false teaching out of the picture. No one is between you and God. You are responsible only to God and God is the only one you have to please.

Jesus, when asked “what is the greatest commandment in the Law?” replied “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40) This is truly God’s will. Love is the most important thing in our lives. 1 John 4:8 says “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love”.

John reemphasizes the importance of love in our lives in 1 John 4:16 “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him”. Love should be the basis or guide for all our actions and decisions. It is the key to interpreting God’s word. Any interpretation of scripture that removes love for God, love for each other, or love for your neighbor is a bad interpretation.

When we receive His Holy Spirit, God gives each of us Spiritual gifts “...God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him” (I Corinthians 12:18). “And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues (1 Cor. 12:28 NIV).

These gifts, given to both men and women, are to be used “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” (Ephesians 4:12). We are to build the church using these spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, these gifts are useless if the person does not have **LOVE** (I Corinthians 13:1- 3).

God’s way to interpret the scriptures is with **LOVE**. Any interpretation of any scripture or Church Doctrine that violates any of the LOVE scriptures is a false interpretation or a false doctrine. Everyone can apply the LOVE test – God has built into every person the ability to recognize when he or she is being treated with LOVE or is not being treated with LOVE. It is that simple.

Any Doctrine that restricts a person, either male or female, from using their spiritual gifts to the fullest violates the LOVE test and should be removed immediately. No man or woman should question which spiritual gifts a person should or can be given – God makes it clear that it is His decision.

I ask that each person apply the LOVE test to the Churches’ Doctrine that restricts women from using all their spiritual gifts. The LOVE test is simple and everyone has the ability to use it. There are only 3 easy steps to follow:

1. Review the LOVE test scriptures on the following page. Does the Doctrine or scripture agree with all of the LOVE scriptures?
2. Ask the women in the Church, “Does this doctrine give you a feeling of being LOVED?”

3. Put yourself in the position of any woman in the Church. You can now only participate in the background. No matter how long you have been in the church, you cannot give an opening prayer, a Bible Study or teach during services. Now, thinking of yourself as a woman, ask yourself, "Does this doctrine give me a feeling of being LOVED?"

It doesn't take long to apply this test. If the honest answer to any of the above questions is "NO", we have a bad Doctrine! Your decision is vital to the life of your Church.

I believe this is the first step we need to take to put LOVE back into our Churches. After we take this step, I think you will see rejuvenated Churches operating as a complete team of both men and women, the way God originally intended for it to be.

May God bless our Churches and use them to the fullest in doing His work.

Praise God for His mercy, forgiveness and LOVE,

Gary McDonnell

**LOVE SCRIPTURES: (New American Standard unless otherwise stated)**

Matt 22:37-40 (NIV) Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

**John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**

John 15:12-14 This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you.

Rom 12:9-10 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

1 Cor 8:1 ...We know that we all possess knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.** And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. **Love is patient, love is kind, is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be done away.

1 Cor 13:13 But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

**1 Cor 16:14 Let all that you do be done in love.**

2 Cor 8:24 Therefore openly before the churches show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Gal 5:13-16 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the {statement} ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Eph 1:4 (KJV) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Eph 3:19 and to know **the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Eph 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 5:1-2 **Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Phil 1:9-10 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

Phil 2:1-4 (NAU) Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not {merely} look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Col 3:14 And beyond all these things {put on} love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

1Thes 3:12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1Thes 4:9 Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for {anyone} to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

**1 Tim 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.**

2 Th 3:5 And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

2 Tim 1:7 (NKJ) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

1 Pet 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

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

1 Jn 3:10-11 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

1 Jn 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

1 Jn 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 Jn 4:10-12(NAS) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son {to be} the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

1 Jn 4:16, 18, 20-21(NAS) And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him....There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love....If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Jude 1:2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.