

Friday, June 12, 2020

Hold fast to what is good

- Pastor Hank French

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers (Romans 12:9-13).

This text—which is labeled The Marks of a True Christian in my Bible—cries out for a bullet point explanation.

- “Let love be genuine.” Love is nothing more and nothing less than a commitment to whatever is good; a commitment to whatever serves the wellbeing of others. “Genuine” in Greek means “without hypocrisy.” Genuine love means having no ulterior motives which move us to act in what seems like a loving manner.
- “Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.” In order to hold fast to what is good, one cannot be indifferent, but must hate what is evil. But, to hold fast to what is good, we must be careful not to hate the one who does evil, but to hate the evil he or she does.
- “Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another showing honor.” The community of faith should commit to being a community of care and respect where everyone feels valued.
- “Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.” Be eager and enthusiastic in our life of faith, remembering that serving each other is serving the Lord.
- “Rejoice in hope.” Our hope is from God and in God; that being the case, hope and rejoicing seem to naturally go together.
- “Persevere in prayer.” Be constant in prayer, be persistent, refuse to stop, live in an ongoing conversation with God.
- “Contribute to the needs of the saints.” This, on one level, means be generous in your offerings to the church. After all many of the needs of the saints are met by the church. But on another level, it means if you see a sister or brother in need, help them out.
- “Extend hospitality to strangers.” Hospitality, welcoming, inclusion—all signs of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). Which is to say when we welcome a stranger and provide hospitality, we do it to Jesus.

A lot to think about in this short text.

Prayer: Lord, I truly want to hold fast to what is good; if you want me to—and I believe you do—help me to be faithful in doing just that. Amen.