

## Love and Your Witness

### Scripture

"I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, 5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, 6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother." (Phm 1:4-7 NKJV)

### Commentary

What a wonderful thing to have said about you—your love for Jesus and all the saints is so obvious that it causes someone to thank God. Paul prays that this love for God would continue and grow. He prays that their witness would be effective as they acknowledge every good thing they have in Christ Jesus.

Theologians are sometimes so focused on the bits and pieces that they miss the big picture. The Gospel must be presented correctly, but it should also be acknowledged in the life of the witness. It grieves this writer's heart to think of the opportunities missed to speak of the goodness of God, or to think how many times Satan was able to snatch the words of life from the heart of those shared with because of harshness.

Harshness undermines the message of love. If the message of the Gospel is one of love, then delivering it with an unloving spirit paints a confusing picture to those who hear. Conversely, delivering a message of love with a loving spirit validates the message. Think about it. John said, "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God [must] love his brother also." (1Jo 4:20-21 NKJV) Those who hear your message know this intuitively. So, if your actions scream I DON'T LOVE YOU, and you are an example to them as a believer, then to them you are just another liar.

Could it be said of you, "we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you"? If not, carefully examine your heart. Love is an essential part of the New Birth for you and for those you seek to save.