*Hello Valley Heights Ladies!*

*Tuesday, January 14th, 2020*

***NOW*** is the time!! Time to review and time for our minds to be renewed! Before we study a new contrast today, grab a cup of tea with me in this extremely cold weather and let’s review some of the many contrasts that we have seen already throughout our study of 1 John.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who know and believe Jesus Christ as Lord and who bear much fruit from believing in His name compared to those who “say they believe,” but habitually live with no repentance, no obedience, no righteousness, no turning from sin and no spiritual fruit.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those walking in Light compared to the character and conduct of those walking in darkness.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who have the right attitudes toward sin(who sin but hate their sin) compared to those who have the wrong attitudes toward sin (who sin but love their sin and dismiss the fact that they do sin.)

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who desire to obey His Word motivated out of their love for Christ compared to those who live as if there is no Law and no Lawgiver resulting in no love for the Word of God and for Christ.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who desire to walk in a manner worthy pleasing to the Lord compared to those who have no desire to follow in Christ’s steps.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who love their brother compared to those who hate their brother.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who desire not be conformed to this world compared to those who deny any necessity for holy living.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who are lovers of Christ and lovers of His Word compared to those who are antichrists and who twist and distort the Word of God and who lie against the truth.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who have the Holy Spirit of God abiding in them compared to those who depart from the truth and do not practice the truth.

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who are the children of God (who habitually practice righteousness and who love their brother) compared to those who are the children of the devil (who habitually practice lawlessness and do not love their brother.)

We have seen: The character and conduct of those who are living in the light of the Lord’s return (living holy and hope-filled lives) compared to those who are living as if there is no God (living in open rebellion and defiance toward God.)

We have seen: The character and conduct of true believers (true converts) who have been born again having “a new nature, a new disposition, new attitudes, new motives, new longings, new desires, new loves, new hates, new goals, and new behaviour compared to those who are false believers (false converts) who have no-new nature, a no-repentance gospel, a no-Lordship gospel, a no-holiness gospel, a no-submission gospel, and a no-transformation gospel….and who have no love for his brother.”

All of these contrasts have been crystal clear thus far in our study of the epistle of 1 John. One of the themes as you know that we have looked at and are in the middle of studying right now in 1 John chapter 4 is the topic of the depth of the Father’s love and His forgiveness towards us.

What Jesus Christ our Lord had to endure on our behalf to save us from the power and penalty of our sins is truly amazing. Amazing love! Amazing grace! Amazing mercy! It is His profound love and grace and mercy that moves us and motivates us to love one another, isn’t it!

***1 John 4:11 says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”***

Today in our morning and evening ladies’ Bible studies we were to “Ponder Truth that leads to Prayer and Praise.” Jesus Himself thought it so very important that we obey His command to love one another that He repeated this command over and over again in the gospels. It was not only this very familiar command of loving one another that I wanted to ponder once again this morning and this Tuesday evening with you, but I wanted to probe a little deeper into our hearts and practically look at something that can easily hinder us from loving our brothers and sisters in Christ as we should: “Hurt Feelings”

Martha Peace, a biblical counselor, conference speaker and author for almost 30 years taught me many years ago how to respond to “Hurt Feelings” in a God-glorifying way. Please know that I am still in the battle! Though this material be familiar to some of us, I felt that it was worthwhile to chew on it and digest it once again like any delicious meal!

***“Let all that you do be done in love.” 1 Corinthians 16:14***

What are hurt feelings? What causes hurt feelings? What does the Bible teach us about how to overcome hurts in our lives---hurts when we have been sinned against- “intentional hurts” and hurts that have been perceived- “unintentional hurts.”

May I summarize for you in acronym form what I learned from Martha’s very clear and concise lecture at “The 2007 Women Discipling Conference” that I attended many years ago. It was full of convicting principles from God’s Word in dealing practically and biblically with “Hurt Feelings.”

Though we are sinners saved by God’s glorious grace, I think I can safely say that without a doubt we have all experienced hurt feelings at one time or another in our lives. What one of us hasn’t been hurt by someone else? What one of us hasn’t inflicted hurt towards another either intentionally or unintentionally? What one of us hasn’t been overly sensitive and misinterpreted what someone else has said or done to us? I think we can sadly say, we are guilty. But O the precious blood of Jesus who has washed our sins away! O to repent of our sinful pride and to renew our minds with the promises of our great God!

Ladies, we are going to look at another contrast. A contrast between humility and pride when it comes to loving others. It’s practical and profound!

How to respond to those who have intentionally hurt you: Pray and put on **HUMILITY**!

(Eight Biblical principles to overcome an intentional hurt)

**H** onour the Lord by ***SHOWING LOVE*** to Him and the person who sinned against you by obeying His Word. Jn. 14:15; Lk.8:21

**U** ltimately we need to ***GIVE THANKS*** to God for the test which will overcome bitterness and hurt.

Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18; Prov. 17:3

**M** ake an effort by God’s grace to ***OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD***. Rom. 12: 17-21; Heb. 11:6

**I**  nstead of returning insult for insult, ***GIVE A BLESSING INSTEAD*** . 1 Peter 3:8-11

**L** ook at Jesus’ example- ***PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREAT YOU***. Luke 6: 27-35

**I**  nitiate a plan of action- ***SPEAK THE TRUTH***, but in love. Eph. 4:15; James 1:19,20

**T**  ry to ***LOVINGLY CONFRONT***: to restore the relationship and give God glory. Galatians 6:1

**Y**  ou may need to ***BRING WITNESSES*** into the situation, as you seek to help the other person honour the Lord. Matthew 18:15-18

***“Let not the foot of pride come upon me…” Psalm 36:11***

“If you are personally offended and God is not---Then it is an issue of pride!”

Unintentional hurts are sinful on the part of the person perceiving it as a hurt. Repent and put off **PRIDE**!

**P**  ride in us is overly sensitive, easily offended, twists and distorts what has been said or done, is self-focused, self-absorbed and full of self-pity. Replays the hurt over and over again. Won’t let the hurt go.

**R** eads what others are like and what they are thinking, judges people’s motives, assumes the worst, misinterprets other’s responses towards them and actions done or not done toward them, “feel ignored, left-out or overlooked.” ***This is pretty ugly! Don’t worry! There is Biblical hope!***

**I** nitiate a plan of action: Learn to give others the benefit of the doubt. Phil. 4:8; 1 Cor. 4:5

**D**  ecide to **NOT** judge the other person’s motives. **STOP** reading into things! 1 Cor. 4:5

**E**  ndure “feeling uncomfortable” in order to help others “feel comfortable.” Phil. 2:3

The heart and the life of a woman who loves the Lord and who love others exhibits by the power of His Spirit the fruit of His Spirit. You can by God’s grace can be full of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. You can be humble, thankful, grateful and motivated to respond to all kinds of hurts with ***FORGIVENESS***. Why? Because you has been forgiven much!! ***Forgiveness is NOT about powerful emotions, it is about an act of our will! It’s about a choice!***

Martha says that, “God is the expert at addressing people in pain. When we place all of our emotions about our hurt and pain into God’s purposeful hands, we are free to move past the offense and see the offender through God’s eyes. We must remember ladies, that “it isn’t the offense that destroy our relationships, it’s the inability to forgive that destroys the relationship.”

***“NO ONE or NO CIRCUMSTANCE CAN MAKE YOU BITTER”*** Jesus Christ our Lord says in Mark 7:14-23 that bitterness and holding a grudge is already there in your heart. So whatever painful circumstance that you have found yourself in, whatever pain has been inflicted upon you either intentionally or unintentionally and you are bitter, remember you and only you are the cause of your own bitterness. The painful circumstance only drew out of your heart what was already there.

Have you been hurt by someone? What are you holding on to: the hurt or Jesus? Are you battling the temptation of anger or bitterness towards God or someone else? Oh ladies, let’s continue to learn together how to biblically love God and one another more. May you and I ponder these realities deeply, pray passionately, practically put God’s truth into practice and pray persistently that our Lord would take these truths and change you and me permanently “to the praise of His glory!” ***NOW*** is the time!!

With love and prayers in my heart for you all, Christyn