

Provoking One Another

Key Verse: “*Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.*”
—*Hebrews 10:24*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 10:22-25

Ordinarily the word “provoke” is used to describe a stirring up to anger or ill will. However, in our Key Verse the apostle uses this word to describe an incitement to good, a stimulation of Christian growth in love and good deeds. The *International Standard Version* translates this phrase: “to

motivate one another.”

Motivating one another to love and good deeds, or works, is the true object and purpose for the Lord’s followers when meeting together. We all need the help and encouragement that come from fellowship with those of like precious faith. The apostle also stresses that fellowship with the brethren becomes increasingly essential as we “see the day approaching.”—vs. 25

To properly encourage one another towards love and good works, the apostle points out we must first “consider one another.” This implies we need to develop a heart sympathy for others, considering their trials, difficulties, and weaknesses. There is a beautiful spiritual balance described in this exhortation to “motivate one another” to love and good deeds. Neither love nor zeal for good deeds are independent of each other. True Christian love cannot exist unless it is manifested in good deeds. Neither can there be deeds considered as good, in the

Lord's sight, unless they are the outgrowth or manifestation of true Christian love.

Good works are described elsewhere by the Apostle Paul as a "labour of love." (I Thess. 1:3) This shows that true love "labors," or works. Such a love is not merely a kind disposition, without any works of love, supposing it is enough to be pleasing to God. The love which should fill and control our Christian life is the love of God, the love possessed and exemplified by our Heavenly Father in his attitude toward the fallen race. God so loved our fallen human race that he gave that which cost him more than anything else he could have given, his only begotten and well-beloved Son, Jesus. (John 3:16) In Jesus, we have an example of the perfect blending of true love and good works. We cannot, of course, perform all the works which our Saviour did, but we can strive to develop the spirit which will prompt us to do all we possibly can.

The Greek word *koinonia*, translated in the New Testament as "fellowship," means "partnership." (Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; I John 1:6,7) Christian fellowship is more than just meeting together to discuss common beliefs. The desire to meet one with another should be prompted by a realization of having been called by God to be co-workers with him in his great plan for the enlightenment and salvation of the sin-cursed world of mankind.—II Cor. 5:17-21; 6:1

Paul highlights the work in which we have been invited to share, explaining, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ... and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." (II Cor. 5:19,20) This means we will, if faithful unto death, participate with Christ our Head in the great work of reconciling the lost world of mankind back to God. This is the common work in which every footstep follower of the Master is a partner. To "provoke" or "motivate" one another to faithfulness in connection with this cause should be a primary objective when we meet together. ■