

LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS

This phrase, which is part of a biblical verse in I Peter, has been misinterpreted, and as a result misunderstood and misapplied.

1 Pet 4:8

“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

The way most read this scripture is that God is telling us here not to confront or address the sinner, but to leave the issue alone and love the person despite what they are doing. This is only partly true in that we are to love the person.

We are to love the person, but we are to address the issues, or we become an enabler, in essence approving of what is going on. Matthew 18:15 says we are to go to our brother and address the sin. Paul indicates in several places that we are to admonish others (I Thessalonians 5:14 and II Thessalonians 3:14-15). In addition, proverbs states that we are truly someone’s friend when we tell the truth.

Prov 27:6

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”

The real meaning of the phrase “covering a multitude of sins” is clearly explained elsewhere in the New Testament – in James 5:19-20.

James 5:19-20

“My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back,

let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.”

The intent therefore is for us to be restorers, that is addressing issues/ negative problems and helping people get rid of them. Jesus came to set the captives free and we are called to do the same. In fact, according to the book of Galatians, we prove we are spiritual by being restorers.

Gal 6:1

“Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; {each one} looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

Fear of man, fear of losing a friend, fear of losing a family member would keep us from telling the truth and attempting restoration. That is explained in 2 Timothy 1:7 where the scripture indicates that where fear is love, is lacking. This means that if we are afraid to address people’s issues, we are not restorers, are not spiritual, and really don’t love people.