

Shayla: I believe that God cares more about love than holiness. As long as I don't hate my fellow man I believe God will accept me despite my sinful lifestyle.

Meforshim:

Like all the best lies, this poor doctrine is based on an element of truth – twisted out of its natural bounds. Yahweh Rach'um (Merciful God) is indeed concerned about love. Love is not an acquired trait for Him. He IS love.

- **1 John 4:16 HCSB** And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.

All those who would be accepted by God must indeed love their fellow man.

- **1 John 4:20-21 HCSB** If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. **(21)** And we have this command from Him: the one who loves God must also love his brother.

However, just as one of His names is Yahweh Rach'um (Merciful God), so one of His names is Yahweh Kadosh (Holy God).¹ Another is Kadosh Yisra'el (the Holy One of Israel).²

So, God is love and He requires us to love our fellow man, but He is equally holy. The lie comes from believing that there is a difference between God's holiness and God's love. I have come to believe that holiness IS love.

Let me first define holiness by what it is NOT. It is not:

- great knowledge as Balaam can attest³
- great profession as Judas Iscariot proves⁴
- great works for then Herod (who rebuilt the temple) would be holy⁵
- great zeal for Jehu had plenty of that⁶
- great morality or respectability for the young ruler had that⁷
- great love of preaching as the Jews in Ezekiel's time prove⁸
- great and godly companions as we see from Joab,⁹ Gehazi¹⁰ or Demas¹¹

None of these alone are sufficient qualities to define one's self as holy. To be holy is to be of one mind with God, to think His thoughts after Him, to act as He acts. If God is love then to be holy is to be love.

To be holy is to shun sin and strive to keep Hashem's commands. Hashem's commands tell us to love our neighbor as our selves, to not covet his things nor to lie to him. Hashem's commands tell us to abstain from sexual sins which bring great harm to our bodies and to the bodies of those who participate in them with us. They tell us to love our spouses and to be faithful to them so that we do not cause them emotional pain. If to be holy is to obey the Lord God's commands then to be holy is to be love.

There is only one man to have never sinned – our Lord and Master Jesus of Nazareth. To be holy is to follow in His footsteps and to strive to gain His mindset.

¹ Leviticus 19:2; Joshua 24:19; Isaiah 5:16; 40:25

² Kings 19:22; Psalm 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Isaiah 1:4; 5:19; 5:24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11-12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 48:17

³ Numbers 24:3-4, 15-16 cp Numbers 31:16

⁴ John 17:12; Acts 1:16-20

⁵ Acts 12:23

⁶ 2 Kings 10:28-31

⁷ Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23

⁸ Ezekiel 33:30-32

⁹ 2 Samuel 2:13-32; 3:27

¹⁰ 2 Kings 5:21-27

¹¹ Colossians 4:14 cp 2 Timothy 4:10

- **1 John 2:5-6 HCSB** But whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is perfected. This is how we know we are in Him: (6) the one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked.
- **Philippians 2:5 HCSB** Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, Jesus loved us with an everlasting love and this great love drove Him to sacrifice Himself on our behalf. Indeed, the holy and sinless Messiah said,
 - **John 13:35 HCSB** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Out of holy love, the Christ died for our sins. However, that same love compelled Him to call the Pharisees out;¹² to address Peter as Satan;¹³ to harshly test the Syro-phoenician woman;¹⁴ and to point out the Samaritan woman's sin.¹⁵ This is because God's definition of love is different from ours. The Holy Spirit taught Paul this definition of love:

- **Romans 12:9 HCSB** Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good.

In order to love well, one must with great meekness pursue patience, gentleness, kindness, and self-control. These things are evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit – indeed they are referred to as the “fruit of the Spirit” in a passage which is very familiar to most Believers:

- **Galatians 5:22-23 HCSB** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

However, the very next verse goes on to say:

- **Galatians 5:24 HCSB** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Unless we can “crucify” our passions and desires we will never be able to truly love others for to love others is to submit ourselves to their needs, placing their good ahead of our own. Similarly – to love God is to submit ourselves to Him, placing His kingdom and His will ahead of our own.

One cannot practice love without holiness and holiness without love is an empty, vain thing for they are one and the same.

¹² Matthew 23

¹³ Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33

¹⁴ Matthew 15:26-27; Mark 7:27-28

¹⁵ John 4:16-18