

While It's Still Called Today (aka Before It's Too Late)

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"but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Hebrews 3:13

As often happens when I have my time alone with the Lord, the Holy Spirit brings to mind a word or thought that becomes a message or even a book. This time it was a phrase that also happens to be the title of one of my favorite Steven Curtis Chapman songs from the early 90s. Bebe Winans, another of my favorites, sang with him on that song. The storylines of the song brought tears to my eyes as I sat trying to remember the words and sing along. The beautifully written words, coupled with some verses that came to mind, led me to write what became the following message Christians needs to hear and take to heart.

There is an important phrase implied by the words of verse above those that could follow them: *"before it's too late."*

That will become more obvious as we work thru the five points below. I used the present participle of each lead word because (as I sure you remember from English grammar), that tense means the action is ongoing.

With regard to this message, nothing new is shared. These or similar words have been written and spoken many times. They will serve as a reminder to some; but for others they will be more in line with the closing words of the verse above, an admonition from the Holy Spirit, lest you fall into that

dangerous place: *your heart grows hard due to sin.* Wherever you are, take some time to consider each one and the verse(s) we chose. The motive behind this message is simple: Feed your spirit to grow in your walk with Christ and strengthen or restore relationships.

- **Telling** people you love that you love them. The Bible does not command us to **tell** people we love them. We have some examples of where the words were spoken in some form.

(David said) *"I love You O LORD my strength."* Psalm 18:1

"The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." Jeremiah 31:3

(Jesus speaking) *"but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me."*
John 14:31

"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you." John 15:12

Husbands and wives telling each other, telling our children, making sure they hear us use those most powerful words. Telling others like family and friends.

- **Forgiving (seeking and extending)** Seeking forgiveness from those you have offended; extending forgiveness to those who have offended you.

(Peter) *"Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."* Matthew 18:21

"...If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. "And if he sins against you seven times a

day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." Luke 17:3-4

*"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**"*
Ephesians 4:32

▪ **Reaching Out to (Reconnecting with) those who need your help or friendship**

Reaching out to or reconnecting with people you with whom you have lost contact or become disconnected. Ask yourself why that happened. (Business is not a good reason.)

"A friend loves at all times; a brother is born for adversity; There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Proverbs 17:17; 18:24

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality... Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly." Romans 12:10-16

Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

▪ **Esteeming (Valuing)** It is easier to tear people down or criticize than to build them up.

"A soothing tongue is a tree of life, But perversion in it crushes the spirit. Proverbs 15:4

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

"With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse

men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. James 3: 9,10

- **Sharing** the love of Christ with people you love or know who do not “know” Him.

And (Jesus) said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16:15 (short version of the Great Commission)

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” 1 Peter 2:9

ALL the above should be done now, sooner than later, **“before it’s too late.”**

The reason is clearly stated in God’s Word. **The return of Jesus** is nearer every day. No one knows the day; first for His church, second to destroy the world powers of evil and set up His millennial kingdom.

“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24: 37-39

“you yourselves know full well the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not

escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; (See Revelation 15:16)

My dear brothers and sisters, ask the Holy Spirit to search your hearts and bring to mind those in your family or sphere of influence in need of one or more of these evidences of Christ in you from you. He will not tarry if you are serious.

For Christ's sake,

Walter