

# Peace Gives Life to the Body

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman emphasizes the vital role of peace, unity, and love in fostering spiritual health and revival within individuals and the church community.*

**Duration:** 38:09

**Scripture:** Proverbs 14:30, Matthew 11:28, John 13:35, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 3:14

**Topics:** "Church Unity", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of peace and unity in both personal lives and within the body of Christ. It highlights how a heart at peace gives life to the body, while envy and bitterness lead to destruction. The speaker stresses the need for forgiveness, love, and unity as foundational principles for revival and spiritual growth, drawing from personal experiences and biblical teachings.

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## Transcript

I want to take a minute and talk about this topic of peace gives life to the body. Peace gives life to the body. And I came across Proverbs 14 a few weeks ago, 1430.

It says, a heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. Did you hear that? A heart, a heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. And this is obviously talking about our personal, our bodies, our own, our, you know, peace.

If I have peace in my heart, it gives life to my body. But when I have envy and bitterness and all these things, it brings, it rots the bones. But this also has an overlapping of principle to the body of Christ, to where not only does it affect our individual bodies, it also affects the entire body of Christ.

And peace in this body is going to bring life. But envy and backbiting and disunity is going to bring death to this body. And that's what I want to talk about.

And I cannot force this message into you. I can only share my heart, right? I can't force this and push this. I can only just share my heart.

This message God has to use to penetrate our heart. God has to really do some work in our own hearts to have this really take hold. And there's something about peace that calms the storm, right? There's something about peace that calms our homes.

There's something about peace that calms our churches. We just want peace. We strive for that.

And there is a way through God's word that we can bring that back into our lives. And it's no secret that I've been praying for revival for a long time. I've been praying for revival.

Lord, revive this church, revive your church wherever, wherever throughout our states, even throughout the world. Lord, bring revival to your churches. But it's very interesting if you look throughout Scripture that unity and love.

You guys are saying, I can't believe Pastor Shane's talking about this. Unity and love. Where's the truth? Where's the hard stuff? Well, sometimes we got to get to the essentials as well.

Unity and love. Unity and love often precedes revival. Unity and love often precedes change and renewal.

So do you want change in your own life? Do you want renewal? Do you want God to stir some things up? Lord, I need change tonight. I need to be revived. Lord, would you meet me here? It often starts with unity and love.

That precedes change. Many times we want truth. I want the truth of God's word, and that's great.

And we need it. The whole church is built on this, the foundation of truth. But unity and love, that precedes, that comes before genuine revival of heart.

If you really want God to change your heart, these things have got to come first. And here's what happens in the church. Unity and love, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

In one ear and out the next. What's for dinner? But I would just encourage you that this is deeper than we think. This is foundational.

God doesn't say, do these things, and you might increase your spiritual side. You might be filled more with the Holy Spirit. He says, if you do these things, you've got to make love and unity top priorities.

Guess what? Because they will not rise to that level left to themselves. We will actually diminish in these areas if we just leave it to ourselves. And the flesh takes over.

And what comes in, it's ugly. It's ugly. It divides churches.

The flesh divides churches. It divides families. It brings disharmony.

That's how important this is. If you want a peaceful home, amen. I do to you.

If you want a peaceful church, it starts with love and unity. But you don't know what they did. Well, no, I don't.

But I do know what we have to do. It has to start in the heart. Think about this.

Actually, the most powerful revival ever recorded, I believe, in history, in one day happened on the day of Pentecost. It says, and when the day of Pentecost has fully come, and they are all in the upper room fighting, bickering, and complaining, then fire fell. What does it say? And when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place, in harmony, in unison.

They put their little petty differences aside. They put their offenses aside. They put their unforgiveness aside.

In one accord, they met in this room, and they said, Lord, we clear our heart of this trash, of this garbage. Would you visit us in this place? And that's when fire fell. Do you think that fire would fall in that place if they were arguing, and debating, and bickering, and complaining? There would have been no early church.

Revival was preceded by unity, and love, and forgiveness. And it's hard, isn't it? How do I know it's hard? Boy, do I know it's hard. I've got to live it out, too.

I actually have to live it out more so, because I'm supposed to be the example. That's what makes it even harder. So if you want change in your life, yes, embrace the truth, and apply the truth.

But don't forget about unity, and love, and striving for that, and making that a priority. And I'm going to unpack that real quick. Peace gives life to the body.

A heart of peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. So in order to talk about Proverbs 14 30, in order to talk about this area of peace and unity, we have to talk about the problem. Because you can't go to the solution without identifying the problem.

And here's the problem. Just for a minute, I'm not preaching at you, I'm preaching to all of us right now. Because I can fall into this category, and this problem can rise up in my own life.

First Corinthians 3 3, I'm going to read from the amplified version of the Bible. For you are still, this is Paul talking to the church. The apostle Paul is talking to the church in Corinthians.

For you are still unspiritual, having the nature of the flesh under the control of ordinary impulses. Could you imagine me walking to the pulpit and saying that? Well that's what I'm saying. For you are still unspiritual, having the nature of the flesh under the control of ordinary impulses.

He's saying, you are led by the flesh. And you might say, Shane, how do you know that? You can't tell me that I'm led by the flesh. Well keep reading.

How do we know? For as long as there is envy, and jealousy, and wrangling, and fighting, and contentions, and bickering, and arguments among you, you are led by the flesh. A dagger to the heart. So you can't hide from this verse.

But I got truth. Yeah, but you got arrogance. But I'm really holy.

Yeah, but you're also really haughty. I'm not talking about the young adult, somebody being really cute. I'm talking about haughty, right? Being haughty, and arrogant, and uppity.

There's haughtiness that's not pleasant. See, we can have a certain form of Christianity, but deny the very essentials. We read the Bible, but we hold in bitterness.

We do a devotional, but we gossip all day. We put on worship, but then we pull people down. We give the appearance of, I'm a Christian, but I'm holding all these offenses in my heart.

God forbid. God forbid. Because without unity, and love, and removing those things, we are actually living in the flesh, and being more worldly, and living in carnality.

It's hard enough without these things. And what happens, many Christians, yes, we're Christians. But when we hold these things, and we pull people down, and we don't allow unity, and love to guide in our homes, and in our hearts, we're led by the flesh in our decisions.

And out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth is going to speak. And we pull down instead of build up. And this is why churches fall apart.

This is why friendships break up, is because unity and love are thrown on the ground, and trampled upon, in the pursuit of, they're actually being hid by excuses. Right? The real reason a lot of people don't change is because we make excuses. I hold offenses in.

Offense. What I mean by offenses, I should probably explain. We get upset at people.

Do you know that? This group does it. The 4 p.m. service gets really upset at people. Okay, so avoid that service.

But we get upset at people. I mean, I gave example at the first service, and this is real life stuff. You know, I'm like, I got to get to, I'm running into Trader Joe's.

I've got five minutes. I got to get in. I got to get out.

I've got to be somewhere in 15 minutes. We made this appointment two weeks ago. They're counting them.

So I get there, and oh, Pastor Shane, hi. And this person's wanting to talk, and just spill their life, and he counts her for 45 minutes. So I say, listen, I got to, can you call me tomorrow? I got to go.

I'm sorry. I got to go, and I do this. And then they go home, and he's so arrogant.

He has no time for me. But I've offended them, right? And to some degree, rightly so, because I was in a hurry. They weren't the priority.

But then that turns into bitterness, and they see me. They walk this way. He's just an arrogant guy, having no clue of really the priorities there that had to take place, and I do it too.

We all do it. That's what holding a fence means. Not a fence that you build, right? An off-fence.

Somebody offended me. I'm going to hold it in. My wife or my spouse, you might say your husband if you're a girl, of course.

They've offended me. And we hold these things in, and we come to church. Here's the interesting thing.

We come to church holding in all these things, and we think we're going to really worship God. We think we're going to pull from the sermon all the truths that God has wanted, and we come in with the wrong heart, and we think we're going to leave with the right heart. So God wants to wake us up.

Paul says, you are in the flesh if factions and divisions and holding a fence, if we're mad at people. In other words, if I see somebody, luckily I don't in the church right now in either service, but if there are

people, if I saw them, well, man, there are people. There are people.

If I saw them, I would just, man, I just cannot stand that person, and I've got to let that go, right? I've got to let that go. And then we come to church as if God doesn't care. He's not going to know that.

He's not going to know I hold these little things in my heart. Not only does he know it, he calls us to repent from it. They were in one accord.

You know what that means, right? In harmony. There was harmony with the group there. They were in one accord.

Is there harmony in our homes? Yes, I know it takes two, but a lot of the responsibility falls on us, especially as husbands, as the fathers, and the leaders of your home. I can convict you really good if I wanted to, but I believe a lot of times that the environment of the home is the responsibility of the father. And when I say that, guess what happens? But you don't know my, she's an angry woman, burns my dinner.

I know, I know. It's hard. It is hard, but I believe that the environment, I believe the husband can come in and set a certain environment of the home.

Won't be easy, won't be, you know, but he can help to set that environment. Is it a home of peace and joy, or is it walking on eggshells? Man, he's angry today, and you set the environment. Here's an example of harmony.

I'll give you a quick example, but you remember Chelsea playing up here, right? Sounded pretty good, right? You want me to try? Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch. What are you, what's the difference? That didn't sound good? My wife tells me it sounds good. But hey, amazing, great, but that's how we go through our lives as Christians.

We walk, there's no harmony, there's no unison. We don't sound like God created us. There's no instrumental things in our hearts as far as unity and harmony and coming together, and that sounds beautiful.

Instead of sounding beautiful, that sounds terrible. That's how important this issue of harmony is, and being of one accord. That's probably how it sounds to God.

And we walk in church like, yeah, I'm going to worship, and there's nothing in harmony. We see, I don't want to avoid that person. I'm going to avoid that person.

I'm going to sit here. I'm holding unforgiveness from a year ago on that person. They've offended me.

They did this, and they didn't say hi, and we just come in and and we don't realize that we're not in harmony unless we make an effort at it. Do you see how powerful this is? I already had my sermon done this week. It's in your bulletin, those seven points in there that we built West Side Christian Fellowship on, the seven pillars, desperate for more of God, or Jesus, desperate for more truth, desperate, all those things.

I was going to recap our foundational pillars, but God kept just tugging on my own heart. Oh, and actually, I think I apologized to about eight people in the last week or two that I knew I had offense with, or they had offenses with me, trying to, okay, Lord, because it's not easy to submit to that, is it? At first, I'm like, me?

I'm not holding offenses in. That's their problem.

They've got issues with me. I don't have issues with them. I'm going to just, I'm not, because it's hard, you know, and then so finally taking that initial step of, listen, I need to apologize for some things I've did, or said, or handled.

I need to apologize for that. I don't want there to be any offense there, and as you work through that, though, you start to, you leave the meetings with a smile on your face. The worship, not it's just sweeter.

It's louder. It's powerful. You're filled again with the Spirit of God.

You walk into your home, not like this, and just land the way of the world, but you feel free of all these things because you've been holding those offenses in, and that's why one reason why we encourage people at this church, and I'll say it again at this service, is if we've offended you in any way, if we've said things, you know, from the, probably me, of course, but if we, I've said things from the pulpit that offended you, don't hold it in, because sometimes I'll talk with people, and they go, you said this six months ago, and I'm still upset. I'm like, really? I had no idea, and usually it's not my heart what I meant to say. It didn't come out right, and if we just talk through it, you know, and then they say, okay, you know, that makes sense, and we're, you know, everything's back to, it's good again because we worked out that offense, and if I go, listen, the way you're, you know, doing this, it's really, you know, and you work that through, you don't hold it on, because you know what holds, what happens when you hold on to it.

It doesn't just stay right there. It's called a root of bitterness for a reason. What happens to a root? There's a tree in our front yard.

It was nice and little, you know, 15, 12 years ago. You could just pull it out. Now, sidewalk's like this.

It's on its way underneath the house, so I can have a guy come out and cuts it out, and not, but see, it started as a little root, and that's what the enemy loves to do. He loves to plant a, because if you plant a root of bitterness, a root of offense, a root of anger, whatever it is, if you plant that root, it will grow. It will.

It doesn't say, oh, this is a nice little thing. It doesn't bother anybody. It grows, and it grows, and it turns into more offense, and that turns into gossip, and that turns into slander, and that begins to affect your prayer life, and it begins to affect your worship, and it grows, and it grows until you turn into a bitter, critical, angry person, unless you eradicate it.

That's the point of this sermon. We got to eradicate it. I've said before, I apologize.

You know, if I've offended people, I apologize. I want to get back in the heart and right relationship. If I've offended people here, I want to apologize.

It needs to start from the leadership, because you don't have a perfect vessel up here. You have an imperfect vessel up here, but we're working together, striving for the unity of being of one accord, and as soon as the offenses come, if we can let them go, then the enemy has no ground. He's not going to, well, he may, but Westside Christian Fellowship, the enemy knows I can't get them on truth.

I mean, they're probably as solid as they come with a lot of the people that come here. He's not going to bring in some false teacher teaching all this different stuff. Now, we'll be careful on that, of course.

Should you check what I'm saying with the Scriptures? I encourage it, please, but he knows he can plant a root of bitterness in this type of church. Truth becomes an idol, and we start to judge people on the truth. We start, I'm full of truth, and I'm going to be critical of you, and he brings in a root of bitterness.

So, this is an area we need to be careful in, and strive for unity. Isn't that interesting? Paul says, you are still, you have this nature of the flesh, and you are under control of the flesh, if contention, and fighting, and bickering are occurring in your life. Now, if you're like most people, including me, you have this.

Paul's not saying you will never fight, you will never have contentions. What he's saying is, I believe, is if these things are present all the time, often, and not dealt with, like you're a person. You're known as a critical person.

You're always fighting, and arguing, and complaining. You're being led of the flesh. It doesn't mean I'm not going to get an argument three weeks from now, but then what do you do with that argument? If you, hey, you know, I was wrong here.

You're not being led of the flesh. You're being led of the spirit to resolve it. See, the flesh doesn't want to resolve.

The flesh wants to grow. The spirit wants to resolve, and to let it be done away with, and kill that root of bitterness that's coming up in us. Think about this for a minute.

I did a quick search throughout the Bible, just to look at New Testament mainly. How do we gauge the spiritual health of a church? They pray, yeah, you got the word, okay. How do you really gauge? I thought about this this week.

Lord, how do you gauge the spiritual health of West Side? How do we gauge that health? And it dawned on me, how do we gauge the spiritual health of a Christian? Jesus said, John 13 35, by this all men, all men will know that you are my disciples. If you have sound doctrine, if you have all night prayer meetings, both of those are great, I encourage them. They'll know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

That's how they know. See, it's not how well a person preaches. You can preach as well as Billy Graham, or D.O. Moody, or George Whitefield.

You can be well read in all 66 books of the Bible, and quoted all day long. You can even have a degree, a PhD in theology, and wrote your dissertation on love. But if you have not love, it profits you nothing.

I don't know about you, but that's a wake-up call for me. Because we can go through the motions, and have not love, it profits us nothing. One of the things I want more than anything else with the elders, and in this leadership that we're in, is we've got to have that mutual love and unity.

Does that mean it's always there? No, of course not. The enemy comes in, and there's just, but we're focused on that. We want to be united.

We want to be loving. We want the Spirit of God to work through us. And that's why, with John and Matt, it's a great team, because we go back to that.

We're not going to hold in this bitterness. We can't. We've got to be fully transparent, and say, listen guys, we've got to be on the same page.

Let's strive to that. Let's do it. And then that's where power of the Holy Spirit comes from, in that unity.

But Jesus said, this is how all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. Why do we glance over that scripture half the time? Shane, keep reading, come on. It's got to say in there somewhere, if you know the Bible well, you know, if you keep Jesus's commandments, you know, all those things.

Yeah, but the true test, the true test is love. If you have love for one another, that's the true test. And then he says in 1721, John 17:21, that they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me, and I am you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

Jesus saying that they all may be one, even as Jesus and the Father are one? That's impossible, right? But we're supposed to die trying. We're supposed to strive towards that. And here's why there's power in unity, because we take on the nature of Christ.

This is why unity is so powerful. This is why you see revival happen after unity. This is why you see lives restored after unity.

This is why you see marriages restored after a husband says, I'm sorry. Very healthy words. Or a wife says, I'm sorry.

I've been a jerk. I've been wrong. We need unity here.

That's healthy. That's, you know, you guys know that's a good thing, right? You don't always have to be right. You can be wrong sometimes.

Or they can be right, and you can still say you were wrong, but you don't have to, you know, get in a big argument about who's right and who's wrong. Just say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Let's work on unity. Let's strive for unity. There is power in unity, because we take on the nature of Christ.

And what I mean by that is, when we're united, when we're apologizing, when our hearts are right, we take on the nature of Christ. That's why the world can see the love of Christ in us. That's why lives are changed.

That's why we have the power of the Holy Spirit operating in us. If we don't take on the nature of Christ, you know what the other nature is? Theologians call it the Adamic nature, the nature of Adam. We take on the nature of Adam, meaning the nature of the flesh.

We want to fight. See, there's something in me that wants to argue. The flesh, right? There's something in me that wants to debate.

There's something in me that says, that guy looked at me wrong. I don't like him. I know he's got an issue with me, and I want to hold on to that.

There's something that likes that. They wronged me. I want to make them feel it.

I'm not going to return their email. Won't that show them? Right? I'm not going to return their text. I'm not returning their... That'll show them.

I'm going to hold... Something in the flesh wants to do that. Come on, guys. It can't just be me being honest up here.

You know exactly what I'm talking about. Why is that? The Adamic nature. So as we strive for unity, we actually take on the nature of Christ.

So now our decisions are backed and made in the nature of Christ. Now the words I'm about to say are coming from the nature of Christ. Now the way I look at situations and then make decisions are based on the nature of Christ.

How I now respond to people is based on the nature of Christ. Or if the flesh gets in there, now the decisions I make are fleshly decisions. Now the phone calls I make are of the flesh, or how you go off on people, or how you get upset.

One or the other is controlling you. See, as Christians, we think, well, I'm not pleasing God right now, but I'm right in the middle. No, the flesh is loving that.

We're either led by the flesh or led by the Spirit. I think it's time to put in our famous disclaimer, if you don't like what I'm saying right now, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying right now. We don't like to hear this, do we? If God didn't get my heart in the right frame the last few weeks, I wouldn't be able to preach this.

You know what I'd be doing? Let's get back to truth and repentance and the fear of God. I can preach that. Oh, let me tell him.

Let me go tell him off. You're going to hell in a handbasket unless you repent. That's easy.

But the heart has to be right, because when the heart is right, the sermon's even more powerful. I remember a story I told about a year ago, a woman who, she told her son, man, I do not like our new pastor. And he said, why? Why don't you like him? And she said, well, he says, we're going to go to hell unless we don't know Jesus Christ.

The son was, well, mom, what's wrong with that? She goes, well, I really loved our old pastor. Okay, what did he used to say? He used to say, you're going to go to hell if you don't know Jesus Christ. And the son was confused, right? Well, mom, they said the same thing.

And she said, no, son, the old pastor, though, used to say it with tears in his eyes. That's the difference. Love makes all the difference in the world.

I can tell when I'm loving, I preach a lot better. I can talk about hell. I can talk about the judgment of God.

I can talk about the righteousness of God. I can talk about the holiness of God, because it's coming out of a heart overflowing with love. It makes all the difference in the world.

If you truly love somebody and you go to them, that makes all the difference in the world, because it's not just the love aspect. It's you are going in the nature of Christ. You can make a person weep and say the same thing or make them upset and cuss you out and drive away, hitting the gas pedal the whole way by saying the same words.

Same words. What's the famous saying? It's not what you say, it's how you say it that tilts the scale. And that's love in there.

This is so important. Actually, the more I thought about it, the majority of counseling appointments we do, marriage, pornography, abuse, sexual, everything, a lot of it, of course not everything, but a lot of it has to do with unresolved bitterness and anger and resentment. If you could just bring unity and love into these equations, you would shut down counseling centers.

Of course, you need to help people work through things. I'm not saying that, but it's never unity and love and forgiveness. They would heal so many things if we would just let them.

If we would just let the power of God do the power of the Word of God, do what it says it would do, we would see transformation. If we would just let, and I know I fought it. Man, I fought it.

I fought it, and it's hard. You know my story. I gave my testimony a while back.

Back in the 90s, my ex-wife had an affair, a couple different guys. Man, and now I'm turning back to God. I'm a Christian, 1990, 1990.

I'm like, I've got to forgive this. I've got to forgive this. Are you kidding me? And the guy, are you kidding me? I'll tell you what else I'll do.

I'm not going to forgive in month after month after month where God would just, in His Word. Man, God. So I know the pain.

I'm not up here mocking it. I lived it. To make that call and then to forgive the guy, man, that's pain like people don't even know.

You're fighting, you're arguing with God. Have you ever yelled at God? I threw a few cuss words in there. You've got to be kidding me.

There's no way. But then as God breaks you down and the Spirit of Christ comes in, you're reading His Word, your prayer, man, I got to do this. Because you know what God did convince me? He started to show me the complete jerk that I was that created that environment.

I created the environment. So who am I to hold onto that? And then you start to read that Christ died for every wretched sin that I ever committed. And I'm going to sit back and not give what Christ gave me freely.

That's what did it. That's what tilts the scales. And once that happened, talk about a filling of the Holy Spirit.

Talk about God, the Bible coming alive and worship coming alive and just witnessing to everybody. You know you're filled with the Spirit of God when you have to tell everybody about Jesus. You turn the conversation of your postman, of your UPS driver, of the guy at work.

Have you ever been to church? That's why you go to church. I don't go to church. Why? Everybody you're talking to, why? Because now that Adamic nature has been crushed because of the power of forgiveness.

It was stifling everything. It was stifling everything. So I know.

I know it's hard. But I also know that the benefits far outweigh, far outweigh the difficulty of letting that go. Do you think it's easy talking to girls who say their stepdad did something to them when they're seven, eight, nine? I get mad.

I get mad. I thank God that guy isn't there in this appointment. Do you think it's easy to talk about forgiveness and letting it go? This is real life stuff, folks.

The scream, I can't. I can't. Man.

But I said, listen, you're holding that in for the rest of your life. It will destroy you. Forgiveness doesn't mean he was right.

It means you're releasing. You're releasing the pain he's causing. You're not going to allow it anymore.

You see how powerful this is? When you dig deep, unity and love is foundational. You've got to let it go. You've got to let it go.

Letting go does not mean that I want to make that it was right. You're not saying you were right. You're saying you're not even approving of it.

You're saying, I'm not going to allow this cancer in my heart anymore. I forgive you. Guess what? You deal with it now.

I'm released. And actually, the power of forgiveness begins to change the other person's heart, too, as well. This type of message will literally change your life.

And I know it's not easy. I live it. I know it's not easy.

And I talk to people. But once you let it go, once that goes, the first thing that will come is tears. You won't be able to stop crying.

And just because the pain's lifting, God lifts it. It's almost like we hold on to the pain with the unforgiveness. And once we let that go, God begins to hold you.

Now you've let that go. Now I can hold you, son or daughter. Now I can.

Now you're mine. Now they're forgiven, yes. And there's consequences.

But now you see how good that feels. Now you're back in my arms again. See, you let the cancer go.

You let that destructive influence of the enemy be released. The enemy wants you to keep all that in because that's how he has you held. Listen, I know we live in a very wicked and corrupt culture.

I know there's people who've done stuff to people that is absolutely terrible. But we cannot allow it to control us for the rest of our lives and hurt us. You have to release that according to God's word.

And it's not for a bad thing. God never says something to do that's going to hurt us. He always says us for something to do to better our spiritual health.

Let me end with this. Colossians 3.14, and above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. These scriptures, I mean, the more I kept rereading them this week, I'm like, how did I

miss all this stuff? We miss it because we read it.

Oh, let me glance over that. Let me get to the stuff I like. Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Put on love. Put on love. You have to put it on.

Just this week, I had somebody I know come to me and once, you know, once get back in with God and he's had a tough life. And I said, here's what you need to do. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.

Instead of welcoming that, he said, I was arrogant and judgmental. Really? Put on love, Shane. Put on love.

Because something's rising up and it's not love. You have the audacity to tell me that when you're though? Put on love. Put on love.

You know, people send emails about the editorials that I'm a white supremacist, narrow-minded. What the heck? My mom would tell you my best friend when I was 12 was African-American, Jonathan Conaty. I tried to track him down last year.

I mean, people come up with this stuff. But you got to let it go. Put on love.

Put on love. And that's how it works. Because we're offended daily, we've got to put on love.

The Bible says, make every effort to keep the unity. Eager to maintain the unity and be diligent to preserve the unity. All that is from Ephesians 4, 3, from different translations.

Make every effort, be eager and be diligent. Those are three keys. You've got to make an effort.

Unity and love will not happen on their own. Guess what will happen on its own? The opposite. The opposite.

That's why I often say the flesh will lead you by default in the opposite direction. If you do nothing, you'll drift from God. If you do nothing, you will not drift towards unity and love.

You have to make an effort and you have to be eager. Eager. How many of us are eager? That's the opposite.

I'm not eager. I want to draw this out for the weeks and the months and the years to come. I'm not eager for reconciliation.

I'm not eager for love and unity. But it says you have to be eager for it. You have to make an effort and you have to be eager, passionate for it.

And then it says you have to be diligent. You have to hold it like a guard. You have to guard it.

Because you know what's going to happen after this sermon? I'm going to be tested in this area all week, I bet. So will you. So will you.

You hear stuff and you just in your own family, my own family, people somewhat close to me hurt and I hurt them. But what do we do? We've got to let it go. Again, a heart of peace gives life to the body, but

envy rots the bones.

If there's any areas in your life tonight where this has been convicting, I would just encourage you. I'll say again what I said at the beginning. I can't force this.

I can deliver it, but I can't force this message into your heart. God has to penetrate your heart. And we know there's tears about ready to fall right now, aren't there? From knowing that the pain that we've been holding on to needs to be dealt with.

We need to let it go. What the spouse did with this, with the father, with the mother, with the... I mean, some of the stories I hear, I don't know if I could forgive the mom or dad either. But the release that comes from that is very healthy.

It's very good. And it will help you, not hurt you.

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