

Without Natural Affection

Richard T. Ritenbaugh
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As a society, we have gone from murders making national headlines to the point where so many murders occur that only the most brazen or the most hideous ones make the local news.

We have children divorcing their parents and parents divorcing their children. We have spouses purposelessly divorcing each other at the drop of a hat. There were 1.2 million divorces in 1991 as compared to 2.4 marriages and it comes out to exactly 50%. Child abuse is at an all time high. There were 2 million in the latest year I was able to get information, which was 1987. Spousal abuse, there is an estimate that 4 to 6 million women are battered by their husbands and sometimes the women batter the men. And of course, there is elder abuse. We have 1.6 million legal abortions each year. Gangs roam our streets, especially in our largest cities, and they have branch offices in the heartland of America. These gangs push drugs and violence on weak members of society and entrap them in the downward spiral of addiction. Violence on TV and in movies is appalling. Just think of *Jason Goes to Hell*, the latest Jason movie, and it goes pretty much unhindered.

There has not been one day of peace on earth since before World War II started; there has been a war raging somewhere.

Are you surprised by any of this? You should not be because it was prophesied to happen. Today we will look at why we have so much violence in our own society and around the world and how we must be on guard against it in our own lives, believe it or not. Let us go to II Timothy 3 to a prophecy that the apostle Paul made about the times that we live in today.

II Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come [we know the time element of this now]: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving,

unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despises of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away.

Now, this list of attitudes and character descriptions parallels almost exactly the list of crimes that I introduced this sermonette with. You could see the attitudes that Paul describes in here coming out in the crimes that I described. But you know, these things mentioned in chapter 3 here do not only manifest themselves in major crimes, but they show up in the way we set our priorities. We see that most easily in the first one listed here, lovers of themselves. Often we set our priorities based on how much we love ourselves. And if you look at these other ones, you will see that they all seem to refer back to "lovers of themselves" because if they did not have this underlying selfishness, these other attitudes would never gain a foothold.

We are going to focus on the first description here in verse 3 of chapter 3. It says "unloving" in the New King James, but I think the old King James has a better translation of that: "without natural affection." That is really the closest to its real true Greek meaning. The Amplified Bible reads "without human affection, callous, or inhuman." It means without family love in its narrowest sense. It is that people are without the love that normal members of a family would have for each other.

I would like to read you a paragraph here from *Barclay's Daily Study Bible* commentary. This is the book of Romans and this same word is also found in Romans 1:31. And I believe in the New King James it is also translated unloving, but it's the same word, *astorgos*, which means "without family or natural affection."

Storge, which is the root of this word, was the special Greek word for family love. When you put an "a" on the front of it, it means its antithesis, without love, without family love. It was quite true that this was an age in which family love was dying. [He is talking about the Roman Empire and the time that Paul wrote.] Never was the life of a child so precarious as at this time. Children were considered a misfortune. When a child was born, it was taken and laid at the father's feet. If the father lifted it up, that meant that he

acknowledged it. If he turned away and left it, the child was literally thrown out. There was never a night when there were not 30 or 40 abandoned children left in the Roman Forum. Even Seneca, great soul as he was, could write: we kill a mad dog, we slaughter a fierce ox, we plunge the knife into sickly cattle as they taint the herd. Children who are born weakly and deformed, we drown. He said this with a straight face. The natural bonds of human affection had been destroyed.

To modernize that, I have got a clipping of recent events and trends. This is a clipping I got out of the Washington Times on August 16th of this year, 8/16/93. It is entitled "Rebels Beyond Poverty" by Susan Suzanne Fields. Now listen to this, this is very similar to what I just read, but this is what is happening in our own society and it is not necessarily an exact duplicate, but I think it has to do with this "without family affection."

Kids slide to the other side of the law for luxuries, Adidas and Nikes, Gucci, gold chains and Guess jeans, fancy boom boxes and beepers, the latest expensive toy. Some are even willing to maim and kill for trendy clothes and flashy playthings, for sometimes just to show they know how to use a knife or a gun. Status for teenagers comes through rebellion but the rebellion is more dangerous than ever. A teenager in Los Angeles shot a cheerleader for her Walkman, a teenage boy in Oakland stabbed another boy when he refused to pay off a 25 cent bet. Some school administrators wear bulletproof vests. A quarter of all big city schools have metal detectors. It isn't coincidental that the latest fashion folly was inspired by gangsta rappers popular on MTV, who think it's hip to imitate the low slung baggy pants prisoners wear with belts forbidden. Shapeless jeans two sizes too large make it easy to conceal weapons. Kids carry an estimated 270,000 guns to school every day according to a new report issued by the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth. Teenagers are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of violent crimes than those over the age of 20. Almost 3 million thefts and violent crimes occur around a school every year. [3 million!] According to Education Department statistics in a Harris Poll of 2,508 schoolchildren in the 6th through 12th grades, nearly 40% said they

knew someone who had been either killed or injured from gunfire. [40% had said they knew somebody that had been a victim of that sort of a crime.] and more than 35% believed they were likely to be shot themselves. [And USA Today Weekend magazine said that 40% of youngsters in the United States school age kids were afraid to go to the bathroom in their own school.]

Let us go to Matthew 24, verse 12 and see where I think Paul got this thing about "unloving," without natural affection. This is Christ's Olivet Prophecy, the Olivet discourse.

Matthew 24:12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

He says almost the exact same thing, *astorge*.

Really, this is a fascinating scripture. I mean, it sounds very plain and simple when you look at it in the English. But it is even more intriguing when you look at the words behind our own words here, especially the words "grow cold." It is really a word picture of a person who, let us say, has a hot bowl of soup in front of him. To cool it off so he can drink it or eat it, he blows on it. In my family we tell our kids to "foof it." It is just something that has been passed down from mom and dad. I do not know where they got it. Maybe it came from before them, but that is the onomatopoeia for the sound. I do not know if you know anything about onomatopoeia but it is a word that sounds like the action that it describes. So "foofing" it, foof your coffee, you foof your tea, you foof anything that is hot that needs to be cooled down. But it is a gradual and constant process. You see, it is something we constantly work at to produce the desired effect.

Now, this unloving, hostile, without natural affection attitude has been built in us and our children by its constant application in our society and in our lives. We have lived in a society that has been "foofing" the love of God and natural affection for decades and it has been going downhill, Mr. Armstrong said, since World War I. That sort of thing has just been almost inbred into our lives.

And like I said before, it does not have to do necessarily with these great crimes that I was reading about, but in just the way we set our priorities, the way we treat our families, the way we treat each other. And now, because it has been so tightly woven into our society, why our government and just people in general cannot get a hold of the problem. They cannot do anything about it. It is just part of our nature now, it is something that we have been "foofing" for years and Jesus tell us why. It exists because lawlessness will abound. That is the direct cause of the love growing cold.

This word abound means "to multiply" or "to increase," and it also is a word picture. It is very similar to our cliché that "they reproduce like rabbits." Christ says here that the lawlessness is going to multiply exponentially and the love just automatically will grow cold. In a sense, He is saying sin begets more sin and in an atmosphere of sin, where sin and guilt are downplayed and even outrightly denied, people can think of nothing more than doing more sin.

Here is another clipping. This is from the Washington Times 8/8/93. Just one paragraph here. It has an interesting title, "Seven Deadly Sins Meet the MTV Era."

There is a vague sense that sin, if it exists, is surely a problem of psychology. Kurt Loder, the narrator of this MTV special on the seven deadly sins, tells us at the start of the program that we are dealing with compulsions [nothing but compulsions, that is all it is.] The seven deadly sins are not evil acts but rather universal human compulsions that can be troubling and highly enjoyable. Discussion of gluttony quickly deteriorates into chatter about addictions. That's the way all habits and attachments are discussed in the pop therapies the MTV generation grew up on. I'm addicted to my girlfriend, one male says about gluttony. Someone else says the 12 step self-help program [I guess that is like AA uses] is God's gift to the 21st century.

Sin is addictive. Each time we sin, if we are caught in the grip of sin, it takes a little more perversion to satisfy us the next time. And that is how this sin cycle grows. And since sin and love are opposites, they are antithetical to

each other, you can see that the natural result of iniquity abounding is love growing cold. But how does that affect us? Let us go back to Matthew 24 here and look at verses 9 through 14. We are going to read the whole context here.

Matthew 24:9-14 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

Guess who He is talking to: the church, His disciples, and we are living right at that time. These are general conditions that apply, must be now. Mr. Armstrong always said that he was fulfilling this, verse 14, "and the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness." So we must be right around that time.

The interesting part is that the love that cools is our own love since we are the disciples of Christ. Another very interesting section from a commentary, the *Tyndale New Testament Commentary*. This is the book of Matthew by R. T. France page 338 and 339. He is talking about the same verses.

This persecution that is mentioned in verses 9 and 10 will take its toll in that many will fall away [they are using a different version of the Bible] and the disciple group itself will be the scene of betrayal, hatred, false prophecy, and wickedness. That is word "lawlessness." Most men's love in here that is many, the love of many, the love of many is literally the love *of* the many. The sequence of thought in these verses suggests that it means that the majority of the disciples will cool off in their love, whether for God or for their fellow men. [Listen to this. I thought this was incredible.] It is a somber picture of a church in decline. All this, the context indicates, is part of the history which must run its

course before the end comes. When the majority cool off, only those who endure will be saved. That is, only they will enjoy the blessings of the new age.

I would say that we had better not be a part of this majority or of the many.

Let us go back now to II Timothy 3, where Paul gives a solution, something that we can do. We will start in verse 14 and read through the end of the chapter

II Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures [he is speaking specifically to Timothy here], which are able to make you wise for salvation. [Remember, we just said that he who endures to the end shall be saved through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. This is what we need to be doing.] All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So what is Paul's solution? Continue in the truth that you have learned and keep your nose stuck in the pages of your Bible so that you can learn even more and you can be guided by God's Holy Spirit. In effect he says, Stay close to God. You are going to need Him at this time. If we are preparing to do good works, like it says here in verse 17, and if we keep our noses in the pages of the Bible, we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We will be ready to do them when the opportunities arise whatever they happen to be. We will be able to give wise counsel to anybody who asks or give the cup of cold water that a person may need.

Then as it says in Matthew 25:34 and 40 "Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren—natural affection one for another; remember we are brethren of each other, brothers and sisters of Christ, sons of God—you did it to Me."

Let us stop the process of "foofing" our love and begin to heat it up again.