

Provoke One Another

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[0:00] Hebrews 10 verse 24 Now some Christians are pretty provocative, aren't they?

We want to be a provoker in a good way. A good way. A good way. To stimulate faith. To stir it up. To encourage it.

To consider one another it says. Consider. It means to take attention to others. To pay attention to other people. To notice others. To fix your eyes on them.

It's a present tense as well. It's a continuous consideration. Consider and keep on considering. One another. And some ways that we are to provoke.

To provoke one another. And the first one it says. Provoke unto love. Provoke unto love. We can think of brotherly love. We all could do with that.

[1:28] The love of the brethren. The love of the truth. God's word. The love of the gospel. The love of the church. Our Lord says. Love one another. Amen.

As I have loved you. Be a lover of God. More than a lover of pleasure. It says. Love the Lord thy God. With all thy heart.

We could think of. The first love. Spoken of. In the revelation. Of a church that had lost. Had left. That first love.

And how our first love. Needs that refreshing. That renewing. That rekindling. We could all do more. To love our Lord. And for that love to grow.

And think of this. How is your love level. As it were. We all could do more. To love. To love our Lord. To love his people.

[2:24] And to be stirred to a greater love. How we need that. To be provoked. To be stirred. Is the sense of it. To be disturbed. To be convicted. Or motivated.

This is the sense of it. Of the provocation. To provoke unto love. If we could but pray that. The Lord would tug.

At our heart strings. And move on us. That we would be moved. That we would be quickened. Made alive. How we need his prompting. His reminding. His prodding.

All the time. And he takes that sharp sword. Of his spirit. And jabs it. As it were. At hardened hearts. Where is God at?

In our thinking. Our planning. Our priorities. Has that love. Grown less. Or. Need we provoke it. Again.

[3:18] I'm sure we could all do more. To provoke that love. Do we love him. Love him. Love our Lord. Where has that love gone? It's like someone.

Spoke of. How they felt. Like they weren't as close to God. As they used to be. And someone said. Well. Who moved? Nearer my God to thee. Draw near to God.

And he will. Draw near to you. Do we love him? The word provoke. Has the sense of excitement. Of stimulation. Of motivation. That's the sense of this word.

Translated provoke. Have we lost that air. Of excitement. Of being excited. About the things of God. That desire. That delight. For the things. Of our Lord.

What are we driven by? What is it that is? Our passion. Our purpose. Do our convictions. Mean anything. Our character. Or are we complacent?

[4:19] Is it just easy to coast along. And grow careless. Let us learn to truly. Love him. To love him. Not a flippant. Careless thing.

But with all. Our heart. All. Our mind. Our soul. Our strength. He is love. Personified. God is love. He is love.

Our Lord. Incarnate. Love. Love. Love in the flesh. As well as. God. Manifest in the flesh. And we are called to follow.

In his steps. To be a lover. Of the truth. A follower. Of the one. Who is love. Personified. So how can we?

How can we grow. In this loving. How can we learn. To love. And others. To grow. In his love. To manifest it. 1 Peter 1. Verse 22.

[5:15] Tells us more. Of this kind of. Supernatural. Love. God's love. Evident. In the church. That he. Loved.

And gave himself for. In 1 Peter 1. Verse 22. It says. Seeing that. You have. Purified your souls. In obeying the truth. Through the spirit.

Unto. Unfeigned. Love. Of the brethren. See that ye. Love. One another. With a pure heart.

Fervently. Unfeigned.

Love. It means. Not hypocritical. It means the real deal. It means real. Love. And with a pure heart. Fervently. Fervently.

How can we love. Like that. How can we make. Our love. Real. Make it real. How can we make it. Happen. That kind of love. That Peter writes of there.

[6:13] Perhaps we could consider. How can. I be more compassionate. For the people. In my circle. Of influence. I was just thinking. Of late.

A work colleague. Has lost her mother. And Julie and I. Sent a card. To this lady. Now you just think. Even in the worldly sense. Worldly people can show love. How much more should we.

How much more oughtn't we. People of God. If you are. A follower of him. Who is love. How oughtn't we. To show. What the natural world. Would naturally show.

To others. And yet. Our Lord says to love. Your enemies. Love your enemies. That's a big ask. Isn't it. That's a tall order too. How can we be compassionate.

Like that. God's kind of love. It's beyond. The. The way the world. Would draw the line. Isn't it. God's kind of love. To be compassionate. To pray for one another.

[7:08] As we've done some praying here tonight. We can pray for those.

And we can make a call. And as we talked about. Earlier. Make a call. To consider. One another.

To love. One another. To speak the truth in love. Sometimes you need to. Show some tough love. To talk honestly. But lovingly. To listen to one another.

To understand one another. Sometimes it's. Hi. How are you going? And there's something not quite right. With someone. You know. You might even find that. In church. When you come.

And say good day. And you know something's not quite right. Someone's not quite. Having a good day. And they might need a word of. Uplifting. Of encouraging.

Listen. And understand. Be kindly. Affectioned. One to another. Forgiving. One another. That's God's kind of love. We're called to love. Fervently.

[8:02] Love. Fervently. Fervent love. This word in. 1 Peter. 1.22.

Fervent love. It's a word. Translated.

From. A word that. Comes from. A word. That means. A stretching out. As of a hand. This word. Fervent. It means. It comes. From a. A Greek word. That means. A stretching out. Of a hand. To

love. An intense strain. An unceasing.

Activity. It's got that sense of. An intensity. Of a perseverance. As of an Olympic athlete. If you like. I was just looking at a picture of one.

Of late. And it looked. And it was. Painting a picture of this lady. As a. A wonderful Olympic athlete. And she looked. It wasn't a very flattering photo of her.

[8:56] Because she was straining at the finishing line. As it were. And you could see that sense. That she was just. Stretching herself. To the

nth degree. And yet she was the champion.

The winner. And the sense here. Of this fervent love. Is of that straining. Of that stretching. Of that reaching forth. Of that zeal. Of that striving. With all of our energy.

That's the kind of. Intensity. That an athlete shows. Now some of these young lads. Are playing footy. They've got to put an intensity. To win that game. To win well.

To play well. And that's the sense. Of the kind of love. That the church of God should have. It's absolutely full on. Fervent. Intense. With a stretching. A maximum output. Of the muscles.

Of the stretching to the limit. Of the striving. Without all. As an Olympic athlete. Who wants to master. Their expertise. With all their energy.

[9:52] So provoke. Unto love. And secondly. Provoke. Unto good works. Provoke. Unto good works. Think of the good works. That we. Are called to.

Undertake. To be provoked to. To be provoked to. Faith. Zeal. Witness. Fellowship. To be that. Healthy. Vibrant. Growing church.

We must be reaching out. Taking the message. Outside the walls. Joining. The rescue effort. As it were. Part. Of the war effort. That we're battling.

Against the. Forces. Of darkness. There is a generation. Growing today. With largely. Very little. In the way of morals. In the way of biblical truth.

In the way. Of. Answers. How we need to mobilize. And reach out. I know. Just. Earlier this afternoon. We. Saw some.

[10:46] TV. Footage. And. It was all about evolution. You know. One thing after another. There's a brainwashing. A conditioning. A. A saturation. Of young minds.

With falsehoods. About. Their beginnings. About man's origins. About creation. And how we need to mobilize. And take action. And reach out.

So we thank God. For faithful workers. In young people's ministries. We want to reach. These young lives. While. We are able to. And the Christian life.

Is meant to be one. Of action. Of mobilization. Of reaching out. The Christian life. Is not meant to be boring. It's meant to be. A life of action. A life of.

Activity. Of good works. There's that word there. Works. Works. Now we can. Sit back on the. Easy chair.

[11:40] On the. Glory train. As it were. And. We know. Our. Salvation. Is purchased. In full. It's not the works. That save us. And yet. As Christians. We want to be.

Active. In that life. That we live. And it says. Provoke. Unto love. And unto good works. God wants his family. To be. Functioning. And growing.

And active. To be doing. Good works. God's works. To be hanging out. With God's people. To be part of the action. To be an arm. Reaching out. As part.

Of his. Outreach. To planet earth. To be rescuing. The spiritually dying. We need to be provoked. Every one of us. It's so easy. To stay inside.

Our comfort zone. And not step out. Of the. Comfort zone. We need to. Be provoked. Unto love. And to. Good works.

[12:34] It's time to rally. To rouse. To awaken. To ask. And allow the Holy Spirit. To. Minister through us. That divine.

Heavenly wind. From heaven. To stir us. As. The wind would stir. And ruffle the feathers. To be provoked. To be fired up.

To be. Convicted. And do good. And that means. To leave the humdrum. To leave the carelessness. Of. A lax. Kind of. Casual.

Christianity. To stop. The wishy-washiness. The she'll be right. Kind of. Do nothing. Attitude. And to be provoked. To be provoked. To be galvanised.

To be inspired. To do good works. To be a church. That is activated. A people. That are challenged. That are urging one another on. There's a work.

[13:29] To be done. A work. To be done. And God wants his church. To be at work. To be functioning. I know Julie's got this saying. She likes to say. Functioning.

In excellence. You know. Julie's a bit of a. A stickler. For everything's just so. And everything's just. She's always. Always very particular. And very thorough.

And we need to be functioning. And functioning. In excellence. Aspiring. So that which is good. And godly. To strain. And stretch forward.

With that fervency. With that. Fervent love. That fervent prayer. That was talked about earlier. And if necessary. When we provoke.

Provoked. It might mean. We get offended. And upset. Hopefully it's the flesh. Showing its face. And we recognise that. For what it is. But. Take action.

[14:23] Take action. Be provoked. Unto love. And to good works. And sometimes. When we provoke. It's really a sign. That we are wrong. It could be. And we need.

The Lord to sort us out. Provoking. It may mean. Making waves. As God awakens our love. And inflames our passion. To consecrate us.

To motivate us. To activate us. To be provoked. To be worked up. And enthused. Good works. You know. Was the memory verse. Early at tonight.

Good works. Faith without works is. Dead. We don't want to be dead. We want to be alive. We want to be a church. That's living. And functioning. In God's way.

And so you should be. Provoked. To good works. Oswald Chambers. A famous Christian. Said. Do good. Until it is. An unconscious habit.

[15:19] Of life. And you do not know. You are doing it. If you would do good. Such that. You're doing it. As a natural. Course. Of your life.

It's the normal. Thing. For the active Christian. To be doing good. Another. Old time writer. Said. This is Barnes. A Christian. Should. Always.

Be ready. To do good. As far. As he is able. He should not need. To be urged. Or coaxed. Or persuaded. But. Should.

Be so ready. Always. To do good. That he. Will count it. A privilege. To have the opportunity. To do it. God. It's a privilege.

To do good. It's not. An irksome thing. It's not something. Oh no. I've got to do. Something. For God. Again today. It's a privilege. It's a privilege. You know. Julie and I were just talking.

[16:15] Early tonight. As we're heading out. Into the cold. And wondering how many. Godly people. Will be here tonight. And we're glad to see. Your faces here today. That you were able to brave. The storm.

And the wind. And the rain. And the cold. And leave that nice warm lounge room. That you might have been sitting in. Before you came. And to be stirred. To be provoked. Unto good works.

And it's a privilege. For us to fellowship. To be a people. Gathering together. Unto his name. Tonight. And whatever we do. Unto him.

Whether it's worship. Whether it's fellowship. Whether it's. You know. Just. Getting together. As God's people. Everything. And anything we do. It's all.

Due unto his name. The glory. Is due unto him. As he says to us. In John. 15. Verse 8. Without me. You can do. Nothing. Nothing. Absolutely.

[17:10] Nothing. Absolutely. Nothing. You know. Our brother. Ian. Led the prayer time. Beautifully. Tonight. But he needed.

The Lord. To help him. The words. That he said. And brother. Bert. As he read. From the word of God. You all. As you've been singing. The Lord. Has prompted you. And helped you.

And given you. That love. To fellowship. To be here tonight. And without me. He says. You can. Do nothing. It's always unto him. Unto his glory.

God. Who is at work. In you. Both to will. And to do. Of his good pleasure. The will. And the work. It comes from him anyway. He gets all the glory. And that's what we want to do.

Isn't it? I trust. That he will. Be glorified. Through our work. That in the everyday. The ordinary. Something supernatural. Can happen. God can use you.

[18:07] Me. Even me. Even. Each one. Younger. Older. And in between. God can use us. It will. It will just be.

Available. The works. God has for you. May be different from. The ones he has for me. But we all. Have a work to do. Every one. I know.

Again. Earlier today. We were talking. Julie and I. As to. Wouldn't it be good. To see more people. Activated. I know.

It was. Really. A bit embarrassing. This morning. With the. The song service. That. As my. Guitar playing. Is not always. Up to. The standard. We aspire to. That.

That the others. Who may have other. Abilities. That are not. Stepping up. And. Making themselves. Available. And saying. I can do that. I can be used of God.

[19:04] I've got an ability here. That's sitting in the. Dusty shelf. And. I haven't. Dusted off for a while. But I can. Do that. And. God helping you.

I'd like to do myself. Out of a job. I'd like to not be the. I don't want to be a one man band. I never. I've wanted to be. But sometimes. It's sometimes. Like that. And I don't want it to be like that. So. The works that God has for you. Do them. Don't hold back. Volunteer. Find what God has put. On your heart to do. What he's enabled you to do. And do it. God helping you to do it. And so. Be provoked. Consider. One another. Be provoked. Unto love. And to good works.

We want that. We want to be encouraged. And it says. Forsaking not. The assembling. The assembling. Of yourselves together. Again. It's a familiar verse. And. I'm preaching to the converted.

[19:59] You're here in church tonight. You're in a. You're in the assembly. As it were. But we all can think. You know. Maybe next week. You might not feel so enthusiastic. Might be colder. Might be raining more.

It might be stormy. It might be. You might be on the way to England. I know some people. Heading off to. Off to the fair land of the UK soon. But. Whatever it be.

Sometimes we can need an encouragement to fellowship. Can't we? You know. I read this earlier. And it said. Several years ago. Some American prisoners. Were interviewed. After they'd been prisoners of war. They were interviewed. About their experience. To find out how the enemy. Had been most effective. In breaking down their spirit. Breaking their spirit. And the researchers learnt. That the prisoners didn't break down. From the physical deprivation. And the torture even. Of their time. In this prison camp.

[21:00] As quickly as they did. From solitary confinement. It was the solitary confinement. As they were frequently moved around. Separated from their friends.

That was what broke their spirit. That was what made them most vulnerable. These soldiers. And they drew their greatest strength. These soldiers. From the close attachments that they formed. With the small military units. To which they belonged. And it's like that for us. As brothers and sisters. As God's people. As God's family. We draw that strength. From that bond. That we have. With our brothers and sisters. In Christ. And we need that group experience. To pull together. To knit together. In love. And that loyalty. To our Lord. And to one another. This is a radio Bible class. I've said this. Our own personal relationship to God.

[21:56] Vital as it is. Is not sufficient. To produce spiritual maturity. And endurance. It's the relationships. Within a unified. Spirit led body.

Of believers. That's essential. For growth. And for maintaining our individual. Faithfulness to the Savior. We're grouped. For strength. There's a grouping together.

Of us for strength. Here's another quote. From a famous. Old time. Hymn writer. An old time. Songwriter. Frances Habergau. Frances Habergau. She wrote.

Many of the songs. That. We. Are familiar with. And she gave. Several reasons. For attending church. Here you go. So. Next week. When you feel like. You're going to come. Next week. When you feel. It's just a bit. A bit. Miserable. The weather. Or whatever your excuse. Might be. This is what. Frances Habergau says to you. Especially on rainy days. She says.

[22:50] She's got seven reasons here. Why it's good to get together. In church. And assembling. With God's people. Number one. God has blessed. The Lord's day.

Making no exceptions. For stormy days. It's the Lord's day. Number one. Number two. I expect my minister. To be there. I would be surprised. If he stayed at home.

Because of the weather. Number three. I might lose out. On the prayers. And the sermon. That would have done me. Great good. Next one.

For important business. Rain doesn't keep me home. And the church. In God's sight. Is very important. Now you've got lots of important appointments.

You don't cancel them. Just because of the rain. You get on with it. If it's important business. Number five. Bad weather will prove. How much I love Christ. True love. Rarely fails.

[23:44] To keep an appointment. True love. Rarely fails. To keep an appointment. How much do you love him? Number six. Those who stay home from church. Because it's rainy.

Frequently missed. On fair Sundays too. I mustn't take one step. In that direction. You know. It's just so easy isn't it? One step leads to another step.

Leads to another step. Don't go down that track. Be faithful. And number seven. I don't know how many more Sundays.

God may give me. Amen. It would be poor preparation. For my first Sunday in heaven. To have slighted my last one.

On earth. It's good to fellowship. It's good to fellowship. Be provoked. Unto love. And unto good works. Not forsaking. The assembling. Of yourselves together.

[24:40] I hope. You've been provoked today. We need to be provoked. Can be disturbing. Can be uncomfortable. But God the Holy Spirit. Is the comforter. And sometimes.

In giving comfort. He's got to discomfort us. When we're in sin. And disobedience. He will convict. The world of sin. Of righteousness. And of judgment. What if someone.

That saw. The house across the road. On fire. Wouldn't you want to disturb those people. That were still in their house. Perhaps sleeping. Unaware of the fire. What would you do?

You'd yell out. Fire. The top of your voice. Over and over again. You'd want to alarm those people. And disturb those people. And discomfort them.

Some discomfort. And inconvenience is vital. And friends. If we're slack and sloppy. He wants to convict us. Of sin. Of righteousness.

[25:35] And of judgment. And wake us. It is high time. To awake. Out of sleep. For now. Is our salvation nearer. Than when we first believed.

Romans 13. 11. And 1 Corinthians. 15. 34. It says. Awake. To righteousness. And sin not. So wake up. Wake up.

And be provoked. And provoke others too. To love. And to good works. Not forsaking. But encouraging. One another. Encouraging. One another.

As you see. The day approaching. Exhorting. One another. And this word. Exhorting. It's got the sense. Of encouraging. Of coming alongside. And encouraging. As the comforter.

Allied to that word. And I look back. As a young boy. Learning to ride the bike. When my dad was there. Helping me. Learn how to ride that bike. And he came alongside to help.

[26:32] I can distinctly remember. Some of that disturbing experience. Of learning to ride the bicycle. And my dad came alongside.

To encourage. And to help. And that's what we are to do. For one another. Exhorting one another. Come alongside. Come alongside.

As it were. To encourage. To rub shoulders. With one another. And put your arms around each other. As it were. To exhort one another.

Exhortation. It's a wonderful gift. And our Lord calls us to that. And likewise. This word. Exhorting. I'm told.

Again. Just a quick picture. To paint. Of how this word. Has a sense. It was used in history. To describe how.

[27:28] Where a military regiment. Had lost heart. And was dejected. And feeling. That they lost the battle. A general sent. A leader to this unit.

This army unit. To talk to. The disheartened soldiers. And. As the man came. And enlivened them. And encouraged them. Their courage was reborn. This body.

Of dispirited men. Became fit. Again. For heroic action. As this man came. And exhorted them. He encouraged them. And this is the very same word.

That we see. Here in Hebrews 10. 25. But exhorting. One another. And so much the more. As you see. The day approaching. Exhorting.

It's got the sense. As. As this. Military union. Was encouraged. To get back in the fight. And. To take. Heart. To. Fight the.

[28:24] Battles ahead. And that's what church does for us. That's what the assembling of ourselves together. Does for us. It provokes. Unto love. Unto good works.

It encourages. And we encourage one another. And it's not the church. As in a building. Or. Or even a meeting. But it's. You and me. Brothers and sisters.

Knitted together. In love. Caring for one another. Doing his works. And exhorting one another.

Considering one another. Looking out for one another.

So and so is not here tonight. Maybe I could give them a call. That's considering one another.

That's considering one another. That's. That's. It's got the sense of looking out. For one another.

And. We try to make that practice. Although. It gets hard. When we've got. Numbers of people. To try to catch up with. It doesn't always happen. Maybe you could help me.

[29:19] If you. If you'd like to play a role in that. If you've got a phone. At your house. And you'd like to make some calls. There's numbers of people. That haven't come to church. This morning. Was. Quite sparse this morning.

There's numbers of people. Not well. In this fellowship. We want to consider one another. Look out for one another. Provoke unto love. Provoke. Unto good works. And exhort one another. And so much the more.

The day is approaching. The day. The day. Of the Lord. Is coming. It's at hand. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. We want. To be that prepared people.

For your returning. Stir our hearts Lord. Convict us. Holy Spirit. That we might be. More in tune.

With your will. And to will. And to do.

Of your good pleasure. Help us Lord. To find. Opportunities. To do good works. We see the world around us. Does lots of good works. And yet. We as your people. Ought to be the ones.

[30:16] Who set the example. To the world. Help us Lord. To be that people. To love. The brethren. To love. The assembling. To love. Our Lord.

And. Master. Our saviour. Lord. Help us to be. That kind of people. And. Considering. One another. And exhorting.

And encouraging. One another. As we see. Time is ticking out. And we know Lord. It's just. Ever closer. You're returning. You're looking for a people.

Ready. We pray Lord. If there's any present. Here tonight. That they've yet to trust you. They don't know. What it means. To have everlasting. Life. Lord.

Let them. Be drawn to you. We pray. Let your Holy Spirit. Work. We pray. And. Bring comfort. Bring. Conviction. Holy Spirit.

[31:11] Lord. Minister. We pray. We pray. For every heavy heart. If there's people. Loaded down. With concerns. Lift them up. Lord. We pray. Let them leave this place.

With a spring in their step. Having been encouraged. Having found the comfort. Of the scriptures tonight. As well as the comforter. To their soul. Lord. For the comfort.

Of salvation. The gift that we have. And just the privilege. To be. Brothers and sisters. Here tonight.

And to be able to spend time. With each other. Lord. We thank you for that.

In Jesus name. Amen. CONGRATIST