

LOVE IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

(by Wendell "Skip" Wright, Kapena Wright Ministries, 2-20-09)

One of the fondest memories I have as child and one of the greatest lessons I learned from my grandmother when growing up was through an expression she used to share with us kids when there was work to be done in the yard or around the house. With all the kids that she had to watch, all of us cousins, while our parents were working, she did an awesome job of keeping us in line and teaching us great values.

One of the things she used to tell us if we were caught not doing the work we were supposed to be doing or not helping someone else, was, "get your finger out of your nose and go help."

I smile as I think back on what she was saying because it was quite simply, an exhortation for us not to just stand around and do nothing, but to pitch in and help get things done. In the process, we would hopefully learn one of the core aspects or ingredients of true love. Unselfishness and KOKUA (Hawaiian-basically means to help or assist).

As I think back on that, I can't help but think of two instances in the Word where we see similar examples of people standing around or sitting with their fingers up their nose.

The first is when Jesus walked on the water in Matthew 14:22-33. Out of at least 12 people in the boat, Peter was the only one to take the step of faith and walk to Jesus. The other 12, well, no matter what they were saying or thinking, they were still in the boat watching, not participating in what was going on.

The other picture we get, and there are more, but I see these two more clearly because they are directly addressed by Jesus, is when Jesus was about to call Lazarus back to life and out of the tomb. I love His prayer in John 11:41-42, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that you always hear me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe." Yep, more spectators, people watching to see what Jesus would do next.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were among the worst of the spectators, but they weren't the only ones. They claimed they needed to "see" what Jesus would do before they would be willing to "believe" Him, and yet in spite of all HE did, all the miracles, all the acts of Love HE performed and the Words of Love HE spoke, many still wanted to "see more".

In Matthew 28:17, we see one of several accounts expressed in the Gospels, of how His own disciples "worshipped Him, but some (still) doubted".

Some reading this may chuckle at what I'm saying here and discount it, and yet, there are so many sitting in our churches today who are, or at least claim to be born-again, Holy Spirit filled, Jesus loving, "faith-filled", worship loving believers, who truly don't believe and are more in being spectators, watching to see what Jesus "may or may not do" in,

through, or with someone else, before they make that commitment and decide to truly walk and follow Him and believe and act on His Word.

The sad truth is that if we are merely spectators with Christ Jesus and the Word, then that is how the rest of our life is and that is how we treat our relationships. And, I believe that that is how marriages that should or could be stronger and relationships that have been broken could be healed, if people would quit being "spectators" and become active participants in love.

A "spectator" watches others so much that they don't "see" their own fallacies or shortcomings. A "spectator" is often a great "critic" of others, forgetting that the way we "judge" others is the way we shall be judged. And, a "spectator" doesn't get his or her hands dirty in the things of life and don't take chances or trust others, because they want to "see" what happens to those who do step out before they'd even consider thinking about maybe taking action.

Love is NOT a spectator sport. Love is and requires from us, action. We must GIVE love and ACT on love. If we remember what LOVE is, or more accurately, WHO LOVE IS, we should be stirred in being more proactive in our loving Him and loving people. After all, John puts it very eloquently when he writes in I John 4:8, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

So, let's quit watching others and don't just stand around waiting to see what someone else is doing or going to do, but step out of the boat, activate your faith and get out there and do what Jesus did, love one another as He loved us and gave Himself for us.

Let's make an impact on others. Let's help change lives for Jesus..for eternity!