



Biblical Love

Jason Hilburn
Editor and Lectureship Director

The Fourteenth Annual
STANDING IN THE GAP LECTURESHIP
January 25th – January 27th, 2013

Hosted by
**NESBIT CHURCH OF
CHRIST**



PREFACE

We have looked forward to this lectureship with great anticipation, believing that this theme of “Biblical Love” will provide great spiritual strength and encouragement from the Word of God. We have been blessed tremendously by God’s love, and reflecting upon His love and how He desires us to love will definitely be worth our time and efforts.

We appreciate all these men of God who have worked diligently to prepare these outlines and present these sermons to us. We also thank brother Green for his work in recording these sermons, so that we and others can continue to benefit for years to come. Of course, I thank the Nesbit congregation, with whom I have been blessed to work for over four years now. This great group of Christians performs each task set before them “heartily” and with their might (Col. 3:23; Ecc. 9:10), and it is a great blessing for my family and me to be here at Nesbit.

Jason Hilburn

Editor and Lectureship Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Greatest Commandment , <i>by Gary Colley</i>	4
The Characteristics of Love , <i>by Dan Cates</i>	7
Loving the Truth , <i>by Bobby Liddell</i>	19
Loving the Lost , <i>by Billy Bland</i>	24
Brotherly Love , <i>by Randy Collum</i>	31
What a Loving God Hates , <i>by Mike Hixson</i>	37
Love Not the World , <i>by Garland Elkins</i>	39
Family Love , <i>by Curtis A. Cates</i>	42
Love Helps the Helpless , <i>by Jared Rhodes</i>	46
Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear , <i>by Chris Butler</i>	50
Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself , <i>by Robert Jefferies</i>	55
Lovest Thou Me More Than These? , <i>by Wade Webster</i>	59
God is Love , <i>by Robert R. Taylor, Jr</i>	62
 <u>Ladies' Lectures</u>	
Good Works Without Love , <i>by Irene C. Taylor</i>	66
Marital Love , <i>by Annette B. Cates</i>	68

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Matt. 22:34-40

Gary Colley

We certainly commend the congregation, and especially brother Jason Hilburn, director, for the great theme and subjects to be studied in this lectureship. This congregation is literally "a city set on a hill" that is continually shining the light of the Gospel to those in this community (Matt. 5:14-16). Your work is highly important and so needful for the Lord and His cause, and is greatly appreciated. We are living in the most precarious time that our nation and the world has ever known. The treats of complete nuclear annihilation are very possible, if not very real. May we all remember to pray for all our young men and women who are valiantly fighting for our nation and for our freedom. All of these things cause us to remember how important our assigned lesson is for our day!

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jesus was teaching in the temple during the last week of His earthly ministry, when "the Pharisees took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk" (Matt. 22:15-22).
2. These enemies of Jesus made three attempts to ensnare Him by asking questions.
3. Jesus had been attacked by the elders, chief priests, and scribes early in the day, whom He had defeated and exposed them to ridicule.
4. Jesus understood their wicked motive and purpose of heart! He said to them, "Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?"
5. The third question is the subject of this lesson: "Which Is The Greatest Commandment?"

DISCUSSION:

I. THEY MEANT BY THIS QUESTION, "WHICH OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LAW IS THE MOST IMPORTANT?"

- A. Thinking that he could not keep them all, he wanted to know the greatest or most important.
- B. Jesus' answer covered all the commandments given by God in the Law of Moses and the Gospel!
- C. Jesus' answer was given in such simplicity that no one could miss its import, as He declares that the whole duty of man, the full sum of man's moral obligations, the essence of all divine law, is embodied and expressed in one word: "LOVE."

II. IT IS MADE CLEAR THAT ALL LOVE MUST BE EXERCISED IN TWO DIRECTIONS: FIRST TOWARD GOD, AND SECOND TOWARD MEN

- A. The Ten Commandments, and all other divine requirements, are all expressions of this one principle: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."
- B. This is also summed up in the word "love."
- C. So simple and unquestionable is the principle of love, by which all moral problems can be solved, and by which all moral obligations can be fulfilled, that Jesus adds, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets."
- D. These two great commanded principles of the law of Moses and the law of Christ are here set forth for all to consider.

III. THIS PRINCIPLE EMBODIES THE "GOLDEN RULE:" (Matt. 7:12).

- A. When we meet all the obligations and responsibilities that we owe to our fellow man, as we are to do for ourselves, we are fulfilling all the duties to him in the same way we look after our own interest.
- B. God demands first place in our hearts and lives.
- C. He wants us to love Him more than we love anybody or anything.
- D. We are to love our fellow man and treat others as we would have them treat us under the same circumstances (Matt. 7:12).

IV. LOVE BRIGHTENS THE WORLD

- A. How dark and dreary the world would be without love! It would almost be unbearable without love!
- B. Love cannot be purchased with money, or completely known by the senses.
- C. The two ingredients of Bible love are concern and interest.
- D. Love is not passive, but an active positive force!
 1. This is shown when men, because of love, fight for their home, nation, and the church of Christ in total dedication and faithfulness (Jude 3).
 2. Paul loved the souls of men when he proclaimed that there was but one body or church (Eph. 4:1-6; Rom. 1:14-17).
 3. Paul loved the soul of Peter when he rebuked him to the face (Gal. 2; 2 Thess. 3:6).
 4. The writer of Hebrews loved the brethren and us when the Holy Spirit instructed him to write, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb. 10:25).

V. LOVE IS THE GREATEST GIFT OF GOD TO MAN (1 Jn. 4:8).

- A. 1 Corinthians 13 has been rightly called "the love chapter" of the Bible. (There are 16 qualities of love in this chapter: 8 negative and 8

- positive).
- B. It has been admired by all ages, but sadly it has been practiced by few.
 - C. The gift of tongues was considered rare and valuable!
 - 1. But when it attained its highest development in eloquence and persuasion, Paul declared it to be inferior to the tongues of angels, and that neither are profitable for salvation without love.
 - 2. The gifts of prophecy (inspired teaching), mysteries (the power to unfold all of the deep counsels of God, which are now given in the Word), knowledge (without study), and faith (super natural) are all dead and worthless without love (1 Cor.13:2).

VI. "AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY" (1 Cor. 13:13).

- A. In summation of the spiritual gifts being removed, and the perfect law of Christ being given, Paul gives these words concerning what abides-- the greatest of which is love (Jas. 1:25).
- B. Faith that comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), is so important to our lives.
- C. Even if we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and give our body to be burned, and have not love, it is profitless for salvation (1 Cor. 13:3).
- D. "Hope" is the expectation with the desire for future blessings which sustains us in life. It is undergirded by faith (Heb. 11:1, 6).
- E. From giving of our goods to feed the poor, he passes to a higher order, of the body being burned as a sacrifice presented to God.

CONCLUSION:

1. Paul assures us that the value of love never fails! It survives all and always abides in all circumstances and in all worlds.
2. Faith and hope will have served their purposes this side of the Judgment, but love will continue into eternity.
3. The spiritual gifts of foretelling future events, or miraculously speaking with tongues, or super-natural understanding and communication of the divine truth was to soon pass away as no longer necessary, but love will continue in its importance.
4. Love, like the unity of the Spirit, demands action and effort on our part....our very best actions and efforts! (Eph. 4:1-6).
5. Love is THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT!

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

1 *Corinthians* 13:4-8

Dan Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul demonstrated the supremacy of charity (KJV), or love, over faith and hope (v. 13) by showing the futility of acting – even miraculously--without love (vv. 1-3), by showing the lasting nature of love (vv. 9-12), and by showing the characteristics of love (vv. 4-8).
2. Indeed, the humanly inserted chapter division between 12:31 and 13:1 would better be moved a verse prior, or better still removed altogether, for the "more excellent way" of the earlier chapter is a description of the love characterized in the latter!
3. In this study, we shall see together the characteristics of Biblical love.

I. LOVE IS LONGSUFFERING.

A. How this is stated.

1. "Charity suffereth long..." (1 Cor. 13:4).

B. What this involves.

1. "It does not break under injury or provocation. With the infirmities of men and the purposes of God, love is patient" (Frank L. Cox, "The Behavior of Love," *Gospel Advocate*, April 18, 1963, p. 249).
2. "Endures slights and wrongs patiently and long, and returns a kindly spirit" (B.W. Johnson, *People's New Testament with Notes*).

C. How this is supported elsewhere.

1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him" (Psa. 103:8-13).
 - b. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

- c. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
- 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (Gal. 5:22).

II. LOVE IS KIND.

- A. How this is stated.
 - 1. "Charity...is kind" (1 Cor. 13:4).
- B. What this involves.
 - 1. "Gentle in behaviour" (A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures of the New Testament).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 - 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).
 - b. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:" (1 Pet. 2:22).
 - 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19-21).
 - b. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12).
 - c. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

III. LOVE IS NOT ENVIOUS.

- A. How this is stated.
 - 1. "Charity envieth not..." (1 Cor. 13:4).
- B. What this involves.
 - 1. "How miserable is that envy which is made unhappy by the good fortune of another" (Johnson).

2. "Far from grieving when others are honored, love rejoices" (Cox, 1963, p. 249).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:26).
 - b. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (1 Pet. 2:1-2).
 - c. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).
 - d. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15).

IV. LOVE IS NOT BOASTFUL.

- A. How this is stated.
1. "Charity vaunteth not itself..." (1 Cor. 13:4).
 2. "Love does not parade itself..." (1 Cor. 13:4, N.K.J.V.).
- B. What this involves.
1. "Does not ostentatiously boast of superiority, nor is it inflated" (Johnson).
 2. Does not "play the braggart" (Robertson).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom" (Pro. 13:10).

V. LOVE IS NOT PROUD.

- A. How this is stated.
1. "Charity...is not puffed up" (1 Cor. 13:4).
- B. What this involves.
1. "Is not arrogant" (Robertson).

2. Whereas boasting is outward, pride is inward.
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phi. 2:5-8).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

VI. LOVE IS NOT UNBECOMING.

- A. How this is stated.
 1. "[Charity] Doth not behave itself unseemly..." (1 Cor. 13:5).
 2. "[Love] does not behave rudely..." (1 Cor. 13:5, N.K.J.V.).
- B. What this involves.
 1. "Self-love betrays its lack of sympathy by vulgar indecorum, and cares not how offensive its conduct is towards others. Manners often give the measure of the man" (McGarvey, e-Sword).
 2. "Not indecent" (Robertson).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

VII. LOVE IS NOT SELFISH.

- A. How this is stated.
 1. "[Charity] seeketh not her own..." (1 Cor. 13:5).
- B. What this involves.
 1. This involves humility in all relationships.

- a. Someone has observed that the difference between "marital" and "martial" is the misplacement of "I."
 - 2. "Neither is love ever alert for its own rights, carefully exacting the remuneration and the recognition that may be due" (Cox, 1963, pp. 249, 250).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 - 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).
 - b. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).
 - c. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14).
 - d. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25-26).
 - e. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).
 - 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).
 - b. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor. 10:24).
 - c. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phi. 2:3-4).
 - d. "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

VIII. LOVE IS MEEK.

- A. How this is stated.
 - 1. "[Charity] is not easily provoked..." (1 Cor. 13:5).
 - 2. "[Love] is not provoked..." (1 Cor. 13:5, A.S.V., N.K.J.V.).
- B. What this involves.
 - 1. "Does not fly into a rage" (Johnson).
 - 2. "Love is not irritable or over-sensitive. It is not fired with resentment at every little slight, whether fancied or real. It does

not blaze out in passionate anger when wronged" (Cox, 1963, p. 250).

C. How this is supported elsewhere.

1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).
2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated" (Prov. 14:17).
 - b. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jam. 1:19).
 - c. "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39).

IX. LOVE IS TRUSTFUL.

A. How this is stated.

1. "[Charity] thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. 13:5).
2. "[Love] taketh not account of evil" (1 Cor. 13:5, A.S.V.).

B. What this involves.

1. "Is not suspicious of evil, is not careful to retain the memory of it, and does not keep a record of it for the purpose of returning it" (J.W. McGarvey).
2. "With a view to settling the account" (Robertson).
3. "Puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others" (Albert Barnes, Barnes' Notes on the Bible).
4. "Love makes allowances for the falls of others, and is ready to put on them a charitable construction" (Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown, A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments).
5. Love does not remember all the ways it has been slighted.

C. How this is supported elsewhere.

1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34).
 - b. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29).
2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins" (Pro. 10:12).

- b. "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).
- c. "The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground" (Psa. 147:6).

X. LOVE IS SENSITIVE.

- A. How this is stated.
 - 1. "[Charity] rejoiceth not in iniquity..." (1 Cor. 13:6).
 - 2. "[Love] rejoiceth not in unrighteousness..." (1 Cor. 13:6, A.S.V.).
- B. What this involves.
 - 1. "Instead of rejoicing, is filled with sadness by wrong doing of any kind" (Johnson).
 - 2. "Love gloats not over evil done by any person, friend or foe...Love finds no malignant pleasure in finding the sins or mistakes of others, in seeing reputations blasted" (Cox, 1963, p. 250).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 - 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).
 - b. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it" (Luke 19:41).
 - 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32).
 - b. "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." (1 Cor. 5:2).
 - c. "For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Pro. 4:16-18).
 - d. "Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long" (Prov. 23:17).

XI. LOVE IS GENUINE.

- A. How this is stated.
 - 1. "[Charity] rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6).
 - 2. "[Love] rejoiceth with the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6, A.S.V.).
- B. What this involves.
 - 1. Rejoices in Truth's triumphs (Johnson).

2. "When truth destroys calumny and shows that reports were ill-founded, love rejoices" (Cox, 1963, p. 250).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:16-17).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10).
 - b. "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9).
 - c. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter...I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things" (2 Cor. 7:9-11, 16).

XII. LOVE IS PATIENT.

- A. How this is stated.
1. "[Charity] beareth all things..." (1 Cor. 13:7).
- B. What this involves.
1. "Bears up in spite of all things evil, and is not overcome" (Johnson).
 2. "It keeps out resentment as the ship keeps out the water, or the roof the rain" (Marvin R. Vincent, Vincent's Word Studies).
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24).
 - b. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the

- unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18).
2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

XIII. LOVE IS NAIVE.

- A. How this is stated.
 1. "[Charity] believeth all things..." (1 Cor. 13:7).
- B. What this involves.
 1. "Is not distrustful and suspicious" (Johnson).
 2. "This is a line which a lot of people, who call themselves Christians, should carve above their mirrors and write on the tablet of their hearts. For a lot of people have developed what amounts to an appetite for bad news. They are not eager to believe the best, but to believe the worst...Because they have hatred in their hearts, they feed themselves on gloomy forecasts, on calamities, on ugly rumors. Getting hold of such morsels, how they love to roll them sanctimoniously over and over on their tongues! 'I don't know whether it's true or not, and I certainly hope it is not, but...[sic]' And what a disastrous collection of retailed rumor generally follows that 'but.' Often they enlarge, they magnify, they surmise. The [sic] take up an evil tale. They disfigure it. They pass it on" (Frank L. Cox, "What Love Believes," Gospel Advocate, August 28, 1969, p. 555).
 3. If I have helped someone and have been promised that I would be repaid but have not seen the repayment; I should imagine that I was repaid in a way that I did not see.
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21-22).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Pro. 17:9).
 - b. "A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame" (Pro. 12:16).
 - c. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have

fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:7-8).

XIV. LOVE IS HOPEFUL.

A. How this is stated.

1. "[Charity] hopeth all things..." (1 Cor. 13:7).

B. What this involves.

1. "Though the object loved is confessedly sinful to-day, yet this supreme grace looks with eager, hopeful expectation for its repentance on the morrow" (McGarvey).

2. "Is hopeful instead of despondent, and hopes for the best" (Johnson).

3. "Sees the bright side of things" (Robertson).

C. How this is supported elsewhere.

1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.

a. "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house...And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:5,9-10).

b. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6,8).

2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.

a. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

XV. LOVE IS RESILIENT.

A. How this is stated.

1. "[Charity] endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

B. What this involves.

1. "The cardinal quality of fortitude, hardihood, unyielding persistence is meant" (Johnson).

2. "On its shoulders, love bears many burdens--its own burdens, also the burdens of others" (Cox, 1963, p. 250).

C. How this is supported elsewhere.

1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.

a. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:3-5).

2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8-9).
 - b. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ...And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:1-2, 9-10).
 - c. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

XVI. LOVE IS ETERNAL.

- A. How this is stated.
 1. "Charity never faileth..." (1 Cor. 13:8).
- B. What this involves.
 1. "It is eternal and imperishable" (Johnson).
 2. "Love survives everything" (Robertson).
 3. "Love holds its place" (Vincent).
 4. In short, love excels all, forever!
- C. How this is supported elsewhere.
 1. As an attribute of the love shown by God.
 - a. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).
 2. As an attribute to be shown by the righteous.
 - a. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

CONCLUSION:

1. In closing this study, let us consider a couple of other thoughts regarding this great portion of Scripture.

- a. In this passage, "The beautiful grace [love-DFC] is personified...She thinks. She suffers and sighs. She rejoices and sings. She moves and seeks. She speaks and refrains from speaking. She bears and believes, hopes and endures. Her behavior is most gracious" (Frank L. Cox, "Love—Its Behavior," Gospel Advocate, April 8, 1961, p. 216).
 - b. "In these verses we have a word picture of the life and character of Christ, who is our pattern" (Cox, 1963, p. 250).
 - c. With Christ as our pattern and these characteristics being characteristic of Him and His example, one may make self-evaluation by, as others have often suggested, inserting his name every time that he sees the word charity, or love; does his name fit?
 - (1). If not, he needs to focus upon the areas where he is insufficient and strive to love as Christ!
2. Love is the crowning jewel of the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:4-8); let us strive to incorporate this "more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31) into our lives!

LOVING THE TRUTH

Bobby Liddell

TEXT: John 8:32

THESIS: To show that truth exists, and that we should love the truth.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Good people love the truth (cf. Psa. 119:97).
2. Those who do not love the truth face these consequences (2 The. 2:10-12).
 - a. They are deceived.
 - b. They are deluded.
 - c. They are damned.
 - d. They will die.
3. Loving the truth requires the following.
 - a. Recognition that absolute, knowable truth exists.
 - b. Understanding what truth is.
 - c. Acknowledging what the existence of truth means to us.

DISCUSSION:

I. DOES ABSOLUTE, KNOWABLE TRUTH EXIST TODAY?

- A. Either absolute, knowable truth exists today, or it does not.
 1. Either there is truth, or there is not truth.
 2. If truth exists, either truth is knowable, or it is not.
 3. If truth exists and is knowable; then, the question arises as to whether truth is absolute, or relative.
 4. We affirm that absolute truth exists today, and that we can know truth.
- B. Can we know that $2 + 2 = 4$?
 1. Yes, for this is truth that is objective; thus, it is truth regardless of whether one agrees with it, likes it, believes it, applies it, or even knows it.
 2. Yes, for this is truth that is absolute; that is, it is truth that does not change regardless of time, place, situation, or circumstance.
 3. The truthfulness of this equation is not based upon assumption, nor is it a mere assertion.
 4. Likewise, it is not possible that $2 + 2 = 4$, and that $2 + 2$ do not equal 4.
- C. Some deny that absolute, knowable truth exists today.
 1. Some affirm: "Truth is only relative, situational, and subjective--there is no absolute truth!" and our educational system has programmed millions of our citizens to accept this "truth."
 2. Some affirm: "We cannot know truth!" without considering the question, "How can they know the 'truth' that we cannot know truth?"
 3. Some affirm: "There is no absolute truth!" not realizing they have contradicted themselves by declaring the "absolute truth" that there is no absolute truth.

4. Still, others affirm: "We should seek truth, but we can never know when we have attained the object of our search, nor can we claim that we know that we know truth, and we certainly must not force our 'truth' upon others."
- D. What if they are right--what if truth does not exist?
1. If absolute, knowable truth does not exist, there is no standard by which to live.
 - a. There would be no accurate measure of right and wrong; thus, none could know if his (or other's) thoughts, words, and actions are right (approved by God, acceptable, and beneficial), or if they are wrong.
 - b. Thus, there would be no right way to live, and no wrong way to live (Jud. 17:6; Pro. 12:15).
 - c. As well, there would be no standard by which to judge, either to condone or to condemn.
 2. If absolute, knowable truth does not exist, there is no basis for real hope.
 - a. How could one have the surety of hope if he cannot know that he knows (1 John 2:2-4)?
 - b. There would be no confidence of salvation for obedient believers (John 8:32).
 - c. There would be no sure way to Heaven for the faithful (John 14:6).
 - d. There would be no conviction of Hell for the wicked (Mat. 25:46).
 - e. Without the certainty of truth, how could one know to have hope, or for what to hope; that is, what to desire, and what to expect (Tit. 1:2; Col. 1:5)?

II. WHAT IS TRUTH?

- A. The question, "What is truth?" is a Bible question, a good question, and a question we all must ask.
 1. Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38).
 2. Wise, educated men ask this question, and so do simple men.
 3. Atheists, agnostics, skeptics, and infidels ask this question with the sneer of doubt, disbelief, and disdain.
 4. Honest, sincere men ask this question with the earnest expectation of coming to a knowledge of the truth.
- B. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Deity incarnate, brought truth to the world.
 1. The Savior identified truth as something that is real, existing, and knowable (John 8:32).
 2. The One sent down from Heaven declared that men could know the truth, and that knowing the truth would bring the benefit of freedom from sin.
 3. Of His truthfulness, there is no doubt, for He is a reliable witness of the truth (John 18:37).
- C. Paul, the faithful apostle of Jesus Christ, gave himself in order to spread truth to the world.

1. Paul believed there existed something he called truth--something that was real, and that men could know (1 Tim. 2:4).
 2. There was no doubt with Paul, but that the knowledge of truth was (and is) attainable.
 3. He, too, was a faithful, reliable witness.
- D. God's Word is truth (John 17:17).
1. In spite of this, some pretend that:
 - a. Truth does not exist.
 - b. That the knowledge of truth is always illusory or unattainable.
 - c. That truth cannot be known to be known.
 - d. Or, that gaining knowledge of truth, if even possible, must come through a process of doubting.
 2. Although God's Word is truth, many have never sought the truth, and others have never heard it.
 3. Others have heard, but have not received, or believed the truth.
 4. Still, regardless of whether we have sought, heard, received, or believed the truth, or not, truth exists, and God's Word is truth.
 5. Sadly, in spite of truth's existence, too many continue in darkness and in doubt, but souls are in the balance, and if we do not know the truth, we will be lost.

III. WHAT DOES THE EXISTENCE OF ABSOLUTE, KNOWABLE TRUTH MEAN TO US?

- A. The existence of truth means we can have confidence.
1. We can be confident that God's Word is truth (John 17:17).
 2. We can be confident that God is "a God of truth" (Deu. 32:4).
 3. We can be confident in the Source (God) of truth, knowing that truth does not originate with man, the church, or the preacher (John 16:13).
 4. We can be confident in Christ, Who is the Truth (John 14:6).
 5. We can be confident that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 16:13).
 6. We can be confident that the Bible is the word of truth (Jam. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:22; Heb. 10:26).
- B. Truth's existence means that we can know that:
1. God exists, and that we are His creation (Gen. 1).
 2. We know either by experience, or by evidence.
 3. Since we cannot know God by our senses (touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing), we must know God by evidence (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and the evidence overwhelmingly, conclusively, indisputably confirms the existence of God.
- C. Truth's existence means that we can know that:
1. Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mat. 16:16).
 2. He is the One we are to hear (Mat. 17:5).
 3. He is the head of the one body, the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:4).
 4. He is the only Savior (Acts 4:32).
 5. He adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).
 6. He will come again one day (John 14:1-6).

7. When He comes, He will judge in righteous judgment according to the absolute standard of His truth (John 12:48; Acts 17:30-31).
- E. Truth's existence means we can know and must obey truth.
1. The search for truth is noble (Acts 17:11).
 2. We should gladly receive truth (Acts 2:41).
 3. The hearing of truth should produce faith (Rom. 10:17; 1:16).
 4. Obedience to truth will purify our souls (1 Pet. 1:22-23; Psa. 119:11).

IV. LOVING THE TRUTH.

- A. If we love the truth, we will believe the truth about this world.
1. Loving the truth means we do not love the world (1 John 2:15-17).
 2. Loving the truth will help us to know the true purpose of this life, and to avoid many of the problems of this life.
 3. Loving the truth means that we will not love that which robs us of God's fellowship (1 John 1:6-10; Isa. 59:1-2), and robs us of Heaven (Rev. 14:13), because it robs us of our souls (Mat. 16:26; 25:46).
- B. If we love the truth, we will believe the truth about the world to come.
1. Loving the truth means we will look to the truth about Heaven, and live so that we might go there.
 2. Loving the truth will help us to know what God has revealed about Heaven, and while there may be things we do not know, we will know that we want to be there.
 3. Loving the truth will help us to realize the sad fact that not one person will be in Hell who could not have been in Heaven (Rom. 5:8; Mat. 11:28-30).
- C. If we love the truth, we will believe the truth about sin and salvation.
1. The truth is that all accountable persons have sinned (cf. Rom. 3:23; Eze. 18:20).
 2. The truth is that those who have sinned can be saved (John 1:29; Mark 16:15-16).
 3. The truth is that God wants all men to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; John 3:16-17).

CONCLUSION:

1. If the Bible is not absolute, knowable truth, then men become the standard, and all religious questions may be "correctly" answered by any answer from anyone!
2. Absolute, knowable truth exists, and God's Word is truth.
 - a. Loving the truth means that we put God in the right place (position) in our lives (Mat. 6:33).
 - b. Loving the truth means that we will follow the right way, for truth reveals that way that is right and cannot be wrong.
 - c. Loving the truth means that we have learned and followed God's way to get right, to be right, and to stay right.
- b. If we do not love the truth, we will be condemned, will be lost, and we will perish (2 The. 2:10-12).
3. We should love the truth for what it provides for us.

- a. If the Bible is not absolute truth: none could have saving faith, for faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17).
 - b. None could have unity with others who have saving faith (John 17:20-21; Eph. 4:1-6).
 - c. None could have real happiness in faith (Luke 11:27-28).
 - d. None could have real hope based upon that saving faith which is, itself, founded upon evidence (Tit. 1:2; Rom. 15:4; 10:17).
4. If we love the truth:
- a. We will be ready to affirm and to defend truth, and to expose and to oppose error.
 - b. We will teach men the fundamental affirmation that the Bible is God's Word, and by it, men can KNOW that Jesus is the Savior, and that through obedience to the will of God, men can KNOW they have salvation in Christ.
 - c. We will realize that it is not enough to know the truth of God; we must also know the God of truth--and we must love both.

LOVING THE LOST

Billy Bland

INTRODUCTION:

1. What a blessing it is for one to know he is loved.
 - A. If one knows he is loved, it adds purpose and a sense of worth to his life.
 - B. Studies have proven that little babies who are shown love have better health and mature at a much better rate.
 - C. In fact, babies who are loved have a better survival rate.
 - D. One's need for love does not stop as he matures.
 - E. Love matters!
2. God is love.
 - A. John states, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8).
 - B. One does not have to convince God to love him.
 - C. God already loves him.
 - D. Even though God is love and loves mankind, this does not mean God approves of all of man's actions (cf. murder, lying, etc.).
3. One of the most known passages in all of God's Word is John 3:16.
 - A. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).
 - B. The little adverb "so," in this context, is a very big word!
 - C. God not only "loved" the world, He "so" loved the world that He gave His only begotten son...
 - D. Consequently, God's love is not limited to the so-called "unconditional elect" per the false doctrine of Calvinism, but is extended to every person.
4. A child of God, being directed by God's Word, must love what God loves and hate what God hates.
5. In this lesson, attention is given to "loving the lost."

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY WE SHOULD LOVE THE LOST:

- A. We should love the lost because they are made in the image of God.
 1. After God had created most of the world, He then created man vastly different from the rest of His creation.
 2. In speaking to the other two persons in the Godhead, God said; "...Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl

of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

3. When one sees a fellow human being, he is seeing one who is made in the image of God.
 4. The person who is living in sin may not appreciate the fact he is made in the image of God, but he is a person of worth, due to the fact God created him in His own image.
- B. We should love the lost because they have souls that exist forever.
1. Being created in God's image, mankind's souls survive the death of the body and continue to exist forever.
 2. Man's soul is of great value.
 3. If the soul does not survive the death of the body, then many people who stood and died for truth, died in vain (i.e. John the Baptist - Matt. 14).
 4. Jesus knows the true value of a person's soul.
 5. He stated; "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).
 6. Jesus placed the value of one's soul above the value of the whole world - a tremendous worth!
- C. We should love the lost because of what it means to be lost.
1. Sadly many precious souls are lost, and if they continue in their present conditions, will be eternally lost.
 2. Jesus instructs; "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).
 3. He also stated; "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).
 4. The word translated "punishment" comes from the word "kolasis" and means, "penal infliction, punishment, torment" (Thayer).
 5. "Torment" implies consciousness with the ability to experience feelings of pain or discomfort.
 6. Jesus describes the eternal abode of lost souls as "hell."
 7. The word translated "hell" (geenna) is found twelve times in the New Testament.
 8. Jesus uses "hell" eleven of the twelve times and James one time.
 - a. "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt. 5:22).

- b. "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:29).
 - c. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:30).
 - d. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).
 - e. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18:9).
 - f. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:15).
 - g. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell" (Matt. 23:33).
 - h. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43).
 - i. "And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:45).
 - j. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Mark 9:47).
 - k. "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:5).
 - l. "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6).
9. Additionally, from the account described in Luke 16, Jesus lifts the curtains from the Hadean world and shows us what it is like to be lost.
- a. The Rich man died outside of God's fellowship.

- b. He was in great “torment” (odunao - different word from “punishment” in Matthew 25:46, yet was “in this flame,” Luke 16:24).
 - 10. Unless those in a lost condition come to Christ for salvation, they too will be in “torment.”
 - D. We should love the lost because of what it means to be saved.
 - 1. The Bible not only depicts the condition of the lost, but it also tells us the blessings of being saved.
 - 2. To be “in Christ” is to be saved from past sins (Mark 16:16), and have all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3 - including reconciliation to God, the privilege of prayer, fellowship, peace, etc.).
 - 3. Those in Christ also have the wonderful hope of Heaven for their eternal home.
 - a. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.
 - b. Jesus stated to His apostles; “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).
 - c. Those in Christ will go into “life eternal” (Matt. 25:46).
 - 4. Jesus invites all to come unto Him - “Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).
 - E. We should love the lost because God loves the lost.
 - 1. As previously noted, God’s love for the lost does not imply He endorses or condones their sinful actions.
 - 2. However, God loves the lost in spite of their sinful conduct and lost condition.
 - 3. God commended His love to us while we were sinners.
 - 4. Paul writes; “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:6-8).
 - 5. Christians have no reason to be lifted up in self-righteousness, for the plain truth is, none of us would be saved without God’s love for the lost.
 - F. We should love the lost because of what God has done for the lost.
 - 1. God, more than anyone, knows the sad condition of the lost.

2. God has done more than anyone to save the lost.
3. Due to the condition of the lost, God was moved with pity to save the lost.
4. Even from the dawn of time, God has desired man's good and his salvation (Gen. 1-4).
5. In the fullness of time God sent forth His son, born of a woman born under the law (Cf. Gal. 4:4).
6. Jesus received criticism by the religious leaders of His day because He taught and ate with the publicans and the sinners (cf. Luke 15:1-2).
7. Jesus came from Heaven with a purpose - "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).
8. Jesus Christ not only taught us, he died for our redemption - "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).
9. If we should ever ponder, "how much does God love the lost," we should just look at the cross.

II. HOW DO WE DEMONSTRATE WE LOVE THE LOST?

- A. We demonstrate our love for the lost by remaining faithful to God.
 1. It would be difficult to convince the lost they need to be saved, if we ourselves are not faithful.
 2. Wives with unbelieving husbands are admonished to remain faithful so that their unbelieving husbands might be converted.
 - a. "Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:1-4).
 - b. The wife, by her faithfulness, may win her unbelieving husband.
 3. Jesus tells His disciples to be "salt" and "light" in this world.
 - a. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city

that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:13-16).

- b. It is interesting that Jesus began both “to do” and “teach” (cf. Acts 1:1).
- B. We demonstrate our love for the lost by personally reaching out to the lost.
 1. It is to our shame if we have been Christians for many years and have not personally reached out in an attempt to save the lost.
 2. How can we personally reach out to the lost?
 - a. By personally inviting someone to worship and Bible study.
 - b. By personally giving someone a tract, bulletin article, etc.
 - c. By personally conducting an organized Bible study with someone.
 - d. If we genuinely love lost souls we will learn how to reach out to them.
 - e. Let us get focused and remain focused on our mission.
- C. We demonstrate our love for the lost by supporting good mission works.
 1. There are over seven billion souls in the world today.
 2. Jesus has commissioned you and me to take his Gospel to each one of these precious souls (Mark 16:15, Matt. 28:18-20).
 3. We need to be active in our divinely given mission.
 4. We need churches seeking to support good works.
- D. We demonstrate our love for the lost by praying for the lost.
 1. Let us pray for open doors (cf. 1 Cor. 16:8-9, Rev. 3:8).
 2. We sometimes pray, “May something be said or done that the lost may be saved.”
 3. Let us make sure we say or do something after saying such a prayer (cf. Matt. 6:7).

CONCLUSION:

1. Imagine – Judgment day is here.
2. God calls each of us into account.
 - A. “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (2 Cor. 5:9-11).
 - B. How would we fare?

3. The church needs to awaken to its God given task.
4. The lost need to respond to God's offer of salvation
5. "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38).

WORKS CITED

Strong, Augustus H. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Accordance electronic ed., version 2.5. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1999.

BROTHERLY LOVE

Randy Collum

INTRODUCTION:

1. The components that underpin “brotherly” love have surely been touched on in several of the other lectures.
 - A. When one considers that “God is love” (1 John 4:8), any discussion of “Biblical” love radiates from the same source.
 - 1) Our love for God (The Greatest Commandment), our love for the lost, our love for our neighbors, our love for our families, and certainly our love for our brethren should look strikingly similar if modeled after the One who is love.
 - 2) “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (1 John 4:11).
 - B. The apostle Paul makes a statement about brotherly love in his letter to the Thessalonians that may appear to some to be sarcastic in nature.
 - 1) “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thess. 4:9).
 - 2) The sarcasm might come from understanding that Paul was constantly writing about problems in the Church (Thessalonica and elsewhere) that were rooted in the lack of brotherly love among Christians.
 - 3) The focus of this exploration of “Brotherly Love” is intended to be a practical application of Christ’s instructions to those who desire to be His disciples: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35).
2. This sermon will explore “Brotherly Love” in four ways:
 - A. Our Example of Brotherly Love.
 - B. Our Encouragement from Brotherly Love.
 - C. Our Enemy of Brotherly Love.
 - D. Our Exhortation to Brotherly Love.

DISCUSSION:

I. OUR EXAMPLE OF BROTHERLY LOVE: JESUS CHRIST

- A. The Old Testament would normally be where one would look for biblical examples of brotherly love.

1. Cain and Abel? Jacob and Esau? Joseph and his ten older brothers? None of these would seem to serve as a good example of brotherly love.
 2. Even the physical half brothers of Jesus of Nazareth are not great examples of brotherly love (John 7:5).
- B. However, Jesus Himself is the perfect example and guide for the love we are to have for our brethren.
1. God (the Father) loved the world and gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16).
 2. But, it was the Son who freely gave His life so that man might have life (John 10:17-18).
 - a. He might have called and the Father have sent ten thousand (rather 12 legions) angels, but he died for you and me (Matt. 26:52-54).
 - b. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).
- C. It is in the example of Jesus death for His "friends" that one finds the mind which Christ desires for all His disciples.
1. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).
 2. What kind of mind did Jesus the Christ have?
 - a. The mind of a servant.
 - b. The Creator serving the one He created.
 3. If this is the mindset we adopt toward all men, and especially toward our brethren, to what lengths would we go to show that love?
 - a. What distance would we go to show that love? Jesus came from Heaven.
 - b. What would we give up for our brethren? Jesus gave up His very life.
 - c. What shortcomings would we not only overlook, but moreover help a brother overcome so that he might be saved with us? Jesus died for the very men who were driving the nails in His hands.
- D. How do we develop a mind like Christ's?
1. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4).
 2. "...let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).

3. It is not about me, it is about Christ.
 - a. "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27).
 - b. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).
4. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM BROTHERLY LOVE: INCENTIVE

- A. "If" is not an expression of doubt.
 1. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies," (Phil. 2:1).
 - a. There is "consolation" (KJV) - exhortation to remain in Christ (Vincent).
 - b. There is "comfort" (KJV) - consolation - incentive - a reward to come for the love we have (Vincent).
 - c. There is fellowship in the Spirit.
 - d. There is tender mercy and compassion (Vincent).
 2. As an individual in Christ, one benefits personally because of Christ's love for us.
 - a. Why would one not share the love laterally with those who bask in the same love which comes down on his brothers in Christ?
 - b. Why would parts of the same body not love the other parts with which they are to share the mind of Christ?
 - c. "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2).
- B. B.J. Clarke provided three ways the Scriptures reveal that we may edify one another (Clarke).
 1. By Works, By Worship, and By Words.
 2. These three avenues of brotherly love are represented by two verses in the book of Hebrews.
 3. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - a. "Provoke" comes from a Greek word which means "to sharpen" (Vincent).

- 1) Steel sharpens steel.
- 2) It is edifying to work with someone who is working.
- b. "Forsaking" carries the meaning of "to desert" (Strong, G1459).
 - 1) This was becoming a problem or "a custom" for some.
 - 2) We are encouraged by those whose "custom" it is to never miss a meeting of the saints.
- c. "Exhorting" – to call to one's side (Thayer, G3870).
 - 1) By his side is the best place to be if you are going to hold your brother up.
 - 2) It is the best place to be if you want to help him finish the race.

III. OUR ENEMY OF BROTHERLY LOVE: SELFISHNESS

A. "Vainglory"

1. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory" (Phil. 2:3).
2. "Empty glorying, that is, self conceit" (Strong, G2754).
3. Conceit: "Favorable opinion; especially: excessive appreciation of one's own worth or virtue" (Merriam-Webster).

B. "Holier than thou"

1. "A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day" (Isaiah 65:3-5).
2. People who provoke God to anger by purifying themselves with unholy rites (selfish acts) to the point that they would be defiled by contact with the righteous (their brethren who seek to correct them) (Rogers, 324).

C. "Love of money"

1. 1 Timothy 6:10 is often considered in the context of verses 6-10 or maybe 6-14.
2. If one considers it in the context of the entire chapter, the selfish love of money is shown to be the enemy of God and brotherly love.
 - a. Verses 1-2: Slavery is certainly not ideal, but one should be a good servant to his master.

- 3) If he is not a Christian, so God is glorified.
- 4) If he is a Christian, because they are brethren.
- b. Verses 3-5: If any teach something different (to the Christian slaves) he knows nothing and is a trouble maker.
- c. Verses 6-8: If you are a slave with food, raiment, and God, what else do you need? Be content.
- d. Verses 9-10: To think you should have more, just because you or your master is now a Christian, is to err from the faith.
- e. Verses 11-12: If one is a man of God (slave or free) he should concern himself with the things that contribute to eternal life.
- f. Verses 13-16: Because God is the ultimate Master (only Potentate) of us all, keep his commandment.

IV. AN EXHORTATION TO BROTHERLY LOVE

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

CONCLUSION:

1. There is no greater example of “Brotherly Love” than the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
2. There is no greater encouragement to remain in Christ than that which comes from “Brotherly Love.”
3. There is no greater enemy to “Brotherly Love”, and therefore the Church, than one’s own selfishness.
4. There is no part, member, or brother greater than the whole body of Christ.
5. “Seeing ye 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” (1 Pet. 1:22).

WORKS CITED

The Holy Bible. King James Version. [e-Sword Bible Software v7.9.8.] Rick Meyers, 2008.

Clarke, B.J. “Edify One Another.” A Study of One Another. Truth In Love Lectures. Director: Paul Sain. Sain Publications: Pulaski, TN, 2010.

Rogers, Dave. “The Response to Prayer.” Studies in Isaiah, Vol. 2. Schertz Lectures. Editor: Kenneth Ratcliff. The Gospel Journal Commentary Series: Pulaski, TN, 2010.

Strong, James. Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words taken from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance. 1890. [e-Sword Bible Software v7.9.8.] Rick Meyers, 2008.

Thayer’s Greek Definitions. No date given. [e-Sword Bible Software v7.9.8.] Rick Meyers, 2008.

Vincent, Marvin R. Vincent’s Word Studies, 1886. [e-Sword Bible Software v7.9.8.] Rick Meyers, 2008.

“Conceit.” Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, 2013. Tues. 8 January 2013.

WHAT A LOVING GOD HATES

Proverbs 6:16-19

Mike Hixson

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of Proverbs is rich in wisdom for everyday living.
2. From a preemptive standpoint, practical instructions are given on how to enjoy a blessed life versus a burdened life.
3. Embedded in this great book are seven things that “are an abomination” to God (6:16-19).
4. In examining the things that are detestable to God, we need to understand there is a distinction between the sinner and the sin, the person and the practice.
5. With these foundational truths in mind, consider the subject, “What a Loving God Hates.”

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD’S VIEW OF A SINNER

A. *The person in sin.*

1. Mankind is the crown of God’s creation (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 139:14).
 - a. The fall of man in the Garden of Eden brought severe consequences (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-24).
 - i. Sin in the Garden of Eden brought spiritual death (Gen. 3:1-15; Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23).
 - ii. Sin in the Garden of Eden brought physical death (Gen. 3:22-24; Rom. 5:12).
2. Mankind is the center-piece of God’s salvation (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9).
 - a. God is the architect of the redemptive plan (Eph. 1:3-7; 3:9-11).
 - b. God’s Son is the agent who executed the redemptive plan (Rev. 13:8; Jo. 4:34; 6:38; 17:4; Eph. 1:7).
 - i. Jesus paid the price for our salvation (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5).
 - ii. Jesus is the Person through whom we enjoy salvation (Jo. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
 - iii. We are saved by His blood (Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18-21) and in His body (Acts 20:28; I Co. 12:13; Eph. 5:23).

II. GOD’S VIEW OF SIN

A. *The practices of a sinner.*

1. Seven things that are an abomination to God (Prov. 6:16-19).

- a. Sins of the heart (Prov. 6:18a; 4:23; 23:7; 27:19).
 - i. A “heart that deviseth wicked imaginations” (Prov. 6:18a). The heart is the seat where sinful intentions are born (Matt. 15:18-19).
- b. Sins of the eyes (6:16a).
 - i. “A proud look” (Prov. 6:17a). Pride is both deceptive and destructive (Prov. 14:12; 16:18). It can be a hindrance to obeying the gospel and admitting our sins (Matt. 5:3; Acts 2:38; Prov. 28:13).
- c. Sins of the tongue (Prov. 6:17b, 19).
 - i. “A lying tongue” (Prov. 6:17b; Eph. 4:25; Rev. 21:8). The Bible does not make a distinction between a “white lie” and a “bold-faced lie.”
 - ii. “A false witness that speaketh lies” (Prov. 6:19a; Ex. 23:1).
 - iii. A person who “soweth discord among brethren” (Prov. 5:19b; Rom. 16:17-18; Phil. 4:2). Someone observed, “I would rather have thrust the spear into the side of the crucified Christ than divide the church.”
- d. Sins of the hands (Prov. 6:17b).
 - i. The “hands that shed innocent blood” (Prov. 6:17b). Murder/abortion are daily occurrences in America (Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8). Far too many people in our world fail to appreciate the sanctity of human life.
- e. Sins of the feet (Prov. 6:18b).
 - i. The “feet that be swift in running to mischief” (Prov. 6:18b; Isa. 59:7). The apostle Paul speaks of those who are “idle, wandering about from house to house” (1 Tim. 5:13). Some people are always going places and doing things out of harmony with the Lord’s will. In short, they are looking for trouble.

CONCLUSION:

1. God hates sin but loves the sinner.
2. As the people of God, things that are an abomination to God ought to be an abomination to us (Eph. 5:11)!

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Garland Elkins

INTRODUCTION:

1. The inspired apostle John wrote: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 Jno. 2:15-17).
 - A. One of the most amazing features of the present crisis that has sunk our morals to its lowest ebb in history is not the violation of our normative standards, but it is the failure to recognize there are any ethical standards. The reason so many taboos have toppled is because the average person has lost all sense of an objective moral order.
 - B. The Bible and prayer have been banned from our schools and the preaching from many pulpits is very weak.

DISCUSSION:

I. PROHIBITIONS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- A. Love not the world (v. 15a).
- B. We are to love the people of the world (Jno. 3:16), and avoid sinful things of the world.
- C. The works of the flesh are of the world.

II. THE LUST OF THE FLESH (v. 15)

- A. This is perverted love. This includes sensuality, gluttony, drunkenness, etc.
- B. "The lust of the eyes" includes covetousness.
- C. "The pride of life." The lust for praise, power, preeminence (3 Jno. 9).
 1. Worldliness is not a matter of one's environment, but an attitude.
 2. The love of the world is incompatible with the love of God.
 3. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him."
 4. We cannot serve two masters.
- D. The world is temporary.
 1. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever, (1 Jno. 2:17).
 2. The one who does God's will is the one who loves God (1 Jno. 5:3; Mat. 7:21-23).

III. SINS OF IMPURITY (Gal. 5:19)

- A. Fornication, prostitution, same-sex marriages, etc. (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

1. Uncleaness includes evil in thought, word, gesture, look, dress, etc.
 2. Lasciviousness -- the breaches of public decency.
- B. Sins of irreligion
1. "Idolatry"-- when man disowns his Maker, he loses respect for himself (Col. 3:5).
 2. "Sorcery"-- a Christian should trust God (2 Cor. 5:7).
- C. Sins against love
1. "Enmities"-- private hatred, a deep-seated ill-will.
 2. "Strife"-- church strife arises not so much from difference in doctrine or in judgment as from personal dislike.
 3. "Jealousies"-- a feeling of resentment toward one for the sake of advantage.
 4. "Wraths"-- personal outbursts.
 5. "Factions"-- the spirit of partisanship.
 6. "Divisions, parties" (Jam. 3:16).
 7. "Envy"-- grudging another getting advantage, favor or honor. "Love envies not" (1 Cor. 13).
- D. Sins of intemperance,
1. "Drunkenness"-- using intoxicants, self-indulgences.
 2. "Reveling"-- defined as "jovial festivity with music and dancing".
 3. "And such like" includes the excessive use of that which is not good.
 4. "They that practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 5. Sin persisted brings eternal ruin.
 6. Christians should avoid violence in every form: movies, videos, etc.

IV. PURITY IS UTMOST IMPORTANT

- A. Purity in life for a Christian is taught throughout the New Testament.
1. We must be pure in heart, Mat. 5:8, pure in speech, 1 Pet. 3:10-13, and pure in deed, 2 Cor. 7:1.
 2. Heaven is a pure place for pure people.
 3. Pure love must be practiced with pure motives.
 4. Pure religion is fervent in service to Christ.
 5. Avoid selfishness and hypocrisy.

V. WE MUST KEEP THE CHURCH PURE

- A. The purity of God's Word must be maintained.
- B. Too many want to lower the standards.
- C. Sound doctrine is necessary.
- D. One cannot add or subtract from the Truth.
- E. One's opinions, theories, errors, and human philosophies are condemned.
 1. We should expose error (Eph. 5:11).

VI. WE SHOULD AVOID FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD

A. Add the fruit of the spirit to grow.

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Longsuffering
5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Faithfulness
8. Meekness
9. Self-control

B. If the above are within us, we will not be barren or unfruitful (Gal. 5:20-24).

FAMILY LOVE

Curtis A. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is no greater need today than to study “Biblical Love.”
 - A. That includes the study of “Family love.”
 - 1) The family is the first of God’s three great institutions: the home, the government, and the church.
 - 2) The home is under attack as never before in America, as is everything else that is sacred.
 - 3) The Godly home is the very fabric of society, and its hope!
 - 4) Honoring God’s plan for marriage and love in the family brings great joy and superb shelter from the world – and can have powerful influence in society.
 - B. Love is the most powerful word in the English language.
 - 1) God is love, and “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19); He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16); Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).
 - 2) Anyone can understand the language of love; we cannot give it without getting it back.
 - 3) What an example Christ gave of humility and love! (John 13:14-15).
 - 4) “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (14:15).
 - 5) The family is to be permeated with love; we cannot live without love; when a person wants love, he will love.
 - 6) We can conquer ourselves through love (Phil. 4:13); we will sacrifice many things for God, for our mates, for our children, for our parents, and for others because of love – even for our enemies.
 - 7) The family is the foundation of Christian training; every member of the home is vitally important in making the family a place of beauty, happiness, peace, and security, for as the fragrance of a flower fills a room, so the love of every member enriches the whole home [as the beauty of a painting or the pleasant musical harmony].
2. One has but to read Ephesians 5:22-6:4 and Colossians 3:18-21 to see the analogy between the home and the church in miniature.
 - A. For example, the home is to be characterized by Christ-likeness, long-suffering, love, humility, mutual sacrifice and work, helpfulness, forgiveness, understanding, concern, appreciation, et al., as is the family of God, the church.
 - B. Neither the family nor the church is to be characterized by antagonism, criticism, or jealousy.

- C. God is our loving companion, as we live as Christians in both the home and the church; He has authority over both, and He is to be honored and His authority recognized (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:24; Mat. 28:18; et al.).

DISCUSSION:

I. Love means for all in the home to grow in and demonstrate maturity, especially the two people contemplating marriage.

- A. Marriage is not for children; it is a serious responsibility; maturation and chronological age are necessary – maturity, stability, and common sense are necessary.
- B. Great and sincere dedication is a must to make the marriage work (1 Cor. 16:13).

II. Putting away childish things, the husband now [motivated by love] is concerned with assuming the responsibilities of being the head of his own household – providing food, shelter, clothing, spiritual leadership for his wife, and for the children when they come along.

- A. The husband is not a lord or a tyrant but is one who submits to his head, Christ, and who truly loves his wife and sacrifices for her (Eph. 5:25, 28-33).
- B. The husband must help build an environment for love to grow; he is to build up, encourage, praise his wife, and treat her as the queen of the household.
- C. He must realize they are on the same team, they are to be best friends, and they share the sorrows, joys and confidences of life.
- D. He must not shift his responsibility to some other; “show thyself a man.” [Of course, the wife may work outside the home to assist the husband (Prov. 31; et al.)].
- E. The husband must not abdicate either his physical or his spiritual responsibilities.

III. The wife reciprocates the love of her husband (Eph. 5:25, 28; Tit. 2:4).

- A. She supports her husband in his responsibility as head, as he follows Christ; love is characterized by mutual respect and trust.
- B. She is to love her husband, showing maturity (2:2-5); she fulfills responsibility to the children, keep the home, meet the emotional and physical needs of her husband [and he hers].
- C. The wife is the emotional hub of the family.

IV. Love for God and for each other demands that the husband and the wife honor God’s pattern of marriage from the beginning, to “leave” and to “cleave” (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:24; Mark 10:6; Mat. 19:4-5).

- A. Parents must “cut the apron strings,” as their children marry, as the two become one, as they walk hand in hand through life, and as they establish their own families (Eph. 5:31; 1 Sam. 2:19).
- B. Love demands that the marriage vows be honored as long as the two shall live; the couple must make their marriage work, for divorce is not the solution (Mat. 19:9; Job 31:9-12).
- C. Inasmuch as God hates putting away, marriage partners refuse to be tempted by others; love leads each to “take heed to your spirit” (Mal. 2:14-16).

V. Love in marriage cannot be built on selfishness [see the growth of the young lady in the Song of Solomon (2:16, selfish; 6:3, still selfish but better; 7:10, no longer selfish)].

- A. Tenderness, graciousness, and kindness pay great dividends (Phi. 2:24; Rom. 12:10; 1 Cor. 13:4; Pro. 14:22).
- B. If one is mean, hurtful, rude, or harsh, he is not righteous.

VI. Love builds the proper environment for rearing children.

- A. That depends upon the husband and the wife having the greatest bond, both possessing a common, mutual love for the Father.
- B. The husband, the wife, and the children to march hand-in-hand into the “land that is fairer than day.”
- C. How tragic for one mate to fail to love God and his family, leaving the wife to go it alone in this most vital, critically important area – how tragic for her [or him] to love God alone, to serve God alone, to approach God’s throne alone, and to bring up the children in the admonition of God alone, the extremely sad result of which is to hear “Well done” alone!
- D. The greatest training for children in the home is to have God-fearing, sacred pattern-obeying, loving-one-another parents in the home.
 - 1) Children learn reverence for God, respect for authority, God’s law, respect for the divine institution of marriage, how to treat their own mates and children, how to live for God and how to go to Heaven in the home; they learn of the one distinctive church, how to serve, how to put the kingdom first in the home, as well as being fortified against false doctrine, worldliness, and atheistic humanism in the home.
 - 2) We owe our children the truth, Godly training, and our time [ourselves].
 - 3) We must start from the cradle, as soon as the children are born.
 - 4) Parents must know the power of their example on their offspring.

5) Child-rearing is a tremendous, terrifying, unique responsibility given to us by our loving Father; we cannot transfer our responsibility to others to rear our children.

E. The Second National Bank of Houston, Texas, in "Business Briefs," stated, "It matters not how sloppy a man's coat might be, how baggy his trousers might be, if his children stand for thirty minutes with their noses pressed against the window pane watching for daddy to come home from work, you can trust that man with anything in this world."

VI. Children also have a great responsibility in the home.

A. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3).

B. Children need to recognize the God-given responsibilities of their parents in rearing them; it is for their eternal good, and they must be cooperative in every way.

VII. As in the case of Timothy's having been taught by his mother and grandmother, the role of the grandparents in child-rearing can be invaluable.

A. To be blessed with Godly grandparents is a heritage that must be ever-appreciated.

B. It certainly goes without saying that we should take care of them in their old age, for they are worthy.

CONCLUSION

1. One can see great parallels between the love which permeates the church and the love which characterizes the Godly family.
2. May we all imitate the love of our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

LOVE HELPS THE HELPLESS

Jared Rhodes

INTRODUCTION:

1. The term “love” by definition carries with it “brotherly concern for others” as defined in the English Dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 737).
 - A. Love then itself implies that it is helping other people.
 - 1) There is no greater love that can be considered then the example of Christ.
 - 2) “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
 - B. One might also think of the Love the Father has shown in sending His only Son.
 - 1) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9-10).
 - 2) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
2. The love of Christ helped the helpless.
 - A. Jesus loved those that were helpless spiritually.
 - 1) The spiritually helpless are those who have sin in their lives.
 - 2) Jesus helped the helpless with the sin problem by giving His life.
 - 3) “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).
 - B. Jesus also loved those that were helpless physically.
 - 1) In the things Christ did we can see His genuine care for mankind.
 - 2) Jesus helped the physically helpless by healing physical ailments, and also by setting guidelines for His church to care for them.
3. Love helps those that are orphans, widows, young, elderly, poor, hurting, homeless, hungry, imprisoned, and the list continues.
4. Let us consider our main passage, James 1:27, and the message love helps the helpless.

DISCUSSION:

I. LOVE HELPS THE HELPLESS BECAUSE OF AUTHENTICITY (TRUE PEACE).

- A. The greatest goal of a Christian is to be authentic.
 1. To be authentic is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

- a. This verse defines pure religion and gives an earmark of authentic Christianity.
 - b. Religion as defined by Scripture goes beyond belief, repentance, confession, baptism, and worshipping God on the first day of the week.
 - 2. Christianity in the purest form reaches to the helpless.
 - a. Jesus was a great example of reaching out to those around Him.
 - b. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).
- B. To be authentic reaches beyond the realm of a simple-minded "me" society.
 - 1. The world in which we live has brought self to be the most important.
 - 2. Reaching outwards to those around us will actually be counted to our glory.
 - a. "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in" (Matt. 25:35).
 - b. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).
 - c. "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:1-2).
 - 3. The need for authenticity in religion reaches to the biblical plan of salvation, biblical worship and many other aspects, but let us not forget authentic religion reaches to loving the helpless.

II. LOVE HELPS THE HELPLESS BECAUSE OF ANGUISH (TROUBLED PEOPLE).

- A. Many people in society could be grouped as anguished or helpless people.
 - 1. Only two groups of people are mentioned in James 1:27.
 - a. The fatherless or orphans would not have the ability to care for themselves and so the responsibility then falls to the church.
 - b. The widows also would need one to help tend to their needs.
 - 2. The need of help in the world reaches also to elderly, those that have lost loved ones, spiritually weak, young people, poor and the list continues.
- B. "In their affliction" is the time that the mentioned visit is needed.

1. The Greek word for “visit,” meaning to inspect, gives the idea that a Christian will figure out the needs of the helpless in order to be able to tend to them (Woods, 99).
 2. Those that are suffering need the love of Christ shown to them.
 3. “Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do” (Gal. 2:10).
- C. One problem that can be seen in the world today is the loss of respect for our elders and peers.
1. “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity” (1 Tim. 5:1-2).
 2. There is a vast quantity of wisdom and knowledge to be learned from elderly men and women.
 3. The respect must therefore be given them as it would to a father or mother figure.
- D. Love that helps the helpless could be taken even one step further to helping all mankind.
1. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).
 2. The New Testament echoes a theme of working together for the goal of the whole, and helping the helpless is just one more way we can help one another.

III. LOVE HELPS THE HELPLESS BECAUSE OF ACHIEVEMENT (TRIUMPHANT PASSAGE).

- A. The number one goal of every individual should be achieving salvation.
- B. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).
1. The inserted “and” near the end of this verse might lead one to believe a separate definition of pure religion is given.
 2. The verse being read without the inserted “and” possibly just further describes the work of visiting the fatherless and widows as keeping one unspotted from the world.
 3. This would tie in very closely with the fact that laboring helps to keep one faithful.
 4. “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11).
- C. One must therefore be working in order to be found faithful in the end.
1. Some have said, “If you are not growing you are dying.”
 2. Achievement can only be attained by working the work of God while we have the opportunity living upon the earth.

3. One must therefore be helping others, which in turn will help them in the end.
- D. The draw of laziness to ignore the responsibility of helping the helpless is just another tool of the devil.
- E. Let us be helping the helpless, which will in part help us attain the great Achievement.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is no doubt that love helps the helpless.
 - A. Help for the helpless is noticed because of authenticity, anguish and achievement.
 - 1) The desire for true religion or authenticity should push one to live by the commands of Christ.
 - 2) The desire to help those in anguish should be deeply rooted in one that wants to live like Christ.
 - 3) The desire to reach eternal life should push one to achieve faithfulness and then live with Christ.
 - B. Help for the helpless comes by individuals dedicating themselves to God and the church in reaching for pure religion.
2. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR

Chris Butler

INTRODUCTION:

1. The assigned topic for our consideration is taken from 1 John 4:17-18.
2. We read, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 Jn. 4:17-18).
3. The Day of Judgment is a common thought in the scriptures.
 - A. That phrase alone appears eight times in four verses in the New Testament.
 - B. There are many other references to that coming day as well that do not use the words "day of judgment" (2 Cor. 5:10; Mat. 25; Rom. 14:12).
 - C. We learn some very valuable information from these passages.
 - 1) There is a day appointed in which men will be judged (Acts 17:30).
 - 2) All men will be judged; no one will escape (2 Cor. 5:10; Mat. 25:32).
 - 3) Judgment is individual (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - 4) Manner of life will be judged, whether it be good or evil (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - 5) My speech will be judged, whether good or bad (Mat. 12:36).
 - 6) Christ will be the righteous Judge (2 Cor. 5:10; John 5:22; Rom. 2:5).
 - 7) He will come with His holy angels and sit upon the throne of His glory (Mat. 25:31).
 - 8) There will be a separation of the sheep from the goats (Mat. 25:32).
 - 9) The sheep will be put on His right hand and the goats on His left (Mat. 25:33).
 - 10) The King will announce for the sheep to "come inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
 - 11) And then the King will declare to the goats "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - D. Having noticed these things, the judgment is a reasonable motive for our obedience to the Gospel (Acts 17:30). It is therefore very useful to the Gospel preacher, but primarily to those who stand in need of repentance.
 - 1) Paul preached the judgment before Felix and he trembled, and rightly so.
 - 2) Our sinful state should and the realization of being judged by the infinitely holy God should cause us to fear.
 - 3) Sin will be punished in the end, but the time comes that the Christian, through the knowledge of God and growth in faith, matures.

- 4) With that maturity comes growth in a number of areas, in particular as it relates to our study, in the area of love.
- 5) I submit to you that while fear can motivate both the Christian and more importantly the non-Christian, to borrow the words of Paul "there is a more excellent way" and it is the way of love.
4. It is not surprising then, to find out that the Apostle of Love used the word love (or loved) a combined 37 times in this short epistle.
5. John presents to Christians of all ages a wonderful fact. That is the Christian who matures in love; who "perfects" love has no need to fear the judgment.
6. In this study we shall seek to understand that:
 - A. Perfect Love (literally) originates with God. 1 Jn. 4:7-8 -- "God is love."
 - B. Perfect Love was manifested in Christ. 1 Jn. 4:9; 3:16 -- "in this was the love of God manifested."
 - C. Perfect Love must be manifested in the life of the Christian in order for fears of the righteous Judgment of God to be cast out. 1 Jn. 3:10; 4:17-18

DISCUSSION:

I. PERFECT LOVE ORIGINATES WITH GOD.

- A. Any study of Love must begin a consideration of the one who defines this word by His very Character.
- B. When we speak of the love of God, we speak about one who is infinite in love, as in all of His characteristics.
- C. 1 Jn. 4:7-8. "For love is of God", "God is love."
 1. In 1 John 4 alone there are many references to the Love of God.
 2. Notice some of the other passages that underscore this point.
 - a. Love is the source of God's giving His only begotten Son.
John 3:16
 - b. Love is the source of the great mercy God has shown to man.
Eph. 2:4
 - c. This Love was given "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8-9).
 - d. This love was given while we were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3).

II. PERFECT LOVE WAS MANIFESTED IN CHRIST.

- A. We have seen many verses which speak of God's love, but love that is demonstrated by action is love that is realized.
 1. John 3:16 and other verses speak of the love of God, but in most all of these verses that love prompted action.
 - a. "God so loved...that he gave" (John 3:16).
 - b. "Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life...." (1 Jn. 3:16).

2. Most of the verses we have referenced have shown the love of God in the realm of our redemption.
 3. The love of Christ is seen in many other areas of His life.
 - a. The best way to understand this point is to understand the type of love that God has for His creation.
 - b. Unless a passage has escaped me, I have found that in the passages that speak of the love that God has for us, the word is always agape.
- B. We then need to define Agape love.
1. Agape--"God's love," "The will to do good to or toward," an obedient, sacrificial love. Unconditional, it does not expect anything in return. It always has the best interest of others in mind.
 - a. It is this love which was and is behind the compassion of Christ (Mat. 9).
 - b. It is this love which was the motive for his helping the needy, feeding the hungry and healing the sick.
 - c. It is the motive behind Christ coming to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).
 - d. (Jn. 3:16, Mat. 22:37).
 2. Phileo--"a strong feeling of personal attachment," brotherly love (Jn. 21:15-18; Jn. 20:2; Tit. 3:15).
 3. Storge—love of family, fathers, mothers etc.
 4. Eros—sexual, physical love
- C. Love is mostly considered an emotion in our society today.
1. Emotions cannot be commanded, yet God commands that we love.
 2. We are commanded to Love God with heart, soul, strength and mind (Mat. 22:37-39).
 3. We are commanded to love our enemies (Mat. 5:43-48).
 4. We are commanded to love one another, to love our brethren (John 13:34-35; 15:12; 17).
 5. This love states to the world, emphatically that we are the children of God (John 13:35).
 6. These words occur 13 times in the New Testament.
 7. The word is the same word that describes the love of God for us--*agape*.
 8. That is the standard, as Jesus said, "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

III. PERFECT LOVE MUST BE MANIFESTED IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

- A. When we speak of perfect love, we are speaking of a love that is complete, full, fulfilled, or finished (Strong's).

1. John wrote as we noticed above, that “perfect love casteth out fear.”
 2. Again our word is *agape*.
- B. There are two primary areas in which our love is perfected.
1. First, His love is perfected in us when we keep His commandments.
 - a. 1 John 2:5--“but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.”
 - b. In keeping his commandments “we do know that we know him” (1 John 2:3).
 - c. Jesus said, “if ye love me keep my commandments” (John 14:15).
 - d. John wrote over in chapter three as well, “let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but indeed and in truth.”
 - e. The context of this verse deals however with our love for one another (1 Jn. 3:16-17).
 2. The second area in which our love is perfected in loving one another.
 - a. Read 1 John 4:7-11. Twice mentioned is the fact that God loved us and we ought to love one another.
 - b. But how? Chapter three speaks of a brother in need (1 John 3:17).
 3. Agape love must be manifested in our lives.
 - a. Love is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5).
 - b. Love is key to my relationship with God. We dwell in Him, and He in us (1 John 4:16).
- C. Let us define the word agape by use of the word.
1. It is a sacrificial love (Mat. 5:44; Jn. 15:13).
 2. In the truest sense, it is not divided (Mat. 6:24).
 3. It requires heart, soul, strength, and mind (Mat. 22:37).
 4. It corrects (Mark 10:21).
 5. It is an obedient love (John 10:17; 14:23, 31).
 6. It is a testament to the world (Jn. 13:35).
 7. It is a Godly love (Jn. 15:12).
 8. It is commanded (Jn. 15:17), but one cannot command an emotion.
 9. Kind love (Rom. 13:10).
 10. Can have emotion (2 Cor. 2:4).
 11. It is without hypocrisy (2 Cor. 6:6).
 12. It gives motive for obedience (Gal. 5:6).
 13. It serves (Gal. 5:13).
 14. It is merciful (Eph. 2:4).
 15. It works, labors (1 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:10).
 16. Enduring love (Jam. 1:12).
 17. It is perfected by keeping commandments (1 Jn. 2:5).
 18. It is a compassionate love (1 Jn. 3:17).
 19. It is active (1 Jn. 3:18).

20. It has the interest of others in mind (1 Jn. 4:9; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 5:6-9).
21. It is not fearful (1 Jn. 4:18).
22. I must abide in this love (Jude 21).

CONCLUSION:

1. The Christian life should not be one of doubt and fear (Jam. 1; 1 Tim. 1).
2. It should be a life of confidence and boldness.
3. It is a life of faith that works by love.
4. Perfect love is not sinless love, but rather it is the love seen in the life of one who has given himself to the Lord and seeks every day to be more like His Lord.
5. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 Jn. 4:7-8).
6. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 Jn. 4:17-18).

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

Robert Jefferies

INTRODUCTION:

1. The subject that we are studying today is one that we have probably heard all of our lives: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."
2. One of the biggest reasons we need to study it is because we live in a world that needs to see it practiced more often.
3. Some have forgotten the Golden Rule. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12).
4. Today, as we focus our study on the subject of "Loving Thy Neighbor As Thyself," we want to notice...
 - A. The Command
 - B. The Question
 - C. The Conclusion

DISCUSSION:

I. THE COMMAND

- A. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).
- B. The command was given in response to a specific question Jesus had been asked--They wanted to know which commandment was first.
 1. According to Warren Wiersbe, there are 613 total commandments:
 - a. 248 positive.
 - b. 365 negative.
 2. One of the favorite things these religious leaders enjoyed doing was sitting around and discussing which of these was the greatest.
- C. This command was originally given back in the book of Leviticus.
 1. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD" (Lev. 19:18).
 2. In the context, v.9-16, they were learning about treating their fellow Jew with respect and consideration.
- D. God would not only expect those under the Old Covenant to follow this command, but He also expects those under the New Covenant, Christians, to follow it as well.

- E. In the New Covenant much of Christianity is summed up with this command.
1. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Romans 13:9).
 2. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14).
 3. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8).

II. THE QUESTION

- A. "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29).
1. He didn't fully understand the concept of who his neighbor was.
 2. A Jew would gladly say that a neighbor would be another Jew. However, they would not extend their thoughts beyond their race.
- B. To answer this question, Jesus would share an earthly story with a heavenly meaning (a parable).
1. The Place.
 - a. "And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30).
 - b. "The Bloody Way" (Sain, p.174).
 2. The People.
 - a. The Victim & Thieves.
 1. "And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30).
 2. Philosophy: "What is thine is mine" (Sain).
 - b. The Priest & The Levite.
 1. "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side" (Luke 10:31-32).

2. Saw → similar to rubbernecking.
 3. Philosophy: "What is thine is thine, and what is mine is mine" (Sain, p.174).
- c. The Samaritan.
1. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10:33-35).
 2. Philosophy: "What is mine is yours" (Sain, p.174).

III. THE CONCLUSION

- A. "And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).
- B. Loving My Neighbor...
1. **Requires Love to Be Our Proper Motivation** (1 Corinthians 13).
 2. **Involves Service.**
 - a. Notice how many times the word "do" is found in the context.
 - b. "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I **do** to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25).
 - c. "And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this **do**, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:27-28).
 - d. "And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and **do** thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).
 3. **Does Not See Any Boundaries** (Galatians 6:10).
 4. **Is Personal.**
 - a. The word "he" is found 6 times in the text.
 - b. "But a certain Samaritan, as **he** journeyed, came where **he** was: and when **he** saw him, **he** had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when **he** departed, **he** took out two pence, and gave

them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10:33-35).

5. **May Require Going The Extra Mile** (Matthew 5:41).

C. Being a neighbor stems from having a proper love for ourselves.

We must remember...

1. That we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).
2. We were worth dying for while we were still in sin (Romans 5:6-8).
3. We were worth God giving His only Son (John 3:16).
 - a. No wonder Paul told the Philippians Jailor "do thyself no harm" (Acts 16:28).
 - b. Thus, eliminating suicide.

SUMMARY:

1. When I truly love my neighbor as myself, I will seek his best interest.
2. A love for God can never be expressed properly without showing love to our neighbors.
3. In doing so, my light will be seen and possibly have an influence in bringing someone to Christ (Matthew 5:14-16).

WORKS CITED

Sain, Paul. The Parables of Jesus, POWER Lectureship. Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications. 2000.

Wiersbe, Warren W. The Wiersbe Bible Commentary. Cook Communications Ministries. 2003.

LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?

Wade L. Webster

INTRODUCTION:

1. "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest thou me more than these?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs" (John 21:15).
2. To what does the expression "more than these" have reference?
 - A. Scholars are divided over the meaning of this expression.
 - B. "These" can be either masculine (referring to someone) or neuter (referring to something).
 - C. Three main thoughts are advanced by scholars:
 - 1) The first thought is that "these" refers to fishing.
 - 2) The second thought is that "these" refers to other people.
 - 3) The third thought is that "these" refers to the other disciples and how they loved Jesus.
 - D. Although only one of the three can be right, I believe that they all have application to our lives today.

DISCUSSION:

I. DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN YOU LOVE FISHING?

- A. I love to fish. I agree with Doug Larson when he observed, "If people concentrated on the really important things in life, there'd be a shortage of fishing poles."
- B. Although I love to fish, I don't love to fish more than I love the Lord. Maybe, that is why I do very little fishing.
- C. I think that Peter must have also loved to fish. He must have found fulfillment in fishing and comfort in casting his net. After all, this is what he did following the Lord's death (John 21:1-3).
 1. Peter had been a fisherman before the Lord called him. "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, **casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers**" (Mt. 4:18).
 2. When the Lord called him, Peter left his nets and followed the Lord. "And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. **And they immediately left their nets,** and followed him" (Mt. 4:19-20).
 3. Leaving their nets involved leaving all that they had ever known. Later, Peter would declare, "**Lo, we have left all,** and followed thee" (Lk. 18:28).

4. In the context, it seems that Peter had gone back to the net that he had left (John 21:1-3)?
5. Perhaps, Jesus was asking Peter if he loved catching fish more than he loved catching men.
6. **Application:** Many, like Peter, left all in the past to follow Jesus (Lk. 14:33). However, their affections are now back on physical things (Col. 3:2). Their priorities are no longer what they used to be (Mt. 6:33). They are no longer fishing for men.

II. DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN YOU LOVE OTHERS?

- A. At one time, Peter had clearly demonstrated that he loved the Lord more than he loved anyone else. He had “forsaken all” and followed Jesus (Mt. 19:27). In defining the phrase “forsaken all,” Jesus spoke of “houses... sisters...father...mother...wife...children”(Mt. 19:29).
- B. Although the disciples fought from time to time, as brethren will sometimes do, they loved one another (Mk. 9:34). Peter loved his brethren, and they loved him.
- C. Although there is nothing wrong with loving our brethren, we must not love them more than we love the Lord.
- D. **Application:** There are clearly some today who love the company of men more than the company of the Lord. They choose being with family and friends over being with the Lord (Heb. 10:25). There are some today who choose the approval of men over the approval of God (John 12:43; cf. 5:44; 9:20-23). Jesus declared, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mt. 10:37; cf. Lk. 14:26).

III. DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN OTHERS LOVE ME?

- A. Peter forsook him and fled just like the others did (Mk. 14:50).
 1. While it is true that Peter returned and drew near unto the Lord, he did not outshine the other disciples.
 2. In fact, he went so far as to curse and swear that he didn’t know Jesus (Mt. 26:72-74). As far as we know, the others did not do this.
- B. To his credit, when Jesus asked him this question, Peter did not profess to love the Lord more than others.
- C. Peter had claimed earlier to love the Lord more than the other disciples did. “Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples (Mt. 26:33-35; cf. Lk. 22:33; John 13:37).

D. **Application:** Sadly, the temptation is to look around and think to ourselves that we love the Lord more than others do. The temptation is to think that we give more time and money than others do.

1. We must be careful not to think too highly of ourselves (Rom. 12:3; cf. 1 Cor. 10:12).
2. Rather than thinking about whether or not others love Him, we need to focus on whether or not we do.

CONCLUSION:

1. In this lesson, we have considered the top three thoughts that scholars have concerning this text of Scripture.
2. The problem is not so much that we might love someone or something other than Jesus, but that we might love someone or something more.

GOD IS LOVE

1 *John* 4:8, 16

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. God is love, emphasizing His immaterial nature (*John* 4:24).
2. God is light, emphasizing His intellectual nature (1 *John* 1:5).
3. God is love, emphasizing His emotional nature (1 *John* 4:8, 16).
4. Love is truly a key word in Sacred Scripture.

DISCUSSION:

I. HIS IS AN UNCEASING LOVE.

- A. Adam and Eve experienced such in Eden (*Gen.* 2; 3:15).
- B. Noah's peers were given sufficient time to repent, being warned by a great preacher of righteousness – Noah (*Gen.* 6:1ff; 2 *Pet.* 2:5).
- C. Patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, were recipients of such from Genesis 12 to Genesis 50.
- D. The whole history of Israel in the Old Testament testifies of such undying love.
 1. People in the wilderness knew of such.
 2. His love followed them into the Canaan, their home for many years.
 3. His love did not fail them during the Captivity and back to their native land again.
- E. We observe His supreme love in the New Testament.
 1. We see it in the sending of His only begotten Son (*John* 3:16).
 2. We see it in what Jesus did for us while He was here.
 3. We observe it further in the establishment of the church, and that we can be members of the same.
 4. Our hope of Heaven is lovingly linked with Deity's love for us.

II. GOD'S LOVE IS COMPREHENSIVE.

- A. Greek words for love, phileo, agape and agapao, are very comprehensive.
 1. Phileo is warm, emotional love for family, friends, etc.
 2. Agape or agapao love is that of the will, it can be commanded, and it seeks the best for the object of its affection.
- B. God is love, yet the Godhead can and does hate.
 1. This is surely manifested in *Proverbs* 6:17-19 relative to seven things God hates or abominates.
 2. *Psalms* 45:7 and *Hebrews* 1:9 tell us that the Messiah loves righteousness and hates wickedness and iniquity.
 3. God hated the hypocrisy disclosed in *Isaiah* 1:13ff.

C. The character of His love.

1. Love originates with Him, proceeds from Him, is bequeathed to humans by Him, is His prerogative to define its meaning, will reward the faithful and punish the rebellious.
2. Love and giving are divine connectives (John 3:16; Eph. 5:1-2, 25).
3. He loved and gave us the Bible.
4. He loved and made possible our sonship to Him.
5. He loved and is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).
6. Christ loved us and is making heaven ready for us, per John 14:1-3.
7. He loved and desires all His people to be with Him, Christ, the Holy Spirit, heavenly angels, all children who died before reaching the age of accountability, and the redeemed from all three dispensations of time, for an eternity.

III. HIS GREAT LOVE WILL NOT ALLOW HIM TO WINK AT SIN AND OVERLOOK REBELLION.

- A. It did not with rebellious ones in the Old Testament beginning with Adam and Eve (Heb. 2:1-3).
- B. It did not with the disobedient in the New Testament.
 1. Pharisees and Sadducees were not spared (Matt. 3:7-8).
 2. False teachers were not spared (Matt. 7:15-20).
 3. Unrighteous and ungodly people were not spared (Rom. 1:18; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5).
- C. It will not for all who die out of the Lord.
 1. Revelation 14:13 pronounces a blessing on those who die IN the Lord.
 2. Obedience is the way to heaven (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:7, 8; Rev. 22:14).
 3. In final judgment the righteous will hear the Great Judge say, "Come" (Matt. 25:34).
 4. In final judgment the disobedient will hear the Great Judge say, "Depart" (Matt. 25:41).
 5. Heaven and hell are no more widely separated than are these two words – COME and DEPART.

IV. LOVE IS _____.

- A. Love is God-like (1 John 4:8,16).
- B. Love is Christ-like (John 13:17 Eph. 5:25).
- C. Love is Spirit-like (Rev. 22:17).
- D. Love is commanded (Matt. 22:36ff; 1 John 3:18; 4:21).
- E. Love is commandment – keeping (1 John 5:3; John 14:21-24; Rev. 22:14).
- F. Love is selfless (Matt. 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
- G. Love is contagious (1 John 4:19).
- H. Love is noble.

- I. Love is patient and longsuffering (1 Cor. 13:4).
- J. Love is the bedrock of Christianity (1 Cor. 13:1ff).

CONCLUSION:

1. In Luke 10:30-37 the robbers showed antipathy (hatred); the priest and the Levite showed apathy (no concern) and the Good Samaritan exhibited sympathy (love and concern).

*Ladies'
Lectures*

GOOD WORKS WITHOUT LOVE

1 *Corinthians* 13: 1-3

Irene C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION:

1. The above citation begins a chapter which describes the attributes of love.
2. It details the beautiful characteristics of real love.
3. It shows the clear connection between good works and love.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS LOVE? (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

- A. Charity, or love, suffereth long (vs. 4).
 1. Where true love is there will be the ability to overlook those "little" annoyances.
- B. Love is kind (vs. 4).
 1. Kindness includes proper treatment of friends and family!
- C. Charity envieth not (vs. 4).
 1. There will be no envy or jealousy toward friends who achieve honors or between family members.
- D. Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up (vs. 4)
 1. There is no tendency to boast or brag about one's abilities or accomplishments.
- E. Charity does not behave itself unseemly (vs. 5).
 1. It always acts with proper decorum; decency.
- F. Charity seeks not her own (vs. 5).
 1. It is considerate of the feeling of others; sees past the big "I".
- G. Charity is not easily provoked (vs. 5).
 1. It keeps the temper and emotions under control; does not fret the small stuff.
- H. Charity thinketh no evil (vs. 5).
 1. It keeps the mind filled with good thoughts (Phil 4:8).
 2. It looks for the good in others.
- I. Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth (vs. 6).
 1. It takes no pleasure in hearing of the sinful conduct in society; does not delight in gossip.
- J. Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things (vs. 7).
 1. Charity is able to adjust to her lot in life, believe in the good of God's Word and the hope of a better life for His children, and endure the problems of life without forsaking God.
- K. Charity never fails (vs. 8).
 1. Charity knows that, if faithful, it will carry us into eternity.

II. WHEN LOVE IS ABSENT, THERE IS LITTLE INCENTIVE TO DO GOOD WORKS (1 Cor. 13:1).

- A. Gifts or good deeds done for kings were usually done to maintain good political relationship, not from a heart of love.
- B. The banquets hosted by Queen Esther were not due to her love of Haman but to expose his evil plot.
 - 1. It was a good work prompted by a loving desire to save her people.
- C. The few good works done without love are usually to benefit self.
 - 1. Ananias and Sapphira gave deceitfully to gain praise and status for self (Acts 5:1-10).
- D. What prompts our good works today?
 - 1. When I prepare food for those who need it, is it out of a sense of duty?
 - 2. When we provide care for one who is seriously ill, is it out of a sense of obligation? (1 Tim. 5:8).
 - 3. Good works done without love profit nothing (1 Cor. 13:2-3).
 - a. Faith alone is not sufficient.
 - b. Giving great gifts without love profits nothing (vs. 3).

III. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES LOVE MAKE?

- A. It makes us more like God and Christ.
 - 1. God loves and gave His Son to save mankind from sin.
 - a. He still gives us life's necessities.
 - 2. Jesus loves and gave His life as sacrifice for man's sins.
 - a. There is no greater love than this!
- B. We are to love as Jesus loves (John 15:12).
 - 1. We are to be busily engaged in good works (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - 2. We are to share the good news of God's love to others.
 - 3. We are to provide for the widows and fatherless (James 1:27).

CONCLUSION:

1. **It has been said that one may give without loving, but one may not love without giving!**
2. One may engage in many works, good in and of themselves, but done without love they are not acceptable to God above.
3. Those same good works, done in love for the glory of God, will help pave the way to eternal bliss.
4. Love and good works have been linked together by God.
5. To be acceptable to God, we must not sever the tie that binds them together.

MARITAL LOVE

Annette B. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. Marriage was instituted by God.
 - A. After creating Adam, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18).
 - B. Man and woman would leave father and mother and cleave to one another.
2. Marriage is a lifelong commitment to one another.
3. Traditional wedding vows reflect this commitment with these words: "from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part."

DISCUSSION:

I. MARITAL LOVE IS FROM THIS DAY FORWARD.

- A. The focus is on the future.
- B. Relationships change.
 1. The two are no longer children in their parents' homes.
 2. They have left father and mother.
 3. "In-law" problems are one of three major causes of divorce.
- C. There can be no looking back at "lost loves" or what might have been.
- D. The commitment has been made.
- E. "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well" (Pro. 5:5).
- F. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote of her love and dedication to her husband:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1073).

II. MARITAL LOVE IS FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE.

- A. Love is not some kind of pit one falls into, and there is no trap door out of which one falls.
- B. Rainy days help us appreciate the sunshine.
- C. The "worse" should bring out the best in each person.
 1. We rise to the occasion.
 2. We encourage one another.

- D. God is “a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know [His] name will put their trust in [Him]” (Psa. 9:9).

III. MARITAL LOVE IS FOR RICHER, AND FOR POORER.

- A. Money problems are one of the three major causes of divorce.
 - 1. A lack of agreement on handling family resources leads to problems.
 - 2. A family must learn to live within its means.
- B. Some causes of “for poorer” are external and unavoidable.
 - 1. The economy affects not only the nation, but individual families.
 - 2. Unexpected expenses can decimate the best of planning.
- C. “Richer” can bring as much conflict as “poorer.”
- D. “Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me” (Pro. 30:8).

IV. MARITAL LOVE ENDURES THROUGH SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH.

- A. Good health is not forever.
- B. Sickness or injury can occur at any age.
- C. Emotional support is as important as physical care.
 - 1. Mrs. Job may have thought she was helping her husband when she looked upon his suffering and declared, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die.”
 - 2. In this statement she destroyed both his dignity and hope, two of man’s greatest needs.
 - 3. “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small” (Pro. 24:10).

V. MARITAL LOVE CHERISHES ONE ANOTHER.

- A. Ephesians 5:23-33 compares Christ’s love for His bride, the church, to that of a husband and wife.
- B. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Eph. 5:29).
- C. To cherish is to place one’s mate above self, to desire what is best for the other, and to seek what is positive, not negative, in the other.
- D. To cherish is to see one another as best friends, and do nothing that would jeopardize that relationship.

VI. MARITAL LOVE LASTS “UNTIL DEATH DO US PART.”

- A. This enduring quality of married love is expressed in The Song of Solomon 8:6: “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is as strong as death; jealousy [true married love] is cruel [lasting] as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame [is from God].”

- B. Time together brings a closeness that youth cannot imagine.
 - 1. There are shared memories known to no one but the married.
 - 2. Little things that seem insignificant to someone else, even to a family member, can carry great meaning.
 - 3. Attaining maturity together is priceless.
- C. Robert Browning expressed the beauty of aging love in the first stanza of his poem "Rabbi Ben Ezra," written in 1864.

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned;
Youth shows but half. Trust God; see all, nor be afraid!"
(Robert Browning, 929).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Marital love is a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman.
- 2. That commitment includes a third Person – God.
- 3. This commitment is not to be entered into lightly, but with a serious recognition that one is leaving the past behind and moving into a new life with another "until death do us part."

WORKS CITED

Browning, Robert, "Rabbi Ben Ezra." Ibid.

The Holy Bible, King James Version.

"Sonnets from the Portuguese" 43. *The Literature of England*. Ed. George K. Anderson and William E. Buckler, Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1953.