

Godly Love vs Carnal Love I

Fred R. Coulter—April 12, 1998

Well, during this Feast of Unleavened Bread it also happens to be the time of the world's counterfeit of Easter—doesn't it? They've got some gal walking around here dressed up as an Easter bunny, passing out chocolate goodies to the kids and things like that, and we're not going to invite her in here.

There's always the true, and there's always the counterfeit. Sometimes the counterfeit can work like it looks like it's true, but it's really not. Likewise, I think we need to understand that *the most important thing we can do to be unleavened in Christ is to really have the love of God*, and to really understand it.

It's like one woman said, which I thought was very profound, 'You know, the problem that we've had is that the ministers never loved the brethren.' Which was, I thought, a very true and a very profound statement. And the reason that was is because they had the wrong kind of love. In the Greek there are four different words for love. So, we're going to look at those today, and we're going to look at the counterfeit carnal love, which in a way can be made to appear to be Godly love. But it's an impossibility.

Eros Love:

The first kind of love is 'eros'—from which we get the word *erotica*. That is *earthly* love, *carnal* love, and the world is driven by *erotica*. *Eros* love is what makes the world go round. And every religion in the world is based upon some sort of *eros* love— isn't it?

Are not their buildings erected to exemplify *eros* love, with the steeples and all of the crosses and things that go with it? *All of that goes back to ancient Greek philosophy!* Now let me read you from Plato, and this is very interesting, *Plato Symposium, 180-A*. And if you have a computer you can get online and pull it down. The Greek pagan way was that *eros* love—if you diligently applied yourself and used *eros* love in it's highest erotic sense—would please the gods and you, therefore, could have salvation by that.

This has to do with Achilles, one of the gods of the Greeks. He had a choice to go ahead and slay Hector who had captured his lover, being a male lover. It's no wonder that we have homosexuality in the world the way that we do because *eros* love always degenerates to the perversion.

From Greek Tests & Translations—
Symposium 180-A (perseus.uchicago.edu):

[Achilles] ...bravely chose to go and rescue his lover Patroclus, avenged him, and sought death not merely in his behalf...

In other words he was saying, 'All right. I will go give my life to save my lover.'

...but in haste to be joined with him whom death had taken. For this the gods so highly admired him that they gave him distinguished honor...

Salvation by works. So when you have carnal love you have salvation by works. This leads to what? The kind of things that you see in the religions of the world. Monasteries, where you deprive yourself and you beat the flesh. And Buddhism is based on that. A lot of Catholicism and Orthodox is based on that. And this *carnal love then seeks to attain to a spirituality* through the elemental spirits of the world. So, isn't it interesting that all religions sooner or later get into some sort of mysticism going beyond just the rudimentary outside definitions of what they do.

...they gave him distinguished honor, since he set so great a value on his lover....

...not Patroclus alone but assuredly all the other heroes, being still beardless and, moreover, much the younger...

For in truth there is no sort of valor more respected by the gods than this which comes of love; yet they are even more admiring and delighted and beneficent when the beloved is fond of his lover than when the lover is fond of his favorite; since a lover, filled as he is with a god,

So, 'eros'—*carnal love*—eventually gets into demonism.

...surpasses his favorite in divinity.

This is my description of *eros*. I have it both in the English and the Greek text.

Agape Love:

Agape love, which comes from God, is different. We'll talk about that a little later. Here's what we have to understand. It is completely wrong to conclude that the most refined and idealistic carnal love can be equal to *Godly love*. There are a lot of good, nice people out in the world that just have carnal love. They are what you would call good, decent people in the society—aren't they?

Then you have the whole form of it going from there on down into the perversion of whatever level that it degenerates into. But none of them have *Godly love*.

They may have something that looks close to it but it's really not the kind of Godly love that God wants us to have because that comes from Him. The basic thing is this: **You cannot make carnal love Godly love**, it's an impossibility!

Agape is a different kind of love and you can't take the best of *eros*, or the best of the next kind of love, one of the other kinds of love we'll talk about, which is 'philea' or 'phileo'—either the verb or the noun—and combine those together. The Bible does speak of a *family love* called 'starge' love, but it also talks about the third kind, which is 'philea,' which is *friendship love*.

The Bible talks about 'philea.' Remember what Jesus asked Peter. 'Peter, son of Jonah, do you love [*agape*] Me?' Peter said, 'Yes Lord, I love [*phileo*] you.' Jesus asked him three times and finally He reduced it down to 'phileo,' but what did He say in the whole thing? '*If you love Me feed My sheep, feed My lambs.*'

Something else that is really interesting: *Eros* is not found in the New Testament. Another thing that is interesting. *Agape*, Godly love, is not found in the heathen writings of the Greeks except Philo, and I think once by *Josephus*. That's it!

So, *agape* love, as defined in the Bible, is that kind of love which comes from God. God inspired the apostles to really bring out that *agape* love is the love that *comes from God*. The counterfeit love that the world has—and you can see this—they take *eros* love and *phileo* love and they combine that together so they have a camaraderie type of thing, because 'phileo' means *camaraderie, friendship love, a brotherly love*.

Therefore, you find most of the secret societies are based upon the combination of both of those, if you belong to the club, you're welcome. If you're not, you're unwanted, but we glad-hand everybody. That's what happened in the Church of God. They did not have the *agape* love, which comes from God. I'm sure many people were trying to. I'm sure many people were wanting that kind of love, but when things evolved into such a way that the love could not be expressed, and love was not taught, then what was the substitute? *Carnal 'eros/phileo' love combined together*, which when you first encounter it is a fairly good counterfeit of *agape* love.

But *agape* love goes beyond, because the carnal friendship love very seldom endures trials and

difficulties and problems; it takes a deeper love to do that. So, let's talk about *agape*.

First of all, this kind of love—*agape* love—is *the essence of God-likeness*. What did God call us to become? **Like Him!** What is the most important thing that we need? **The love of God!** That's what we need. I think it's true. Herbert Armstrong expressed it this way, he said in his later years: 'Brethren, I don't think any of you get it.' I don't think he was realizing what he was really saying, because he was not talking about the love of God at that time. He was talking about restoring the 18 truths, of which none of them say the love of God; that was totally missing.

Agape love **must** come from God; comes down to man. This shows the epitome of *agape* love, John 3:16 "For God so loved [*agape*] the world..." Think about the world. God has a greater love than we do. We are told not to love the world, neither the things in the world, for the 'lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life' are all of the world and are going to perish. But the one who is doing the will of God shall abide forever—correct? **Yes!**

God looks down on this earth and He's got His plan. And He's going to work His plan. It's going to be spectacular, brethren! It is going to be absolutely amazing! But we've got to get the point that *God loves us*, and what God is doing because He loves the world. He's eventually going to save the world, but He doesn't want to do it without us. That's why He's called us now, *to prepare*.

- How can we help the world if we don't *learn the love of God* and we don't *teach the love of God*?
- How are we going to help them if we become a God-being, which the very essence of God-likeness is *agape* love?
- How can we help them if we don't have the love of God?
- How can you become a son of God if you don't have the love of God?

It won't work!

Now you understand why God had to do what He's done to the Church? Not only did we have false doctrine, but we had *false love*; we had a false sense of understanding. When you really have the love of God, that's the place to begin and to finish. Everything else flows from that. That's what John 3:16 is telling us; that God came down; that the One who became Jesus Christ divested Himself of all of His Divinity and all of His being God and humbled Himself.

If you think you've gone through trials and difficulties and have been humbled, understand that God did that; if you've been called and you've given

up something; understand what God gave up to give to you.

“...that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes...” (v 3)—present tense participle in the Greek, meaning *the one who is believing in, constantly believing*, not one day a week. Not when you go to church. **Constantly believing!**

“...in Him...” (v 3). In the Greek there is a three letter word, ‘eis’—pronounced *ice*, and it means *into*, which is expressing a spiritual relationship that with the Spirit of God coming from God *to* you, *into* you, bearing the fruits of the Spirit, it goes back into Christ. So, that has quite a bit of meaning when you put that together.

“...everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life” (v 3).

Romans 5 talks about what Christ did. This is important to understand. It’s one thing to have a *brotherly love*—to love those who love you—isn’t it? But it’s another thing to *love an enemy*. It’s a greater thing to give your life for an enemy, that your enemy may become your friend.

Romans 5:8: “But God commends His own love to us... [love coming down from God to us] ...because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Paul could write this with meaning—right? *No question about it!* Paul was one of the most implacable enemies of Christ. He understood it. After he was converted he understood it.

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

Verse 6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time...” That means *at the set time*, the very time appointed.

I’ll tell you one thing. We need to look and find, and understand that our relationship with God is based upon the relationship that Abraham had. That is central to our understanding, brethren. When you get the second edition of *The Christian Passover* book, you’re going to understand it even more, that yes, the Passover is based upon the covenants with Abraham.

I understand that there’s been a lot of Judaism teaching going around. Brethren, please understand something: ***The Church of God was separated from Judaism beginning with John.*** {see sermon series: *Scripturalism vs Judaism*} You can’t finish doing the spiritual things with physical things. That’s all Judaism is going to do. Please understand this: ***Judaism is not in covenant with God.*** Only those, through Christ, who have the Spirit of God

and truly keep the Passover of God—based upon the promises given to Abraham—are in covenant with God.

Now, a lot of people accuse me of being anti-Semitic. I am not! But I want you to understand the true reality toward Christ and God and the world, because there are going to be many people coming around teaching many things. Someone sent me six tapes of someone showing how we should keep a Seder with our Passover. Brethren, ***that’s not of God!*** Jesus never told us that. He died at the set time for the ungodly. That’s God’s love that He died for the ungodly.

Verse 7: “For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man.” Christ has done that for us; ***that is true Godly love!***

Now let’s come to John 6, and let’s understand something about our calling. We haven’t been called to join a church. The Church is the body of Christ, that is all of those believers who have the Spirit of God. That is the assembly, or the Church. God has not called us to join an organization, because an organization is a carnal, corporate thing.

God has called us to be His very sons! God the Father is the One Who has done it. I know every one of us are going to hit bottom. How many here didn’t have any trials last year? *Not one hand raised*—right? Sometimes you hit the very bottom—don’t you? Especially with all the troubles and difficulties going on in the Church, you wonder where is God? Why, God? What is happening? How can I see my way out of this? And the people that you looked up to, some of them, have no more belief in God than a Protestant. You wonder how could that happen? And you get all low.

I think it’s something that God wants us to come to that point. Why? ***Because He loves us!*** Not out of cruelty; not out of hatred; but so that you understand *the great love of God.*

Sometimes you can’t really appreciate anything until you have been to the bottom. Or as we could put it this way: walking through *your own valley of death.* Remember this when you get there—I’ve been there, and I know I’ve had to ask God at the lowest point in my life—‘God, heal my soul.’

So remember this, John 6:44. “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him... [God the Father, the greatest being in the universe, is the One Who activated the calling in your life. Do you understand that? That is profound. God has called you.] ...and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘and they shall

all be taught by God.’” (vs 44-45). Whatever you have learned brethren:

- from the Scriptures
- through God’s Spirit
- through the experiences
- through the things you’ve gone through

the Father is the One Who’s teaching you all this, because you have the Holy Spirit of the begetting of the Father in you. His seed remains in you—that seed of eternal life. So, ***God is the One Who’s teaching!***

Let me just mention this: Wherever I go we have a lot of long-time members in the Church of God. I guess I’m one of them. We’re all getting closer to the inevitable: either the return of Christ or the place of safety in the grave. That’s not *the* place of safety, but it is *a* place of safety.

God wants all the long-time brethren to be perfected, to learn. I know we have many on the mailing list that are retired and say, ‘Send me tapes, send me tapes. I listen to two, three, four a day.’ Why? I don’t want them following me. No! It’s a vehicle that God can use to perfect them. God wants them perfected, like Abraham who died a ‘ripe’ old age. There are two times you’re ripe:

1. just before birth

All mother’s know that the belly is so big and so tight and you feel like you’re walking with a 20 pound watermelon stuffed in there—you are ripe! If you thump it just right, like a watermelon, you can tell birth is just right around the corner.

2. when you get old and feeble and gray

It’s like ancient Israel. He was 147-years-old, and he said, ‘Joseph, bring your sons, Ephraim and Manasseh here.’ He was in bed, on his deathbed. He got out of bed, and he was so weak he had to stand up and lean on his staff. After he got stood up there he, being blind, put his hands to bless Ephraim, and bless Manasseh.

Joseph figured, ‘Well, he’s old and doesn’t know what he’s doing, and blind.’ And he says, ‘Father, you put your hand on the wrong one.’ And he says, ‘I know what I’m doing. I know.’ Then he died. Was God pleased that he died in the faith? *Yes!* Is God pleased that many, many brethren are going to die in the faith? We’re going to see that brethren. Yes, because they have accomplished, and will arrive at the resurrection.

So, part of what we do is to help tuck them safely in the grave. That is pleasing in the sight of God. All the ‘eros’ glory of the discipline and razzmatazz and all of the stuff that is substituted for the love of God is all going to come to an end. But

God wants them all taught. I had an 87-year-old woman come up to me yesterday. Gave me a great big hug. She says, ‘Oh, thank you. Thank you.’ She says, ‘I really understand now.’ She says, ‘I never got it in the past.’ But she says, ‘I understand now.’ I hope she lives to be as old as she can be. When I go to Boise and go into Ruth Kennedy’s—she’s 92. She was one of the first persons I met when I went over to pastor Boise in 1965.

Verse 45: “Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me.” That’s what God wants.

1-John 4 is important for us to understand and really realize, brethren, that the love of God has come down. With the Spirit of God, God wants you to experience the *love of God*. In order to experience the love of God there are going to be trials, there are going to be difficulties, there’s going to be pain and suffering.

- Did not Christ have trials and difficulties, and pain and suffering?
- Was He not alone and rejected and despised? *Yes, He was!*
- Can you imagine that?

The Creator of all that there is *came to His own* and was rejected; came to His creation and it killed Him. Yet, *He loved them!*

This is the separation that’s taking place today, right now, 1-John 4:5: “They are of the world...” I couldn’t believe it when I read in a recent *Worldwide News* article that there is sufficient validity for us to keep the celebration (note the word *celebrate*)... So, they said there is sufficient evidence that we ought to celebrate the crucifixion and the resurrection at the same time the world does. I don’t read that in the Bible.

“...because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them” (v 5) Why? Because they are leaving *agape love* and going to *eros/phileo love*. That’s what they’re doing! Trying to take the best of human *carnal* love to make it Godly love. In that then they are making a ‘religion.’ They are leaving *the way of life* and going to make a ‘religion.’ ***God has called us to a way of life***, not a religion. The world can look at us and say we are religious. But God looks at us and says, ‘You’re My sons and daughters.’ Totally different!

Verse 6: “**We are of God...**” Brethren, I want you to understand that. You’ve got to know you are of God, and *know that you know*. We’re living in some terrible, terrible times. I feel so sorry and devastated for those people that had to go through those tornadoes back there in Alabama. Can you imagine a 250 mph wind? It just took this one couple right out of their house. Destroyed their

house and threw them three blocks down the street in a ditch. We better have *ears to hear, and eyes to see and understand* that God is not pleased with what's going on. Therefore, the only way we're going to survive is to *know* we are of God, and not to be bragging, not to be boasting. But to be thankful and grateful, and understand *we have nothing we did not receive*, and it all comes from God. It's a wonderful thing, brethren.

Verse 6: "**We are of God**; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the truth and the spirit of the deception." We are living in the days when that is being repeated exactly the same way. **The spirit of error has entered into the Church!**

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another..." I tell you brethren, the Feast of Tabernacles this year I think was really an epitome of this. We had a wonderful Feast wherever we were, because all the brethren were there to worship and serve and love God, and love each other. It was just tremendous—really wonderful! I know some of you have gone to Feasts where it's just been a bust. God doesn't want that.

"...because love is **from** God... [from the Greek 'ek'—meaning *out from*. Love, *agape*, coming out from, down to—'ek'] ...and **everyone who loves** has been begotten by God, and knows God" (vs 7). Everyone who is loving, on a constant, ongoing basis, is begotten of God and is knowing God on a constant, ongoing basis.

Verse 8: "The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.... [The very essence of God-likeness is love, *agape!*] ...In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.... [that's why Christ came] ...In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God... [Not that we're so good to tell God what to do. Not that we're so good that we go to God and demand this and that, and the other thing. Not so!] ...rather, that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins" (vs 8-10).

That's where grace comes from. Grace is not forgiveness in advance. **Grace is the whole status of your standing before God!** It's kind of like an umbrella that is the expression of the love of God that His grace is given to you, that you stand in that love, and you stand in that grace, and you receive those blessings of God, you have the Spirit of God. If you sin, when you repent then you have forgiveness. Not like the world says. Propitiation means *constant*. Therefore, you don't have to be fearful. You don't have to worry.

I'll tell you this, the best way to overcome is *really learn the love of God*, because with the love of God you can overcome more things, because you're concentrating on doing the greatest thing that God wants you to do, that is *love Him and love each other!* In doing that, aren't you going to eliminate a lot of sins and judgments and things like that that come along? *Yes, no question about it.*

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another." I tell you, the Church has just been torn asunder. It's hard to love one another. I mean, we've got a double duty to overcome—don't we? We have depressions, cynicism, turned-offness—whatever you want to call it—apathy, lethargy—all of those to overcome. People will say, 'Well yeah, I heard that before.' We need to get to the love of God so we understand it.

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time...." Aren't we thankful? Can you imagine what it would be if a human being had seen God? What would he do? 'I have seen God! Who are you?' Let Satan get a hold of that and twist and pervert that. Woo! That's why we're not going to see God until we're resurrected.

"...Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us... [God is dwelling; we are the temple of God.] ...and His own love is perfected in us" (v 12). This is what God wants. He wants that love perfected; growing in it. And that requires trials, challenges and difficulties; some of them almost insurmountable. Why? *Because we're not dealing just in physical carnal things*, we're dealing in the things that are leading to eternal life.

Verse 13: "By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us. And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God" (vs 13-15). Of course, you put all of the other factors together. That means

- *truly confessing*, because you have the Spirit of God
- *truly believing*, because you have the Spirit of God
- *truly knowing and understanding* God is dwelling in you.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him."

If there's any one thing, brethren, that God wants us to do and really get the point is to *understand the love of God*. I know I've preached a

lot on it and I think I'm just beginning to understand it myself. It's one thing to have a good flesh feeling in your heart. It's one thing when you're praying and studying and understanding and God's Spirit moves you to understand His love, or when you are lying there awake at night in bed and all you can do is just lie there and pray and cry out to God, and you know that God loves you and the tears just stream down. I don't know if you've ever experienced that, but you will and you should. God wants you to because **He wants you to know that He loves you!**

That's what it's all about. God *is* love! Christ *is* dwelling in us! The Father is dwelling in us, and we're dwelling in Them! The whole sum of it is finished with the Feast of Tabernacles. Not only that, we will dwell with Them.

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us... [there's the task set before us] ...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment..." What's going to see you to the day of judgment better than anything else? *The love of God, yes!* How can you have brotherly love if you don't love God first? ***You can't really truly have brotherly love unless you love God first!***

"...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. ***There is no fear in the love of God...***" (vs 17-18). That is so profound! That's why Paul was not called Mr. Tarsus. That's why John was not called Mr. Zebedee. All those artificial things bring *fear*. How many here have been fearful in the Church? *All of us*—right? How did you feel? Much love of God? *No!* How did you feel when the minister picked up the phone and says, 'I'm coming by to visit.' You probably felt, 'Oh, what did I do?' ***God wants it to where the ministers love the brethren, the brethren love the ministers, and we all love each other because we all love God first!***

Verse 18: "There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love casts out fear..."—present tense participle. It 'is casting' it out. There again is the process. Love is overcoming that fear. Casting it out. Putting it away. Not that you become audacious and carnally bold. But that you truly become humble and filled with the love of God. That's what it's all about.

"...because fear has torment..." When you were fearful and living in fear, what happened? *Sleepless nights*—right? *Yes!* I've gone through that. I know what that's like; not very pleasant. Did it accomplish anything? *No!* Was it of God? *No!*

"...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (v 18). You must let the love of God be casting out those fears. It's kind of like this: some people come along and they have a doubt. Now what do you do with a doubt? A

lot of people say, 'Oh, I shouldn't doubt. Get that out of my mind.' You go along and doodle-lo-do-losing, the doubt comes back. 'I thought I put that away. I shouldn't think that way.' What you do if you have a fear, if you have a doubt, you grab hold of it when it comes along...

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...and you look at those fears, and you look at those doubts, and you prove what is true, and let the Truth and the love of God get rid of the fear and get rid of the doubt. That's what you do, because if you just put it in the back of your mind Satan's going to come along one day and he's going to push that button, and what's going to happen? *You know what's going to happen!* So, this tells us the whole process. This shows us what we need to do.

Verse 19: "We love Him because He loved us first... [then he gives the acid test]: ...If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?" (vs 19-20). That's quite a test— isn't it?

What you need to do with this is just think about those people that you know you ought to love and ask God to help you love them. And the first thing you're probably going to do is have a trial. Why? *Because that's how you are going to learn the love of God!* Try loving someone as Christ has loved us, in spite of themselves. Those that you know that you need to love and are not loving, see if you can inspire them to love you in return by asking God to help you love that individual, to care for that person, to help them to be inspired to respond to what you are doing. What if they don't for a long time? What do you do then? *You just keep at it! You never give up!*

Verse 21: "And this *is* the commandment that we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother." That's the kind of love that God wants us to have.

- It is the Spirit of God that makes all of this possible
- It is the Spirit of God that helps us understand all these things
- It is the Spirit of God that helps us grow
- It is the Spirit of God that helps us to love each other

Here's how the Apostle Paul came, 1-Corinthians 2:1: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom, in proclaiming the testimony of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (vs 1-2). He wanted to know everything about Christ, and he

wanted them to know everything about Christ. 'I was with you in power and strength and demonstration of the Spirit, and my carnality was its greatest authority.' *No!*

Verse 3: "I was in **weakness and in fear and in much trembling** when I was with you; and my message and my preaching *was* not in persuasive words of human wisdom; rather, *it was* in demonstration of *the* Spirit and of power... [that is the power of God] ...so that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men... [or on a man] ...but in *the* power of God. Now we speak wisdom among the *spiritually* mature; however, *it is* not *the* wisdom of this world..." (vs 3-6). There's no room for philosophy of the world in the *way of God*. The Greek word *wisdom* is 'sophia' from which we get the word 'philosophy'—which means *lover of wisdom*.

"...nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nothing.... [they're all going to come to nothing] ...Rather, we speak *the* wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom* that God foreordained before the ages unto our glory Which not one of the rulers of this world has known (for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory); But according as it is written, '*The* eye has not seen, nor *the* ear heard, neither have entered into *the* heart of man, *the* things which God has prepared **for those who love Him.**'" (vs 6-9).

Jesus said, '**If you love Me** you will keep My commandments.' It's not that you keep the commandments and you develop love. ***Love inspires you to keep the commandments.*** It's the other way around. Can you have commandment-keeping without love? *Yes, in the letter; you sure can!* What does it lead to? *Futility, dead-end, carnality, judging, pickiness*—doesn't it? I'm sure none of you have experienced that—have you? (I say that in jest.) You've all experienced it, because there wasn't the love!

Verse 10: "But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit..." This is how God's love and God's knowledge comes to us. If we love God, He's going to grant us more of His Spirit and understanding. It's a constant growing thing.

"...for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God. For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God" (vs 10-11). So therefore, we can't take the world's religion and bring it into the way of God and try and make understanding out of it. There may be some things of value that we can learn in a technical sense, but the true love of God has got to come from

the Spirit of God, and the deepest thing for us to understand is the love of God by the Spirit of God.

Let's see what this did for Paul. What was he out doing? He was on his way to Damascus, filled with *eros love*, orders from the high priest to arrest all of those, take them bound back to Jerusalem to be beaten, to be jailed (Acts 9). Let's see what happened to Paul after he was converted. Let's see what the love of God did to Paul. This is what it needs to do to us, brethren.

Galatians 1:13, here's where he started out: "For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism, how I was excessively persecuting the church of God and was destroying it." This means to just take and to root it up like a boar hog with the big tusks that come out of each side of the snout, and just rooting and tearing apart. That's what he was.

Verse 14: "And I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of *my* contemporaries in *my own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by His grace" (vs 14-15).

Let's see how Paul's attitude changed over a period of time. How that with the love of God he became more humble. How that with the love of God he could see God greater, and he could see what God was doing to a more full extent.

1 Corinthians 15:4: "And that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve. Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time..." (vs 4-6). Can you imagine what those brethren thought when they saw Jesus raised from the dead? That must have been an experience!

"...of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage.... [What did he consider himself? *This means an abortion, one who was aborted!*] ...For I am the least of the apostles..." (vs 6-9). Notice the humility that the love of God brought him. The more that he grew in the love of God, the more humble he became, because the greatness of God becomes so overwhelming.

"...and am not fit *even* to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them..." (vs 9-10). I think Paul worked extra hard because of what he did. I don't think he was trying in any way to

make up for what he had done, because you can't make up for it. There is no work you can do to make up for your sins—is there? Is there anything you can do to forgive your sins? *No, except repent!* Notice his attitude.

Let's see how he expresses it. I'm kind of going in chronological order in the writings of the Apostle Paul. 1-Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry... [God is the One Who puts anyone in a teaching or ministerial position.] ...who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus. *This is* a faithful saying, and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (vs 12-15).

Notice that he comes all the way from profiting in the Jewish religion all the way down to saying 'I'm a chief sinner.' That's what the love and Spirit of God will do.

Verse 16: "But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all long-suffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life."

Ephesians 3—this was just before he died, when he was writing in prison. God revealed to him and the other apostles the great and overwhelming plan of God. God had to reveal this to them step-by-step; because it is an awesome thing to contemplate and to understand that God wants you to become as He is. What do you do with children? *You are reproducing yourself*—correct? Do they become equal to you? *Yes, they do*—don't they? Sometimes when they grow up, they think they're more equal.

God wants us to learn that that's what He's doing with His family. He is not creating infants to be infants through all eternity. He's creating sons and daughters to share eternal life with, and he revealed this to the apostles. It says right here concerning the mystery of God:

Ephesians 3:5: "Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men..." Just think about it right here at the end-time, we've got all of God's Word—*all* of God's Word. Isn't that a tremendous blessing? What are we going to do with it? Think what some people did with just part of the Word of God. *We've got all of it!* Is God going to hold a higher judgment on us? *No question!*

"...as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by *the* Spirit; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint

partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, Of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was* given to me through the inner working of His power. To me..." (vs 5-8). Notice how his attitude kept going more and more, and more to the real understanding of human nature compared to the plan of God.

Verse 8: "To me, **who am less than the least of all the saints**... [How's that for a hierarchy? *Doesn't exist*—does it? *Nowhere!*] ...least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the gospel among the Gentiles—even the unsearchable riches of Christ." That comes through the love of God. So, that shows you exactly what God is doing.

Let's understand something about 1-Corinthians 13. There are quite a few things we can understand about this. I think I finally figured out why some books of the Bible translate the word 'agape' as *charity*—as it does here in 1-Cor. 13—rather than *love*. I think that was reflective of the committee that was doing the translating when they did the *King James*. So, the ones who translated the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, they translate it *love*. Here the committee that did 1st and 2nd Corinthians translates it as *charity*. But what this is telling us, this is the most important thing: You can go through 1-Cor. and you can see all the problems that they had: divisions:

- following a man
- allowing fornication
- eating things sacrificed to idols
- eating at the table of demons, saying that that was all right
- having wild church services with tongues, with a psalm, with an interpretation

You had your Peter party over here, your Christ party over there, your Paul party over here, your Apollos party over here; came to church and it was like coming to a zoo. I imagine the Apostle Paul was wondering, 'O God, why on earth do I have a church like this?' I What is it today? Some people ask me, 'What church era do you think we are in?' I tell them 1-Corinthians, because that's exactly what we are—every problem there.

So he says he's going to show you the way out of this. 1-Corinthians 12:31: "But earnestly desire the more *edifying* gifts; and yet I show you a way far surpassing *all these*." *The way of love! The way of God!*

In 1-Cor. 13 what we are going to see and understand and discover is this, that this is describing the nature of God—isn't that profound? Notice how he starts it out, 1-Corinthians 13:1: "If [you] speak with the tongues..." No! He says "If **I**"—Who's he applying this to? *Himself!* He's

saying: “If I [as a minister] speak with the tongues of men and of angels...”

I remember when John Paul II was coronated. That was during the Feast of Tabernacles 1975. I imagine many of you remember that. That year I kept the Feast in Pasadena, and we stayed down in San Pablo in a person’s home, and went on down to Tucson, Arizona. I was glued to that TV, because remember John Paul I was coronated just 30 days before. If you read Malachi Martin’s^[transcriber’s correction] book, he was going to get rid of the Masons within the Catholic Church and he was snuffed out.

So, John Paul II came on. And here, 54-years-old, or 56, I forget which, and he could speak 45 languages fluently, flowing from one to the other without even a stutter. I thought, ‘This has got to be last pope.’ You talk about a Babylon. Not only is it Babylon, but he can speak in all the languages of Babel—right? I looked at that and I thought, ‘My, my, we must be getting close to the end.’

Now look, he’s getting feeble and he’s doing all he can to try and make it to the year 2000. I wonder what the next pope is going to be like. And you know this one can’t last too long, so keep your eyes on that. But though he could speak all those languages, and like Paul said, even ‘if you spoke the language of an angel...’ I don’t know what language the angels have, but when they communicate to men they use the language that we speak. But can you imagine what it would be if someone said, ‘I know the language of an angel.’ Oh my, self-exaltation—right? *Yes!*

If I have that, “...but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal” (v 1). It doesn’t mean *as*, it means you *become one*. Have you heard any sermons like that? *Yes! Just so much noise!* Not conveying anything to teach or to uplift, or to inspire. So, if you have all of those things, what does it count?

Here’s a loveless prophecy. Have we experienced loveless prophecy? *Yes!* Verse 2: “If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” Not only does it profit nothing, he *is* nothing. When you get all this substitute *eros* and *phileo* love altogether looking to these things, what happens? *All going to fail*—right? How many here remember 1975? *Oh, Yes!* How you going to understand prophecy? What if you studied prophecy? Is that going to give you understanding? *That won’t give you understanding!*

All the way through the covenant that we have, *the covenant of eternal life*, Jesus said back in John 15—oh, there’s so much here, I tell you these

four chapters are really marvelous; I’m overwhelmed every time I read these. Let’s see how this is going to come to answer the question: How are we going to understand prophecy?

John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the Truth...” (vs 15-17). You receive the Spirit of Truth because you love God, because you love Christ.

John 15:9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love” (vs 9-10).

John 16:13 talks about the Spirit of Truth: “However, when that one has come, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, **it will lead you into all Truth...** [It has to be based upon the love of God and the Spirit of God working together.] ...because it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come.” *If you love God!*

That’s how we are going to understand prophecy, brethren. So, we can all relax. You don’t need to buy a plane ticket to Petra this year. No! God is going to work it out. I see I’m not even going to get halfway through what I have here, but you’ll just have to bear with me.

1-Corinthians 13:2: “If I have *the gift of* prophecy...” This can mean two things:

1. understanding prophecy
2. prophesying in the way of forth telling of God’s Word.

There’s a telling forth of events, which is one kind of prophesying. There’s a forth-telling of the Word of God, which is inspired kind of speaking kind of forth-telling. That’s what it’s talking about here.

“...and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...” (v 2). What happens when you have all knowledge? What happens when you have loveless knowledge? *You have mental superiority*—right? The young become conceited. Like your friend Bill Gates over here, who has billions. Or, if they’re old they become dictatorial. And we’ve experience that, too—right? *Yes!* So, this kind of knowledge and things like this are hard, cold, loveless and presumptuous.

“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains...” (v 2). What would happen? What’s harder to move than a mountain? Well, I haven’t been in the mountain moving business myself, but

what is harder to move than a mountain? **Human nature!** Besides, if you had the ability to move a mountain, what would you probably do with it? *You would plop it down in front of your enemy because you had no love; you didn't love your enemy so you'd put it down right in front of him and cause him trouble.*

"...but do not have love, I am nothing" (v 2). What does nothing mean? *It means you are a non-entity!* How important is love then? *Greatly important!* True love causes you to exercise the mental powers through the Spirit of God to choose the will of God to become your will. Now, that's very profound! You need to understand that!

God does not expect you to give up your will. God does not expect you to check your brains in at the door.

- God gave you a mind to use.
- He's given you the Holy Spirit to add to it, to understand.
- He's given the love of God so you can understand.

What He wants you to do is He wants you to **choose His will to become your will!** That's what's so important. Isn't that in the daily prayer? *Your will be done!* What's the biggest problem in the Church today? *Too many people want their will to become God's will!* That's how all false doctrines come. That's how all of these things develop, because someone has a will that they want this, or they want that, or this is interesting, and I discovered this, and how great that is.

Jim Hyles and I were talking about all these false doctrines flying around, and we thought, well just look at all the false doctrines concerning the Passover. I mean, it's unreal! Jim said, 'I can come up with some false doctrine and I bet some people would believe it.' And I said, 'What's that?' *Well, in the years when you have the Passover in the middle of the week, what we ought to do is fast for three days and three nights, and that way we'll know more about God because we fast three days and three nights.* You know, there would be people who would believe that, and they would do that—wouldn't they? Why? *Because they want their will rather than God's will!* God never said fast three days and three nights. So, we're not going to go around making our will the will of God. What we have to do is *let the will of God become what we desire—just the opposite.*

I tell you, the epitome of loveless service and sacrifice, v 3 "And if I give away all my goods... [It does not say *to feed the poor* in the Greek. It is that you give out all of your goods for whatever.] ...and if I deliver up my body that I may

be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing."

This is the whole concept of world's bootstrapism—right? *To improve yourself! To become better! Discipline yourself!* You can do certain things that way; you can accomplish certain things that way, but is it going to generate the love of God? *No!* Will you be more disciplined? *Perhaps!* What if you discipline yourself and you become Mr. America, or Miss America, or whatever, the greatest, the best, the strongest, the most beautiful, the most handsome, and all of this sort of thing? What do you have? *Without the love of God, nothing!*

So, you give everything that you have. I mean, some people have even given everything to their cats—right? Buy 100 years of cat food. Set aside the whole house. Boy, o boy! Then you make the ultimate sacrifice of *eros* love. You give your body to be burned, thinking that will please God.

"...but do not have love, I have gained nothing" (v 3). God isn't going to do that. God isn't going to respond to that. There are plenty of people out there who are sacrificing for this and that. And besides, most of them like to get their names in the paper—right? *Yes!* What does God say? *When you do your alms, don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing!* When you give, don't sound the trumpet before! That excludes Ted Turner who gave a billion dollars to the UN?

This doesn't show the works of love, but it shows the works of *eros*. You do not obtain the blessings of God's love by giving away. What you do, you give *because you love God*. You understand how that works with tithes and offerings then? That's why we tell people, 'Listen, if you don't love God and if you don't give because you love God, we don't want your money.' We're not going to merchandise the brethren. That's why when you got *The Seven General Epistles* book, there was not a bill. That's why we don't send out letters saying, 'Send in money. We really, really, need money.' No! What you need to do is work within the budget that God has given and make do with that. Can God take care of whatever is needed? *Yes, if you believe God, He will!* Is He going to provide everything you may desire? *No!* It's the same way in our lives.

Look at all of that. Become as sounding brass. I'm a non-entity. It profits me nothing. Whatever you have, that kind of substitute carnal *eros* love to accomplish a physical thing without *agape* love, **it is worthless** as far as any spiritual standing before God. Now, you may have people in the world saying what a wonderful person you are. You may have your name in print, or a plaque, or a statue, or a monument saying how great you were.

But that greatness sometimes ends up like poor Mohammed Ali. You look at those pictures where he said, 'I am the greatest.' You look at that poor man now. What a shame! What did it profit him? What did it profit the world? **Nothing!** And when he's gone and another generation goes by, who's going to remember Mohammed Ali.

That's why the love of God is the most important and that's what we really need to learn!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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- 1) John 3:16
- 2) Romans 5:8-9, 6-7
- 3) John 6:44-45
- 4) 1-John 4:5-21
- 5) 1 Corinthians 2:1-11
- 6) Galatians 1:13-15
- 7) 1 Corinthians 15:4-10
- 8) 1 Timothy 1:12-16
- 9) Ephesians 3:5-8
- 10) 1 Corinthians 12:31
- 11) 1 Corinthians 13:1-2
- 12) John 14:15-17
- 13) John 15:9-10
- 14) John 16:13
- 15) 1 Corinthians 13:2-3

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