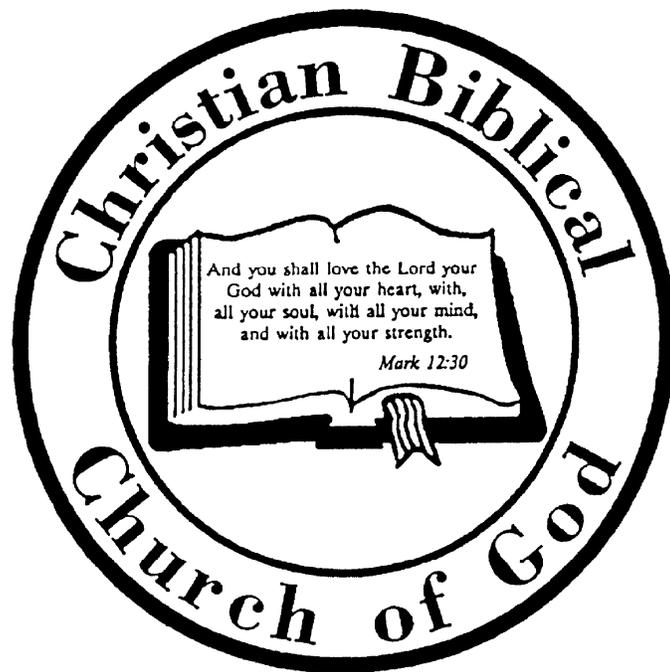


Love Series



Transcript Book

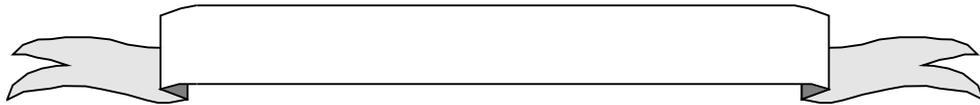
By Fred R. Coulter

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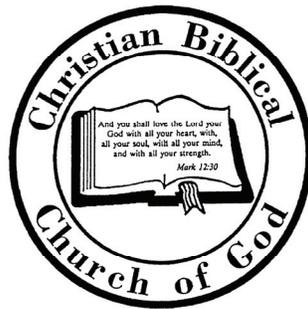
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HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

Love Series

Series of 22 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



Signature

Date

- When All Else Fails, God Loves You Date completed _____
- Love and New Covenant Date completed _____
- Understanding the Love of God Date completed _____
- Love of God #I Date completed _____
- Love of God #II Date completed _____
- Love in the Church Date completed _____
- Love of God—Second Calling Date completed _____
- Love of God in the Law and the Psalms Date completed _____
- Love of God in the Prophets Date completed _____
- Love of God in the Gospels Date completed _____
- Paul and Love Date completed _____
- Is the Love of God Unconditional? Date completed _____
- Love & Overcoming Offences Date completed _____
- Godly Love vs Carnal Love—I Date completed _____
- Godly Love vs Carnal Love—II Date completed _____
- Love One Another Date completed _____
- How to Make the Love of God Work Date completed _____
- Passover Preparation I Date completed _____
- Passover Preparation II Date completed _____
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Love Series

Foreword

This series of 22 transcripts will help you to learn more about God's love and what he expects from us. It includes messages

- When All Else Fails, God Love You
- Understanding the Love of God
- How to Make the Love of God Work
- Is the Love of God Unconditional?

As well as 5 messages on

- Passover Preparation, and many more

In a time when the “love of many is waxing cold”, not only towards each other but for God as well, we need to be asking God to fill us with His love. Searching the scriptures to understand this important subject, will bring greater understanding to the reader, and many have found that by listening to the messages at the same time as reading the transcripts, they retain much more.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.

Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You

Fred R. Coulter

I've been debating on what should I entitle this sermon, and I think one title would be:

- In spite of everything God loves you
- When all else fails remember God loves you
- In spite of all the trials and troubles you may be going through remember God loves you.

Let's begin with a survey of the world where we are; let's go to Matthew 24 and let's understand what Jesus told us about the world. It is a difficult place to live in, and I think that we are going to find that, increasingly it's going to be a far more difficult place to live in. Matthew shows how tough the world is going to be. And, of course, Jesus says:

Matthew 24:4: "...Be on guard, so that no one deceives you." Right now for the next couple of months we're going to be in the middle of defending the Truth in the Bible because there are people out there deceiving others with their various false doctrines.

Then it says there are going to be "...wars and rumors of wars. See *that* you do not let *these things* disturb you. For it is necessary *that all these things* take place, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in *different* places.... [they're trying to predict the earthquakes now] ...Now, **all these things are the beginning of sorrows**" (vs 6-8).

How can a Christian, living in sorrows, increase in faith? Or put it another way: when the whole stinking, rotten world is against you it seems, how do you get along in this world? You've felt that; I've felt that. I've gone through the whole thing of many different things, some of which I will discuss with you and some of which I won't discuss with you. God doesn't necessarily tell us that we have to share our whole lives with each other to the point that everybody's privy to everything in your life and then you start judging that person's life, or their performance or whatever, that's not correct either.

It gets really bad here, v 9: "Then shall they deliver you up to affliction, and shall kill you... [that time's coming] ...and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake.... [That time is already growing and growing and growing.] ...And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another" (vs 9-10). In another place it says the father is going to betray the

son; the son the father; the mother the daughter; the daughter the mother; the mother-in-law, and the foes and the enemies that you're going to face ***are those of your own household!*** (Mat. 10:37) That's pretty tough when even those in your own household are your enemies. I've experienced that, too, and it's difficult.

- What do we do now?
- Do we throw in the towel because it's tough?

Look at the Church of Smyrna, they were destined to be killed, and yet God commended them because of their spiritual ability. We need to really understand how we can hold on in times that are like this, because they're going to get more difficult. I see somewhere down the road—two years, three years, five years—when all of the international bankers, controlled by Satan the devil, are going to call the debt on the nation and we're going to be bankrupt, and we will go down tubes just like the Soviet Union. That day is going to come. There is no getting around it. We can't run out and stop it and change it, and we can't necessarily change our own particular situation so that we can necessarily survive in it. ***We have to trust in God and have faith!***

Then it says, v 11: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many... [it's an ongoing thing] ...and because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold" (vs 11-12). We've covered this before. How many times in our lifetime in the Church have we read these Scriptures, and have heard sermons based upon these? ***Many times!*** How many times, as a minister, have I done it? ***Many times!***

Verse 13: "But the one that shall endures to *the end*, that one shall be saved." Then it talks about the Gospel being preached in all the world, then the end shall come.

So, sometimes you feel like you're kind of like this little old lonely cow stuck in the flood. You know you're out minding your own stupid business with all the other cows munching grass, and in the morning and the afternoon—between munching grass and being milked in the evening—you chew your cud three times a day, you lie down and everything is nice. Then everything begins to be disturbed because here comes the rain. Now there comes the flood and you find higher and higher ground.

Sometimes you feel like this little old cow that was stuck out there when the flood came down

in Texas. Sometimes you have flash floods, like down in Texas. Wham! Everything is wiped out! So, here this cow standing on this mound of dirt, right up on top of this looking around, dripping wet, soaking in the rain that is coming down. The water is rising higher and higher, and the water is running down in the stream eroding the dirt around you and you're looking at all of this and you wonder: When am I going into the drink? There are going to be times when you feel exactly like that; I have felt that way.

So, *in spite of everything, remember, God loves you! In spite of everything remember, God is going to save you!* Maybe not in the time or in the way that you necessarily feel that God should do it for you. But in a way and a time that God is going to do it the way that He is going to do it.

Isaiah 41:10: "Do not fear; for I *am* with you..." Tie that right in with Heb. 13 where God said, 'I will not, no I will not ever forsake you or leave you.' And that's an important thing to remember, because when you're living in the sorrows of this world, and living in this world where iniquity is growing, abounding, *it's multiplying, it's increasing*. It sure is! So much that it's almost incomprehensible for me to grasp how that so many people are so fed up with so many things in this world, but they come back to the trough again like hogs addicted to alcoholic slop, and they just gobble it up.

So remember, v 10: "Do not fear; for I *am* with you; be not dismayed... [don't be discouraged] ...for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you... [God will help us regardless of the circumstances. And in order for the help to come it may get worse in the short run rather than better.] ...yea, I will uphold you with **the right hand** of My righteousness.' Behold, all those who were angered against you shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing. And those who strive against you shall perish" (vs 10-11).

I've seen that. I've kept sort of a mental running tab on all of those that got after us when we had the separation with Biblical [former Church of God]. It's a true thing that's actually happening to them. They're becoming ashamed and confounded, and buried in false doctrine, and deception. The things that are taking place, and that's just a natural occurrence, and for me to say that is not for me to get up and brag and say that God has done that to them because of what they did to me. No! God does that to everyone who does that to people who are trying to serve and love God—in spite of their mistakes.

I remember when, going way back when Herbert Armstrong would get up there and say,

'Yeah, and all those people that were against me they were struck down with cancer,' and he would rejoice in that. No, you don't rejoice in that. You just say God is right, and God is true, and God will take care of it. But you don't rejoice in their demise, because it may happen to you. God is just that way. God says, 'When your enemy is down and I'm dealing against your enemy, don't stand there and rejoice.' Because God says even He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Verse 12: "You shall seek them, and shall not find them; men warring against you shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.... [as if it never existed] ...For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, "Do not fear; I will help you." Do not fear, you worm Jacob *and* men of Israel; I will help you,' says the LORD and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (vs 12-14). Notice how low they got before they had the help—felt like a worm; felt miserable. I think if you let the peaceable fruits of righteousness work in you when those times come, that you're going to find that God will help you, and you will find that God's help will be better and greater in the long run when it comes.

Psalm 57 is a very good Psalm to go through. Many of these are. It gives us what we need to do, how we need to do it, and the approach that we need to have to God. You know, sometimes we're fighting the battle so hard or we're fighting something so hard *ourselves*, that we forget to stop and ask God to intervene for us. In other words, we worked at it so hard we've exhausted everything we can do and we haven't asked God what He can do. And lots of times when we get to that point and we just say, 'God, I've done everything I can do. You show me what to do,' then you're finally at the right point. That doesn't necessarily mean that is the solution, but it may be the beginning of it.

Psalm 56:1 (and Psa. 57 follows right along): "Be gracious unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all the day, he oppresses me." I didn't know they had freeways back then. I'm saying that in jest, but know that when you drive on these freeways you feel you're oppressed by the time you get home. Or, like when I mentioned to you about that situation on that commission payment. By the time I got done talking to some of those stupid bureaucrats I felt oppressed.

Verse 2: "Those who lie in wait for me would trample me, for many are those who proudly fight against me. When I am afraid, **I will trust in You**.... [Remember, *when all else fails God loves you.*] ... In God—I will praise His word—in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?" (vs 2-4).

I am sure, brethren, that these are some of

the prophetic words of the thoughts of Jesus. When you put it in the context of what Jesus went through during His ministry, this is a word-for-word verbatim situation that Jesus went through. Sometimes when we read the Gospels and so forth, we get inspired and we see what Jesus did and how He did it. The thought occurs sometimes that Jesus had everything nice and pleasant. No! He had it tough, and miserable, and wretched every day.

Verse 5: "All day long they pervert my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They stir up strife; they hide themselves; they watch my steps as they wait for my soul.... [Yes, a tremendous prophecy of the thoughts of Jesus and what He had to go through.] ...Because of iniquity cast them out. In Your anger cast down the people, O God. You number my wanderings, O put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, then my enemies will be turned back. This I know because God is for me" (vs 5-9).

Psalm 58:1: "Do you indeed speak righteousness, O mighty lords? Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men? Yea! In *your* heart you work wickedness; you weigh out the violence from your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb; they who speak lies go astray from birth" (vs 1-3). This is the generation we are dealing with. This is the thing we have to function within the world.

I mean, now they layout the statistics of those that are killed by gang wars in Los Angeles as if you're just reading a recipe. It's insane! Just yesterday a five-year-old kid was out playing in the front yard, shot dead because of a gang war. What can you do? So, now they are actually selling bulletproof clothes to parents who live in those areas. Did you see that on TV? Selling bulletproof clothes for kids rather than stand up there and go after these people.

You know the way Christ would do it, He would gun them down. They either put down their weapons and repent, and crawl in absolute humility and abject submission, or they're dead. Wouldn't put up with any of this nonsense going on because it's just this way, as soon as they are born, because the world is so evil.

Then it talks about how they are, v 4: "Their venom is like the venom of a serpent; he stops his ear like the deaf adder, which will not listen to the charmer's voice, *though* a skillful caster of spells. O God, break their teeth in their mouth; shatter the fangs of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away like waters that run off continually. When he aims his arrows, let them be as though they were cut off" (vs 4-7).

God is going to take care of it, but in His

time. And we are living in the age when God is going to store up all of this for the return of Christ, and the final judgment is going to come. This again gives us the kind of attitude and the kind of trust that we need with God, and where we need to put our heart and our mind.

Psalm 62:1: "Only for God does my soul wait in silence; from Him comes my salvation.... [comes from God] ...He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress..." (vs 1-2). Because of that, sometimes you may offend people in the world. There isn't anything you can do to get around it. It's like I explained about my little incursion with these people about the Truth. Should we teach our children the Truth? Oh yes, you know the actual fact of the matter is people do not want the Truth. They want to hear what they want to hear. They don't want the Truth. But in that you have to wait for God's defense.

"...I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you imagine mischief against a man? You shall be slain, all of you; you shall be like a bowing wall and as a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his great height; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse. Selah" (vs 2-4). And nothing could be further from the Truth than that in today's world. And human nature hasn't changed, that's the way it was back in David's day too.

Verse 5: "My soul, wait in silence **for God alone**... [it is **only** God] ...for from Him comes my hope. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God" (vs 5-7). When it says that God is our Rock we know that's talking of Christ. 'And that Rock that followed them was Christ' (1-Cor. 10:4). But in Matt. 7, Jesus gives us an indication of what's going to happen when God is our Rock. It doesn't mean that everything is going to go smooth and nice and easy.

I saw the other night *Where Eagles Dare to Fly*. Very good movie! Very intriguing. They had this huge cliff, and up on top of it was this fortress. The only way you could get in was through cable cars or trams. When you think of a rock, too many times you think of something like that. You're up, you're out of it and nothing's going to bother you and you can control everything that comes to you and from you. But that's not the way it's described here:

In Matthew 7:24 it's described a little differently: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man who built his house upon the

Rock.” We find back in Psalms that the Lord, ‘He only is my Rock.’

Notice what happened, v 25: “And the rain came down, and the floods came...” You didn’t have to be like that cow standing on that piece of dirt, watching it being washed away all around you wondering when you’re going to slide into the flood and die.

“...the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall...” (vs 25). This is telling us that we’re going to go through trials, that is, like the rain beating down upon us, the flood coming after us. Who sends the flood? *Satan!* Rev. 12:15 says that Satan sent a flood after the woman—right? This shows Satanic activity in our lives.

“...and the winds blew... [Just like in Job, a whirlwind came and took them away.] ...and beat upon that house...” (v 25). There are going to be times when the world around you feels like it’s beating on you. I’ve felt that. I’ve felt that way. There are times when I just feel as though I’ve been beaten up by the things in the world:

- by the people in the world
- by the circumstances in my life
- by the difficulties in my own family
- by people that come to me with their problems.

You feel like you’re beaten up.

“...but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock.... [If you’re founded on that Rock, which is Christ, remember, when all else fails, God loves you.] ...And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.... [just like that cow out there during the flood] ...And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (vs 25-27).

Psalm 62:6: “He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; **I shall not be moved.** In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock **my strength, my refuge is in God....** [notice how to call upon that]: ...Trust in Him **at all times**... [Not just when the going is good, or not just when the going is bad, but **at all times.**] ...you people, pour out your heart before Him...” (vs 6-8).

You have to take it to God in prayer. There are times when He let’s you go through just downright misery, and don’t think it any strange thing, that can happen. But God is there, He will help you, He will hold your right hand.

“...pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.... [then you look at the world and you see] ...Surely men of low degree are

vanity, and men of high degree are a lie...” (vs 8-9). Oh, how true!

Trying to help the homeless is a farce. Those who are truly homeless and need help, that’s fine. Did you hear about what happened to this one family somewhere back in the Midwest? This family said they we’re homeless. ‘We don’t have a job. We have no place to live, and our children are hungry and suffering and without clothes.’ So, the whole town— it was in a small town—decided, ‘We’re going to help these homeless people.’ So, they did. They got them a job, they got them social welfare assistance; they got food for them; they got them a place to live; they got clothing for their children; they put them in school; and it lasted two months until the social welfare ran out. Then he quit his job, and she quit her job, and they left town. So men of low degree are vanity. That’s true, we’re all vanity—all people.

Psalm 39:4 is quite a Psalm: “O LORD, make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how short lived I am.” That was not in one of his more humble times, but getting there. Don’t worry; you’re frail.

When I went down to L.A. I found out how frail and how quickly it can happen. In the motel I was staying in they had a tub with a shower, and then they have built in these nonskid things in the tub. I took a shower and I forgot to bring the shampoo. I thought, well I’ll step out and get the shampoo, and BAM! just like that I slipped instantly. Didn’t have even a split-second to try and catch myself. I landed on my shoulder, and the big toe of my right foot was just not quite well yet, it’s well now, and it hit that big old heavy nozzle that comes out of wall real hard. So there I am, ‘ahhhh,’ and it really hurt.

Now I know why people can slip in showers and break their necks and drown, and all that sort of stuff, because it happens so fast you don’t have a ghost of a chance. Believe me, next time, rubber mat *on* the tub floor. Boy! Believe me! And I’m going to take everything in with me, and I’m going to have a towel right there so if I have to do anything I can dry off, and I’m going to make sure that I’m standing upright, and before I take the weight off of one foot I’m going to make sure that I have the other foot safely down.

I didn’t notice it right at first, but my toe swelled up and it was black and blue as can be, and then my shoulder got all black and blue and painful. I knew at that point ‘you’re frail, you’re a stupid idiot.’ Did you ever do that? Talk to yourself like that? *Yes!* I looked in the mirror and said, ‘Oh, how dumb! dumb! dumb!’ I could have broken my neck, bashed out the side of my head, or anything. Kids get all upset when mothers say, ‘Watch out, be

careful you don't slip and fall, Johnny.'

"...that I may know how short lived I am" (v 4). You're frail! We've all have had something happened to us that we know how frail we are somewhere along the line—right? *Right!*

Verse 5: "Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth... [Not too big a deal—right?] ...and the span of my days is as nothing before You. Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah." That means, meditate and think on that, folks.

Verse 6: "Surely every man walks about in a vain show! Surely they are in an uproar in vain. He **heaps up** riches... [It means he swells himself up.] ...and does not know who shall gather them. And now, LORD, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the fool" (vs 6-8). So, when you get down and out and you feel like that, you feel you've had it, don't worry, God is there. He will help you.

Now let's go to John 14, because I tell you what, we can only take so much of being beaten up. We can only take so much of being assaulted by Satan. We can only take so much of those kinds of things. We can just go so long until we need some real good encouragement from God's Word. Let's get the encouragement from God's Word and see how that help comes, and see how it's going to be, and see and remember that *when all else fails, remember, God loves you*, and how much he loves you. That is:

- in spite of your weakness
- in spite of your vanity
- in spite of your own self-deception
- in spite of your sins

—without saying that you take advantage of grace, because that's not what I'm intending. *But God knows!* He didn't call us because we were perfect, and he didn't call us because we could become perfect by our own works. That's just the way it is. But here is what is important.

John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him...' You need to know even though the world hates you and though you feel like everybody on earth hates you, and maybe you feel your husband hates you, your wife hates you, all your kids hate you, **remember God loves you!** You need to understand that. I've gone through that, too.

Have you ever had a good knockdown drag out fight with your wife or your husband? Does that mean God has rejected you? *No! It means you had a fight!* God still loves you in spite of that, but maybe you've got some things you need to do, that's all.

Does God allow you to have a knockdown drag out fight? *Yeah, He'll allow you to have a knockdown drag out fight* with your wife, or your kids, or whatever. Sometimes it's necessary/sometimes it's not; sometimes because of your own stupidity and weakness or your own temper or whatever. I've experienced that. Remember, that if you love Christ and if you keep His words, the Father will love you. His grace is great enough to see you through your difficulty.

"...and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (vs 23-24).

John 16:27: "For the Father Himself loves you..."—in an ongoing active way. Regardless of what you have gone through, and there are a lot of people who listen to these sermons who feel as though that God doesn't love them because they've been beaten up by a church; or beaten up by a minister; or they've gone through some terrible situations in their life. But remember, *when all else fails you*—and people will fail you, because that's the nature of human nature—"...**the Father Himself loves you**, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God."

Those are really tremendous comforting Scriptures. These are the kind of Scriptures that when you're down, and you're out, and you're discouraged, that you can go pray to God and open up the Bible and claim these promises:

- God can *heal* you
- God can *help* you
- God can *work with* you
- God can *uplift* you from it

I tell you one thing, if we're going to share the same suffering that Jesus shared, which Paul said that he prayed for there in Philip. 3, that we are going to come to the very depths of despair, too, in our own lives. You cannot but help but go through it.

Don't feel as though that God has rejected you, or turned you aside, or cast you off, because He has not. **The Father Himself loves you because you love Jesus!** Did God the Father love Jesus? *Yes!* He said, 'This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.' But what did Jesus go through? **The very depths of despair, and every miserable rotten thing that possibly could be!**

Come on down to v 32: "Listen, the time is coming, and has already come, that you shall be scattered..." Maybe that will help answer the question that so many people ask: 'Why are there so

many little groups?' *God said there would be, that's why!*

"...each to his own, and you shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me" (v 32). Of course, that happened that very night. The very disciples that stood up and said, 'Yes, Lord, this won't happen to you.' Peter denied Jesus directly three times, and even swore and cursed. But yet what did He tell Peter? *He said, 'Peter, Satan has asked for you, but I have prayed for you that your faith be strengthened.'* Did He reject Peter? *No!* How did Peter feel? *Miserable!*

Verse 33: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, But be courageous! I have overcome the world." *Remember, when all else fails—which it will—God still loves you!*

1-John 3:1: "Behold! what *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!... [Remember that! If you get discouraged and down, you turn to 1-John 3:1 and read it, and pray about it, and do it on your knees.] ...For this very reason, the world does not know us... [The world doesn't understand us. Why?] ...because it did not know [or understand] Him [Christ]. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is" (vs 1-2).

And there's nothing that can replace that. If you have that buried in your heart and mind, and let it burn in your soul, there is nothing that can take that away from you. They can destroy you, they can kill you, they can do anything whatever that happens to you, and they can't take that from you.

I read a report about the pagans going against the evangelical rally over in San Francisco? You know what the homosexuals and pagans said? *'Bring on the lions, open the Coliseum. They need to be fed to the lions!'* You don't think that attitude is there? Ho! Ho! Ho! Yes, it is!

(go to the next track)

Verse 3: "And everyone who has this hope in him... [it's got to be *in* you] ...purifies himself, even as He is pure." How does he do that? *He overcomes the world!* You trust in the love of God, that's how you do it. That's how it's done, brethren.

1-John 4:19: "We love Him [God] because He loved us first." When did He first love us? How did He first love us?

Verse 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them.... [it sure does] ...We are of God; the one that

knows God listens to us; the one that is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of the deception" (vs 5-6). We're going to have to come back here when we start dealing with some of these false doctrines. First of all, before we start dealing in them and going into them, what I'm going to do is go through and do a survey of the New Testament and show the forewarning of the different doctrines that would come. They're all there, believe it or not. What we'll be dealing with in every one of these things is no different than what has gone on from almost time immemorial, but because we haven't been exposed to all of those, therefore, it seems new to us.

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another..." That's what we need to do in the Church, brethren, wherever we are. As we've nicknamed our church here 'the little no hassle church' because we love each other. Part of that love is that we understand we may have problems and difficulties, but we don't go running galloping around with a huge great giant mouth and the sledgehammer of self-righteousness and destroy each other.

It can be done, so we don't do it. Doesn't that make it a lot better with each other and the brethren? I can see one of the reasons why in church groups that there become cliques and there become groups that sort of get together, and that's because they're on the same gossip loop. That's the worst thing that can ever take over a church, because people become busybodies in other people's business when maybe it's between God and the person. *Pray for them, rather than talk about them!* I'm not saying this because we have any gossip. I'm saying this because we don't have any. And keep that in mind.

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.... [*Remember, when all else fails, God loves you!* That is the key and important thing to keep in mind.] ...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.... [When did He send Him? *Not when we were perfect!*] ...In this act is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the propitiation* for our sins" (vs 7-10). That means a *continuing ongoing basis* even now.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us...." Do you know and believe that love that God has toward us? *That's what we need to really capture, brethren!* That's what we really need to hold on to, otherwise we'll end up just playing religion like everyone else,

and trying to be good people because they want to be good. That's not all there is to life, and that's not the righteousness of God. Sometimes the greatest righteousness of God can be worked after you realize how miserable you are, not how good you are.

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. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment..." (vs 16-17). We can have that, and judgment is now upon the house of God. We can now have boldness toward God.

"...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (vs 17-18). That's what we need to have, and sometimes it's hard to do. Sometimes it's difficult to come by. Sometimes you'll almost literally be spit in your face when you try and show it. But be of good cheer, **God loves you in spite of everything!**

Verse 4 is the key: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them... [That is all the false prophets and false spirits in the world.] ...because greater is He Who *is* in you, than the one who *is* in the world." That is tremendous to know and understand. **Christ is in you**, and He's greater than anything that's in the world, or anything that the world can do to you.

Let's see this love in action in us, in spite of what we were, in spite of what we are. Why do I say that? **Because only God can change us!** Do you know that? Ephesians 2:2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh..." (vs 2-3)—and still have our troubles overcoming the flesh, and overcoming the world, and overcoming Satan, and so forth.

"...in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of the world. But **God, Who is rich in mercy**... [in spite of all else, *know that God loves you*] ...because of His **great** love with which **He loved us**" (vs 3-4). That's the most important thing for you to understand and realize: *God loves us!*

Verse 5: "Even **when we were dead in our trespasses**... [that's when God loves us] ...has

made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For you have been saved by grace*)." That is **having been saved from the world, having been saved from Satan**. So, now you're on that Rock, and let the floods come, and let the wind blow, and let it beat against it, because you're on the Rock and there isn't anything that's going to move you, because **by God's Divine grace you are saved!**

Verse 6: "And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the ages that *are* coming..." (vs 6-7). That's when we'll be there in those heavenly places. But in effect having God's Holy Spirit *in us*, as we see in the first chapter, that is the down payment, the earnest of that. So, in a sense then we have those heavenly things, that is God's Spirit *in us*.

Verse 7: "So that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith... [*having been saved* (past tense) from Satan, from the world, from the 'prince of the power the air'] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God" (vs 7-8). That's why in spite of yourself, in spite of anything that goes on in your life, God loves you. **Remember, when all else fails God loves you.**

Verse 9: "Not of works... [Has to be of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, not of works. What can you do for God?] ...so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (vs 9-10).

- you can take cheer
- you can be encouraged
- you can be thankful
- you can praise God

Romans 8:28, a very key important verse: "And we **know**... [It's something you have to know and comprehend, and sometimes it's difficult to do when you're going through it.] ...that all things... [**everything**] ...works together for good..." You might have to insert there, 'in the long run,' after the raining, after the flooding, and after the beating.

"...work together for good to those who love God... [in that raining and flooding and beating, then you determine whether you love God with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and being] ...to those who are the called according to *His* purpose Because those whom He did foreknow, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His own Son... [great and fantastic destiny that God has for you] ...that He might be *the* firstborn among many brethren... [the firstborn from among the dead (Col. 1).] ...Now, whom He predestinated,

these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, those He also glorified.... [not yet happened, but it's going to] ...What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who... [or what] ...*can be* against us?" (vs 28-31). **Nothing!**

Let's see how this love of God works in us. Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith **into this grace** in which we stand..." (vs 1-2). That's a tremendous thing. That grace covers all. It covers the sins and problems and difficulties that you get into.

God can get you out of them. Obviously not the unpardonable sin, but I don't think anyone here is wanting to do that—do you? If they were they wouldn't be here—correct? I don't think anyone listening to the sermons is ready to do that, because if you were you wouldn't be listening to the sermons—correct?

"...and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [that's awfully hard to do, but looking back you can] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* [experience] character..." (vs 2-4). That's what we're going through, brethren. God is giving us experience. That is what is so important.

Now, sometimes we don't like the experiences. I look back and see some of the things that I've gone through. I didn't like them at all, but I can look back and say now that those were exactly what God wanted me to go through, because I've learned by experience—you, also, by your experience in the things you've gone through. You can talk to people—not from a point of view that it's academic in the head—from the heart because you've experienced it, and that means a whole lot more.

"...and character *brings forth* hope.... [because *when all else fails, remember God loves you, and that's what gives you hope!*] ...And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us.... [because God loves you] ...For even when we were without strength, **at the appointed time** Christ died for *the* ungodly.... [at the set time or ordained time] ...For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But **God commends His own love to us**, because when we were still sinners Christ died for us" (vs 4-8).

That's how much God loves you! Even not only while we were yet sinners, but **before we were**

even born, Christ died for us. God doesn't have any pleasure sin. Even when it got so bad:

Genesis 6:5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth..." It's that way today. It is terrible. I'm sure the time is going to come when you know the time has already come. There are times when I feel like just taking a .45 gun to the TV. Since I don't want to pay for that, and my wife would not put up with it, and my kids would be enraged, I use the channel switcher and the mute, and that takes care of it. But it is compounded, it is multiplied, it is expanded through all the media, and the education, and everything as never before. We are almost right here at this same point today. Remember Jesus said, 'As it was in the days before the flood in the days of Noah'—here it is right here

"...and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.... [**Continuously!** How did God feel about this?] ...And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart" (vs 5-6). And yet, in spite of all of that, **God still loved the world**. And He loved it enough to save it through Noah and his family. He loved enough to promise never to flood it again. So remember, **when all else fails God loves you!**

Let's go back to 1-John 5, and this becomes important for us to understand, because we can overcome it all, brethren. **We can!** That's the important thing. **We can overcome it all!** It's going to take some work. It's going to take some dedication. It'll take some suffering. It'll take some agony. It'll take pulling heartstrings, pulling emotions, and the whole thing. But in the final analysis we can overcome it all, without a doubt.

- God *is* God
- God is for us
- God will help us
- God will be with us

1-John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments." That's what we're trying to do. That's the whole reason why we're here. I'll just have to say here, if anyone preaches or goes to church for any other reason, they're only kidding themselves and *God knows it*. Doesn't God know all the thoughts of every heart? **Sure He does!**

Verse 3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.... [What has God ever asked you to do that's real burdensome? **Not a single, solitary thing!** Whatever God has asked us to do is for our own good.] ...Now then, everyone who is begotten by God overcomes the world..." (vs 3-4). We are overcoming it; we have to fight it. We have

to be against it, and all that sort of thing. But we are overcoming the world.

“...and this is the victory... [which is the result of overcoming] ...that overcomes the world—our faith” (v 4) Our faith becomes stronger

- *when we love God.*
- *when we know that God loves us*
- when we understand in spite of everything
 - ✓ your own sins
 - ✓ your own circumstances
 - ✓ your own difficulties
- that God still loves you

—then you can have even more faith—isn’t that so? You may have to go off to a private place, or climb atop a hill, or go someplace alone and pour out your heart before God, as it says there in Psa. 62, and let the tears flow and let everything, every emotion in you. Remember, you start out that you love God and God loves you, and then you can have more faith. You can overcome the world.

Verse 5: “Who is the one who overcomes the world? Even the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” That’s the one! Again, on an ongoing believing, overcoming basis.

What if Satan is right there, right there at the very throne of God? And he is there (Rev. 12:10). Satan is there before the throne of God accusing us day and night saying, ‘See, see, look at that, look there, look at that, look at this. God, how dare You put up those people.’ But through Jesus Christ and the grace of God, God sees you as His sons and His daughters, and in His family, and glorified with Him. And there is no problem that cannot be overcome.

But here’s how you overcome Revelation 12:11: “But they overcame him... [and his accusations day and night] ...through the blood of the Lamb... [because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ] ...and through the word of their testimony... [because of what you speak and believe] ...and they loved not their lives unto the death.” They love God with all their heart, mind, soul, being and strength. That’s why, and that’s how, and that’s the way it needs to be.

Ephesians 3 is what I call the lifting up of the feeble hands (Heb. 12) because of what you go through. Ephesians 3:4: “So that when you read *this*... [this epistle] ...you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ.” It certainly is a tremendous mystery—isn’t it?

- That God could love us *before we were even born.*
- That God could love us *while we were yet in our sins.*

- That God can love us *even though Satan accuses us* day and night.
- That God loves us *in spite of all of our mistakes and difficulties* that we go through.

That is a mystery!

Verse 5: “Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men...” Aren’t you glad you were born after Christ? Aren’t you glad that God called you? What would you do if you were in some of these past civilizations that didn’t know, which God didn’t reveal?

“...as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by *the Spirit*” (v 5). It says in John 16 that the Holy Spirit will *lead* you into all Truth and will reveal things to come. Part of that is drinking out of the Word of God all that God inspired and put in there by His Holy Spirit.

Verse 6: “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 unto me through the inner working of His power” (vs 6-7). You know no minister knows anything but by the grace of God. No minister can preach but by the grace of God if he can truly preach. That means that the minister is nothing more than what God wants him to be, to preach His Word.

Verse 8: “To me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the gospel among the Gentiles—*even* the unsearchable riches of Christ; And that I might enlighten all *as to* what *is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God...” (vs 8-9). That’s quite a thing! If you want to have hope in God, remember that He’s revealed the greatest secret in the world to you, and to those that He has called. That it was hid from the beginning of the world until the preaching of the Gospel.

“...Who created all things by Jesus Christ; So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places*, According to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 9-11). God has that purpose for you, and that calling for you, and that love for you, and a place in His kingdom, which He’s already reserved for you. Which Jesus said, ‘In My Father’s house are many mansions, and I go to prepare a place for you.’

Verse 12: “In Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith. So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my

tribulations for you, which are *working for your glory*" (vs 12-13).

You read some of things that Paul went through and you would think, looking at it strictly from a human perspective, that God was against him—but God wasn't.

- God was with Paul in the deep
- God was with Paul when he was being stoned
- God was with Paul when he was beaten five times, 39 stripes

And I bet his back was sore, and I bet he had scars.

- God was with Paul and loved him in spite of the fact that He didn't heal him of his eye affliction
- God loved him even though the brethren turned against him

In spite of it all, ***remember that God loves you!*** If you have difficulties or tribulations, don't faint at them even though they're faintable. Don't give up because of them. Ask God to help you see the solution. *He will!*

Verse 14: "For this cause... [The purpose of God, what God has done, and *He loves us in spite of everything.*] ...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory..." (vs 14-16). The very glory of God! All the wealth and power of the universe and the glory of God.

"...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man" (v 16). That you have that conviction and love. That in spite of everything, you know God loves you. In spite of everything, you know that God is right, and that you have the experience, and the patience, and let God's Spirit work in you.

Verse 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love... [Again, this love works both ways—from God to you, and from you back to God, and you being rooted and grounded in that, on that Rock.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints..." (vs 17-18).

This is what we need to grow into, brethren. This is what I hope we can grow into in these next few months. Grow a little more in it this year

- to learn more of God's plan
- to learn more of God's way
- to learn more of God's love
- to learn more of God's faith and hope for us

"...[that] you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and

depth and height... [of the very purpose of God, which is revealed by God with His Spirit as we're strengthened with might, with the very power of God] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge... [You cannot know the love of Christ when compared to knowledge.] ...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (vs 18-19). That's a tremendous and wonderful thing to contemplate and understand. And that's why I say that, in part, to pick up your feeble hands, and strengthen the feeble knees, and lift up your heart and mind and attitude, because God still loves you in spite of everything.

Verse 20: "Now, to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen." (vs 20-21).

So remember, when all else fails, God loves you!

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

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 24:4, 6-13
- 2) Isaiah 41:10-14
- 3) Psalm 56:1-9
- 4) Psalm 58:1-7
- 5) Psalm 62:1-7
- 6) Matthew 7:24-27
- 7) Psalm 62:6-9
- 8) Psalm 39:4-8
- 9) John 14:23-24
- 10) John 16:27, 32-33
- 11) 1 John 3:1-3
- 12) 1 John 4:19, 5-10, 16-18, 4
- 13) Ephesians 2:2-10
- 14) Romans 8:28-31
- 15) Romans 5:1-8
- 16) Genesis 6:5-6
- 17) 1 John 5:2-5
- 18) Revelation 12:11
- 19) Ephesians 3:4-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 10:37
- Hebrews 13
- Psalm 57
- 1 Corinthians 10:4
- Revelation 12:15
- Philippians 3
- Colossians 1
- Revelation 12:10
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Love and the New Covenant

Fred R. Coulter

One thing we need to understand—the spiritual maturity to which we need to come—*we need not be afraid of anything, anyone, or any doctrine*. I feel that if you really strive to stay close to Christ, which I'm sure all of us are trying to do, and you ask for the mind of Christ, and study His Word, that you will be able to know the Truth and understand it. You will be able to differentiate Truth from error, because Christ promised we would.

It says, 1-John 4:6: “By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.” Therefore, you can have discussions of any length—and even quite heated at times like it was in Acts 15 if necessary—and still love each other, and still have the Spirit of God, because God doesn't want us to be just doormats. I mean, how on earth are we going to assist Christ in ruling in the Millennium if we're just doormats? *Never happen!* One of the things that we need to understand, and understand more deeply in the differentiation between law-keeping to the letter of the law.

Can you have a relationship with people or with one another, based solely on law, and be correct, but have it a nonfunctioning agreement? This is what has happened in so many Churches of God, which stress—and rightly so, but too much so—*keeping the commandments*. No one is saying we should not keep the commandments, which is really kind of the lesson of Job. Job did everything perfect in the letter, but he was missing one important ingredient: really loving God enough to see his own position in relationship to God. That's why he had to repent so drastically at the end.

I want to play this song, and it's from *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Do You Love Me?

Tevye: Golde do love me?

Golde: Do I what?

Tevye: Do you love me?

Golde: Do I love you?

Tevye: Well?

Golde: With our daughters getting married and there's trouble in the town, you're upset, you're worn out, go inside, go lie down. Maybe it's indigestion.

Tevye: Ah no, Golde I'm asking you a question. Do you love me?

Golde: You're a fool.

Tevye: I know. But do you love me?

Golde: Do I love you?

Tevye: Well?

Golde: For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked your cow. After twenty-five years, why talk about love right now?

Tevye: Golde, the first time I met you was on our wedding day. I was scared.

Golde: I was shy.

Tevye: I was nervous.

Golde: So was I.

Tevye: But my Father and my mother said we'd learn to love each other. And now I'm asking, Golde, Do you love me?

Golde: I'm your wife.

Tevye: I know—But do you love me?

Golde: Do I love him?

Tevye: Well.

Golde: For twenty-five years I've lived with him, fought with him, starved with him. Twenty-five years my bed is his. If that's not love, what is?

Tevye: Then you love me?

Golde: I suppose I do.

Tevye: And I suppose I love you, too.

Tevye and Golde: It doesn't change a thing, but even so, after twenty-five years, it's nice to know.

If you listen to the song very carefully, he asked, ‘Do you love me?’ She said, ‘Well I suppose I do.’

Many people in the Church of God are that way toward God. They think that they can love God, and express the love to God, by just keeping the commandments. That's exactly the reverse of what God wants us to have.

Let's see something interesting and ask: Why should we love God? And that was really the question that he was asking his wife: Why don't you love me? *Well I washed your clothes, and I mended your socks, and I've cooked your meals*. All legal binding agreements in the law for a marriage—right? *Yes!* ‘But do you love me?’

We need to clarify something else I think is most important and most profound: You've heard said that God is putting us through all of this misery we're going through so we will learn not to sin. That's true, but I'll tell you one thing that's important: We're not going to go through all eternity beating our spiritual flesh, as it were, saying, ‘I'm not going to sin, I'm not going to sin, I'm not going to sin.’ No, because *the only way you can live for eternity is by love*. You think on that a minute! God

is not going to have us there unless we love Him. And that's just the way it's going to be.

Let's come to Mark 12:28, and this will show you that the love of God is more than just a commandment. It's more than just repeating the words and a ritual. "And one of the scribes who had come up to Him, after hearing them reasoning together and perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is *the first* commandment of all?'" The Greek there is 'protos'—*primary*, the most basic fundamental commandant of all

Verse 29: "Then Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God...'" (vs 29-30). Notice how this is to be. There is not one word of commandment-keeping here. And we will see how that all flows together in 1-John in just a minute.

Verse 30: "And you shall love the Lord your God with **all your heart**... [So you won't have to ask: Do you love me?] ...and with **all your soul**... [If your soul is your physical body, then that means you have to take care of it and eat the right things, and so forth.] ...and with **all your mind**... [That's something else, because people truly, deeply in love can think of nothing else! All your mind, and not only that, it's not a part-time job.] ...and with **all your strength**. This is the first commandment. And the second is like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (vs 30-31). And Jesus gave a third commandment: that you 'love one another in the same way that I have loved to you.'

He also said, Matthew 22:40: "On these two commandments hang **all** the Law and the Prophets." They hang *from*. Love is not supported *by*; they come *from*. So, Law is derived *from love*. When we understand that God is love, and there is only one Lawgiver—Who is God—then Law comes *from* love because God is love, which is very important. We'll change our whole perspective in how we obey God, how we look to the things and how we're going to respond to God.

Now notice what he said, Mark 12:32: "Then the scribe said to Him, 'Right, Master.... [that is, *well spoken Master*] ...You have spoken according to Truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as oneself, **is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices**'" (vs 32-33). In a marriage you can put up with an awful lot of clothes not washed *if* you truly love each other.

Now notice Jesus' answer. And this is what

is missing most of the time, v 34: "And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, 'You are not far from the Kingdom of God.'" He's getting close to the object of it, and when you put all of this in context with the punctiliousness of the keeping of the commandments in the letter by Judaism, you will understand the profundity of the statement. 'You are not far! You are finally getting close!' Then look at all the other questions that they asked Jesus, and so forth.

Now let's understand something that is so *profound*; let's see the **requirement of love** that God put on Himself for us. This is a very basic fundamental Scripture. Let's hope we can learn some more of the love of God from this, John 3:16: "For God so loved the world..." This means God's profound love for the world, not just us, but **the world**. In God's own time He's going to show that, and prove that. After all it's the same thing, just like in marriage. What on earth good is a marriage if it's just run by law, if there's no love? It will soon break down in hate. And what good is it to serve a God who is not a God of love? I mean, you think about that!

Verse 16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten** Son... [And it's interesting in the Greek: 'He gave His only Son *the begotten, the only begotten*'—so it's even more emphatic.] ...so that everyone who believes in Him..." As I mentioned in the series on John that 'in' means *into*. Your faith comes *from within* you, **out of you toward God**, and *into* His very being of faith and love.

"...may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (vs 16-17). That is God's desire. He's given the choice up to us.

Let's understand how this impacts into our lives. Let's see some very important things. This is the whole basis of the New Covenant, 1-John 4:7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love**.... [it's something we can possess, but that is what God is.] ...**In this way**... [in the Greek again, as we will learn, it is 'en toutoo,'—*in this way* or, *this manner* or *this means*] ...the love of God was manifested toward us..." (vs 7-9).

He's talking about the apostles in relationship to showing the love of God toward the disciples and the believers. That this kind of '**God is love**' was manifest in us that we are preaching to you vs the first part of this, which are the antichrists and the ones of the devil.

He goes on saying here: "...that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.... [now we come back to the present tense again] ...In this *act*, is **the love**..." (vs 9-10). In other words, that there's no other way of saying the profundity of the love of God—**the love**—in this very act of sending His Son.

When you look at it, the hardest thing for us as people to do—I've had to go through this, and I know you have—is *to show love to someone that you don't want to show love to*. With the world filled with sin the way it is, would you come and die for them? I mean, think of that the next time you watch all the evil on TV, and you'll realize, as I do, we have a long way to go in growing in love—right?

That doesn't mean, for the acts they have done they don't deserve to be punished, because they do. We know God's plan; that God is going to take care of it in the long run. But nevertheless, Christ was sent *before* these people were even created, and His sacrifice applies to them even to this day. You know that in this world we're going to be dealing with a lot of people. It's not going to be a matter of arguing over whether you go to church on Sabbath or Sunday; it's going to be a matter of how they can restore their lives to God. And living in such a hateful world, how's it going to be if there's no real true love? You can have all kinds of mealy-mouth love; you can have all kinds of things where you profess love, but to really have it, that's what we're trying to learn here.

Verse 9: "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. In this *act* is **the love**—**not that we loved God**... [And that's the whole lesson of Job. No one is going to go to God and say, 'God I love You; You've got to give me salvation.' Because in that you're telling God what to do.] ...not that we loved God..." (vs 9-10).

What is the greatest thing that brings us to repentance? *To understand the love of God!* In spite of all the stupidity; in spite of all the sins; in spite of all the difficulties that I have gone through—that you've gone through—whenever you've gone through a trial or difficulty or whatever it is, you realize that **God loves you**. That's the whole basis of the New Covenant, brethren.

"...rather, that He loved us and... [not only that He] ...sent His Son *to be the propitiation*... [Propitiation is one step above expiating. Expiating is removing your sin once. Propitiation is removing your sins on a constant basis—which we need. And that's why we have grace.] ...for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are **duty-bound** to love one another" (vs 10-11). We've never had it put this

way before—have we? *But that is true!*

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time.... [There were a lot of people going around saying that they had seen God.] ...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." You think about that for a minute, brethren. The very fact that you have the Spirit of God in you, **God is dwelling in you!** Now, that's a tremendous amount of love in itself just to think on that one thing alone. Of all the people in the world—and we surely have got to come in somewhere right at the bottom rung or near to it, or maybe on the bottom side of the bottom rung—**God loved us!** Not because we're great, that we love God and God responded because of our great deed. **No!** And **God dwells in us!**

1-John 3:1 "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure" (vs 1-3).

Based on love, let's see how our conduct has to be, v 4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.... ['anomos'—*against law*]And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him **does not practice sin**..." (vs 4-6). That's what it means in the Greek: you're not *practicing* sin. It doesn't mean you don't sin, but you don't *practice* it.

"...anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him. Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who **has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His seed of begettal**..." (vs 6-9). The Greek for *seed* is 'sperma'—from the Father. That's how He is dwelling in us; is dwelling within him.

"...does not practicing sin, because His seed *of begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God" (v 9). Brethren, this means that anyone who has the Spirit of God, if they're living in sin, God is going to bring them to a conviction so they can repent, because they can't be practicing sin.

I recently had someone come to my door, and was so happy that I was still living where I was when I was pastoring in Monterey. This individual went to the congregation in Monterey that I was pastoring at that time; and with all the trouble and difficulty in the Church, dropped out, and has been going to a Methodist church every Sunday and *knew* that it wasn't right.

She came and knocked on the door and said, 'I've got to get back on the track.' ***You cannot be practicing living in sin!*** This is a fantastic example, brethren. Think of how many are out there, that have the Spirit of God, that are wandering like lost sheep, and all they want to know is: Do you love me? And all God wants to know is: Do you love Me?

To ask in relationship to what I just said about someone not living in sin, what about weakness? If you have a weakness, which causes you to sin—and I guarantee everybody one thing: you will never be perfect in the flesh, and everyone has a weakness somewhere along the line. Let that be a motivating factor to let you love God more and more, because you don't have the strength within you to overcome the weakness. It is a weakness, and only through the strength and love of God can you ever overcome it.

Verse 10: "By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from *the beginning*—that we should love one another" (vs 10-11). I'll tell you—from the pulpit and between brethren—there's been too much *lack of love*: bashing, knocking and condemning.

Verse 12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother. And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous. My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren. ***The one who does not love his brother is dwelling in death.*** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. By this *very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren" (vs 12-16).

We think that it's easy to love God Whom we haven't seen. But God says you better love your brother that you do see. We'll see how this ties in with the love of God.

1-John 4:14: "And we have seen *for* ourselves... [the apostles; probably at this particular

time John and Andrew and some of the other apostles at Ephesus when this was written] ...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. 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" (vs 14-16). Now you see how this ties in with the command to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being.

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. ***There is no fear in the love of God...***" (vs 17-18).

Now, you need to think about that! That doesn't mean that we throw caution to the wind and we run out down the road at 200 mph or anything like that, and say we have no fear. But ***there is no fear in coming to God, if you love Him!*** There is no fear in love. If you have a husband and wife who love each other, opposite of what we've heard on this song here, then there's no fear. He wouldn't have to have the fear: Do you love me? And she wouldn't have to have the fear to answer back and say, Well, I do all these things. This is the kind of fear it's talking about.

"...rather, perfect love casts out fear..." (v 18). It's an ongoing thing. You are ***casting it out.*** This includes:

- your sins
- your weaknesses
- fearing that you won't make it into the Kingdom of God

How many times has that been held over people's head? *God wants you there!* That's why God has called you. You should have no fear that you're not going to make it. *God wants you there!*

"...because ***fear has torment...***" (v 18). I tell you, the times I've had fear, and worry, and frustration—what happens? *Torment! Sleepless nights!* We've all gone through it. Anyone who hasn't, it'll come because it's a test of love. And I'll tell you one thing that is sure, absolutely for sure: as human beings ***we do not have love perfected in us unless we suffer. God did not have love perfected in Him through Christ, until Christ suffered!*** Think on that!

God is always perfect in love, but what God did to redeem us was such a loving act that even God had His love perfected to a greater degree through the suffering of Jesus Christ, because of what Jesus went through and what He bore in His body.

“...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him **because He loved us first**” (vs 18-19). We need to always remember that, and especially for a minister. What did Christ ask Peter?

- Peter, do you love Me? *Yea Lord, I love you!*
- Feed My sheep.

He said the second time:

- Peter do you love Me? *Yes Lord! He was a little irritated that time: You know I love You!*
- Feed My sheep.

And the third time He said:

- Peter, do you love Me? *Yes, Lord, You know I love You!*

And we know the play on words between ‘phileo’ and ‘agape.’

- Feed My lambs!

This needs to be an act that a minister does, not because he wants to prove that he’s a minister, but because he loves God:

Verse 20: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar... [God puts it right back to us—doesn’t He?] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs 20-21).

Let’s see that in the Sermon on the Mount is exactly where Jesus started—wasn’t it? He said, Matthew 5:23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go *your* way; **first** be reconciled... [which is an act of love] ...and then come and offer your gift” (vs 23-24).

1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him Who begat also loves him who has been begotten by Him. By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: **when we love God... [present tense] ...and keep His commandments**” (vs 1-2). How much more will you keep the commandments of God if you love Him? How much better will you keep the commandments of God without having to say, ‘Oh I got to keep it better.’ By having the whole attitude of loving God.

Verse 3: “For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

Now let’s go to the Gospel of John, chapter 14. When I did the *Passover Ceremony* booklet, it really dawned on me how absolutely profound the New Covenant is, *based on love*. Love is greater

than law. Law will give you the minimum requirement as to what you should do. If a husband says, I want my breakfast at six every morning and he has to tell his wife every day. ‘I want my breakfast at six every morning.’ If she loved him she would have it ready, he would never have to ask. She would know, and wouldn’t that make things better? Or likewise, with the husband. You don’t come along and suspect because certain things aren’t done that she doesn’t love you or care for you. Anyone who says that they’ve been married and never had a fight, well then come and tell me about it, I’d like to know. Even ministers and their wives have fights, everybody, once in a while, I’ll guarantee it. They’re not human if they don’t.

Here’s the whole basis of the New Covenant John 14:15: “**If** you love Me...” Notice there again—**love first**. You’re going to keep the commandments because of love, and that profound love, of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being; as you say, every fiber of your being.

“...keep My commandments—namely My commandments” (v 15). This would be an interesting thing, and I don’t have it on computer, nor do I have the Greek on computer, but I hope to one of these days as one of my projects: go through the New Testament and pick out every commandment that Christ gave. Some people like to specialize in going back over the 630 in the Old Testament. That’s fine, nothing wrong with that. But let’s try all the ones in the New Testament and see how we measure up.

Then He says He would send the Holy Spirit (v 16). Let’s come on down to v 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him”

Brethren, we are sitting here with the most profound thing, and I pray for greater understanding of this: *God the Father*, the greatest Being in the universe, **loves us**. I mean, think on that! If you feel down, if you feel out, if you feel neglected; if you feel put upon; if you feel unwanted—which all of us have—**remember, the greatest Being in the universe loves you!** And loves you so much that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, **Who was God**.

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... [v 14]: ...And the Word became flesh...” so that God could understand the temptation and the sin that we go through. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and carried the *law of sin and death* within His very members, so that we could have our sins forgiven. That’s what He bore in His body to

the tree, to the cross. *Not having sin but tempted in every way like we are*, He would show His *profound love for God* and *His profound love for us*. And that is so profound what He did: for God to empty and divest Himself as being God to become a human being, which he was a human being, and having the *law of sin and death* in Him, and to be *tempted in every way as we are*, was an absolutely qualifying for Christ as our Savior—had to be.

Now coming back to here in John 14:22: “Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’”—which is quite a question.

- What makes you different than other people in the world?
- What is it that separates us from people in the world?
 - ✓ not because we’re better
 - ✓ not because we’re richer
 - ✓ not because we’re greater

But there’s been a manifestation to us by the Holy Spirit of God to lead us to Him, and lead us to love Him and keep His commandments. So, He says, ‘Here’s how I’m going to manifest Myself to those that I call and not the world.’

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, **he will keep My word**... [You can do a great and profound study on that: *In the beginning was the Word*; not only just the commandments, but the words of Christ.] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me” (vs 23-24).

That, brethren, is really a deep and profound thing how we need to really love God. I’ve been through every doctoral argument that there is, and some people like to say that they manifest love by throwing out doctrine. You can’t do that, because doctrines are the teachings of God. You can’t love God and throw out doctrine. But I tell you what, even though you get it all right and get it all straightened out, *if* you don’t love God what good is it? Are there people who know of the Sabbath Day and keep it in their own way but don’t have Christ? *Yes!* Are there people who don’t murder and don’t have Christ, that don’t have the love of God? *Yes!* You can go right on down the line any one of the commandments. That’s not to do away with them.

Let’s see how that this love, coupled with grace—and grace is the first manifestation of the love of God—that something very important happens. By faith, by grace and by love, what we

actually do when we love God, we keep the laws of God in a proper and correct way. That’s something to really think and ponder on—isn’t it? We do! And what are we doing with this love, because you can have law without love and *you accomplish nothing eternally*. But if you have eternal love and you keep the commandments of God with faith and grace, then here’s what you do:

Romans 3:31: “Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, we are establishing law.” It’s very interesting that in the Greek it means: *you make the law to stand*. And I think that’s profound. **We make it to stand!**

Let’s see how this is true with loving God and magnifying the law. Isaiah 42:21: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake...” Think how absolutely perfectly Christ kept the laws.

(go to the next track)

Verse 21: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake... [Think how absolutely perfectly that Christ kept the laws. Why did He keep the laws that way?] ...**He will magnify the Law and make it glorious.**” How will He make it glorious? *By basing it on love!*

Let’s go to John 5:19. “Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself...’ That’s interesting from the point of view the Greek is ‘ek’—that means *coming out from within Himself*. In other words, He’s not going to initiate anything on His own.

“...but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder” (vs 19-20).

Let’s come to the very heart and core of the whole process of the New Testament, the New Covenant, John 15:8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit...”

I want you to pay particular attention to Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone that says to Me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who’s doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we* not cast out demons through Your name’” (vs 21-22).

What kind of fruit? A lot of people look to income and say, ‘Boy! God is blessing us, we must be spiritual.’ But what kind of fruit? That poor little group over there. I know when I talk to different ministers they ask, ‘How many do you have?’ And I

say, 'Everyone that truly believes. How many do you have?' **Because it's not the number!** Though sinners march hand-in-hand, they're all going to fall. It's not the number! What kind of fruit is it that we're going to bear?

John 15:8: "...so shall you be My disciples.... [Then He answers the question. Notice, too many times we don't connect the verses so they're one after another—isn't that true? Notice how He says to bear fruit]: ...As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love...." (vs 8-9). IF you continue in 'My love' then you're going to *bear the fruit* 'I want.' What is the fruit?

'...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness...against such things there is no law' (Gal. 5:22-23) Why? *Because those are a spiritual law to themselves based on love!*

- We make the law to stand!
- We make the Sabbath stand!
- *Because we love God!*
- We make the Holy Days to stand!
- *Because we love God!*

We don't do away with them. We don't have the gall to march up to God and say, 'God I love you so much but I hate Your Law.' That's incongruous—isn't it? **That's stupid!** It doesn't work

How it is to be, v 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.... [*it is a living love*] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full" (vs 9-11).

And everyone asks: Why am I so miserable in this Christian life? I've had my share of misery in it. *So that we will learn to love!* Do you not appreciate love when you have suffered? *Yes!* That's what it's all about. May we quit beating up on each other and learn to love each other so we have the joy.

I'll tell you what, you come down to the last where you think there is no one in the world, when you think that no one understands you: your wife doesn't understand you, your husband doesn't understand you, your kids don't understand you, nobody in the world understands you and you're a dirty rotten slob. The only thing you can do is go to God and bawl and say, 'God, I don't know anything.' That's when you appreciate love. That's what He's talking about here. That's when you can have joy and it will be filled in you through Christ and His Spirit.

Verse 12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this..." (vs 12-13). It all comes to giving of Christ's life. The only one that God the Father ever begat in the flesh—the one and only. Did He risk all eternity? *Yes! It was only one!* That's how much love God had for us, and He had for Christ. The only way Christ could do it was because He loved God. How? *With all His heart, with all His mind, with all His soul, with all of His being, with all of His Spirit, with all of His strength—everything that was in Him*—and that's the model that we are to follow. That's what He says, 'As I have loved the Father, as the Father has loved Me.'

Verse 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. **You are My friends.**" When you get that very alone feeling, you still have one good friend, and that is Christ. And He loves you, and He knows all of your faults and mistakes. He knows all of your weaknesses, and difficulties, and temper, and anger. And you go to God blubbing and say, 'Oh God, forgive me.' Whatever your problem may be, *God knows!* He still loves you, and He is still your friend.

Verse 14: "You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.... [I'm going to do that. Please, someone help me to do that—the commands in the New Testament.] ...if you do whatever I command you.... [We're going to find that not only are those based on the Ten Commandments, but they are based on love and they are so profound.] ...No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father. **You yourselves did not choose Me...**" (vs 14-16). The reason that is there is that so no man could boast.

Can you imagine how Job would be if he entered into the Kingdom of Heaven after having... You know at one point he got so angry he said, 'After I've done all these things, I just wish that there were a betwixt man [an umpire] between me and God, and he will know my righteousness.' Can you imagine what it would be like if he got into the Kingdom of God on that?

There is law-keeping without love, there is law-keeping without understanding human nature. That's why he had to be brought to repentance. How did God bring Job to repentance? *He came and smashed him on the head and said, 'Job you're a dirty rotten no good sinner.'* **NO!** God said, 'Job:

- Where were you when **I** laid the spans of the heavens?
- Where were you when **I** called forth the deep?

- ***I'll*** declare to you, Job, that ***if*** you can clothe yourself in majesty you can save yourself.

And Job said, 'Ah, ***I've heard of You by the hearing of the ear but now my eye sees You.***' And that, brethren, is God's love to bring him to repentance, and that's why Christ has called us *in love* to that repentance and to this kind of relationship as a friend. When we, as the bride of Christ—I mean, just think of this down further—Christ is never going to have to come to his bride and say, 'Do you love Me?' ***Never!***

Now let's see if we can go on further with this, and if there's anything that we can do to keep this in mind, brethren. There are certain things in the Bible that God has given to just purely inspire us, because inspiration is the vehicle to overcoming sin. That's how you overcome sin: *loving God* and *knowing God loves you* is the vehicle to overcome sin!

John 16:26: "In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you." Neither will Mary because she's not there. You don't need Mary up there. Mary will hold a prominent position in the Kingdom of God. Believe me, she will be *magnificent! The only woman in all of history to have been selected by God the Father to be impregnated with the seed directly from Him* for His only begotten Son. Some other women have made the claim when they've gotten caught: 'It wasn't so.' She was the only one to have conceived ***from the seed of God the Father*** in her womb. No other woman can make that claim.

And for us, v 27: "For **the Father Himself loves you...**" God's love is on a constant, continuous, ongoing basis for each one of us. But He's given us all free choice, so therefore, He doesn't interfere in our lives because He wants to know, 'Do you love Me?' That's the question now. He's not going to ask it later, He's asking it *now*.

"For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (v 27).

Verse 33: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation.... [that's why you go through all the things you do] ...But be courageous! I have overcome the world." And *with His Spirit and His help*, you can, too!

John 17 is the most inspiring part of the whole New Testament, brethren. Let's think upon these things, and let's think upon the song, as we read this: *Do you love me?*

John 17:1: "Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, 'Father, the

hour has come; glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You.'" Just think for a minute that the love that God has for us that we are going to have the glory.

Romans 8 is also inspiring. Why are the Epistles of Paul so inspiring? *Because he suffered terribly so that he could write this for us!* When he was called He told Ananias: 'You go to him and you tell him that he is to testify of Me before the nations, before the children of Israel and the things that He would suffer.' Look what he wrote!

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by *the Spirit of God*, these are *the sons of God*." If there are any ministers listening, this is how you ought to treat the brethren, *as the sons of God*. They are not chattel, they are not dollars, they are not merchandise, they are not numbers, ***they are the sons of God!***

Verse 15: "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear... [Remember when we said *perfect love casts out fear*, that's what John wrote.] ...but you have received *the Spirit of sonship*, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying that we are the children of God*. Now, if *we are* children *we are* also heirs—truly, **heirs of God** and **joint heirs with Christ...**" (vs 15-17).

God is the Author of ownership of property, brethren. If we're joint-heirs we're going to inherit the property of the kingdom. I mean, you think on that! Isn't that something? That's why it's so foolish to try—think on that for a minute: how foolish for a Church of God to drown itself in wealth when we're going to inherit the Kingdom. Think of it! And remember what He told the rich man. He said, 'You had your consolation in this life.' Don't go out and take a poverty vow, going to the other extreme. Remember, we're going to inherit the Kingdom of God:

"...joint heirs with Christ—if indeed **we suffer** together with Him... [that's the tribulation we were guaranteed] ...so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (v 17). Do you know how fantastic it's going to be to have a *spirit* body, to have a *spirit* mind, to have the *glory* of God? It will be so good for those of us who have the problem of trying to lose weight. We won't have to worry about getting overweight (just a little aside). ***We're going to be glorified together!***

Verse 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us." That's why we have to be resurrected on Pentecost and meet Him in the air on the Sea of Glass, so that we

will be all glorified together. We will all be there at the marriage of the Lamb, and we will receive the blessing of God in full *spirit fullness*. That, I tell you, is something! That is something!

Verse 19: “For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God; Because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope, In order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (vs 19-21). How will that be? ***By the love of God!***

When you get down to your very lowest—and I’ve been there, and you been there—you go to Rom. 8:28. ***This is a promise, this is a guarantee!***

Verse 28: “And we know that **all things** work together for good to those who love God... [we come full circle back to *loving God*] ...to those who are called according to *His* purpose. Because those whom He did foreknow, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His own Son, that He might be *the* firstborn among many brethren” (vs 28-29).

This is what He was praying about, John 17:2: “Since You have given Him authority over all flesh, in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.” Think on that! On your calling! God the Father called you! ‘None can come to Me unless the Father draw him.’ I’m still trying to fathom that, brethren, that the Great Creator, the most superior, magnificent Being of the universe, ordained to reach down into my life, into your life, and call us and give us of His Spirit. I mean, think on that! That is profound! Does that not pale into insignificance then, all of the stupid little things we put ourselves through trying to be Christian? *Yes!*

Verse 3: “For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word.” (vs 3-6).

Verse 7: “Now they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You. For I have given them the words that You gave to Me; and they have received *them* and truly have known that I came from You; and they have believed that You did send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world, but for those whom You have given Me,

for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and all Yours *are* Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*” (vs 7-11). Even Christ looked to this being in the Family of God together.

Verse 12: “When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I am speaking *while yet* in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them” (vs 12-13). Brethren, how can you have the joy that God fulfilled in you unless you understand what we’re going through right now? *You can’t!* Because there’s nothing to be joyful about.

Verse 14: “I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world... [as much as we may desire that from time-to-time when things really get bad, but He’s not going to.] ...**but that You would keep them from the evil one**” (vs 14-15). And I just wonder how many times, brethren, God has rescued us in keeping this prayer that Jesus asked, to keep us from the evil one.

Verse 16: “Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth. Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your* Truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word; **That they all may be one**, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You...” (vs 16-21).

Brethren, that can’t be accomplished unless there is love. The only way we are going to live through all eternity is ***on love, by loving God***. We’re going to keep all of His commandments, don’t worry. This is what so many people are afraid of. I don’t even think they comprehend that they are afraid of love because they think that if you really preached love that somehow you’re going to lose keeping the commandments God. *No way, never happened! Never happen!* Christ’s whole goal is that we may be one.

“...as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me, in order that they may be one, in the same way *that* We are one: I in them, and You in Me, **that they may be perfected into one...**” (vs 21-23). That’s what God

is doing now. Perfection is done how? *'Perfect love casts out fear!'*

“...and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me may also be with Me where I am, so that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; because You did love Me before *the* foundation of *the* world. Righteous Father, the world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You did send Me. And I have made known Your name to them, and will make *it* known; so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (vs. 23-26).

‘Do you love Me?’ is what God wants to know right now. Our answer should be, ***‘with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, with all our being, with all of our strength.’***

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 John 4:6
- 2) Mark 12:28-31
- 3) Matthew 22:40
- 4) Mark 12:32-34
- 5) John 3:16-17
- 6) 1 John 4:7-10, 9-12
- 7) 1 John 3:1-16
- 8) 1 John 4:14-21
- 9) Matthew 5:23-24
- 10) 1 John 5:1-3
- 11) John 14:15, 21
- 12) John 1:1, 14
- 13) John 14:22-24
- 14) Romans 3:31
- 15) Isaiah 42:21
- 16) John 5:19-20
- 17) John 15:8
- 18) Matthew 7:21-22
- 19) John 15:8-16
- 20) John 16:26-27, 33
- 21) John 17:1
- 22) Romans 8:14-21, 28-29
- 23) John 17:2-26

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 15
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- Galatians 5:22-23

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Gospel of John*

Booklet: *Passover Ceremony*

Understanding the Love of God

Fred R. Coulter

Today is quite a day. We just read an article concerning the demise of the auditorium—Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena California, which was originally suppose to be a house for God, is now closing because of financial situations. And before services began we reminisced a little bit about it. And all of those of us who have been longtime in the Church of God understood the beginnings of it, and all the things that went on there—the good and the bad and all that sort of thing. But I would like to read to you the dedication prayer by Herbert W. Armstrong, May 6, 1974. And I would assume that this was taken off of a tape recording because I know that Mr. Armstrong was not in the habit of writing out his prayers:

Great God, lifting up hands I want to thank You, Almighty God, from the bottom all of my heart for I know all these people are doing it the same way; they feel the same way toward You. Really this is not our gift to You, it is Your gift to us, and we're grateful that Your name is on it. And now we come to the time that I want to dedicate this in the name of the living Jesus Christ, to the honor and the glory of the great God. Almighty God, please grant that we may always use this building to Your honor and glory. That nothing will happen here that will be displeasing to You. I ask You, Almighty God, to honor prayers that go up from this building. I ask You to bless those who come in to it. I ask You to bless every one who will speak in sermons or Bible studies from this platform. I ask You, Almighty God, to bless it and protect it in every way and to preserve it because You are the great Creator and You are the Creator Who preserves that which You create. So we ask You to preserve this, immaculate and clean and beautiful. And to keep it clean to represent clean and honest and forthright character. May it be an inspiration to all who come in. And we ask every blessing, Father, to people that come. And we give You thanks as far as we humbly can, for allowing us to have such a beautiful place at Your headquarters church to honor You. Thank You in Jesus name. Amen.

I think that perhaps that's a more appropriate opening to the sermon that I'm going to bring today than the opening that I had. From the point of view that, that is a tremendous example for us to

understand that the best intentions, unless you follow God's way, are going to come to nothing. The auditorium is now closing its doors to any activities in the Ambassador International Culture Foundation. I would assume that they won't even have church services there pretty soon. I don't know what is going to happen to it, but as I mentioned for years, that when I go to Southern California to the Los Angeles area, I stay many times with a friend of mine who lives directly across the street on Orange Grove from the campus. I could look over there and see all of the buildings. And I remember when it was beautiful and filled with students, and on the Sabbath day the students would walk down through the gardens and see the flowers. It was very, very inspiring.

Now you drive by there, there aren't any flowers. You drive by there and all the apartments, where the people lived who worked at the campus are all empty. In some cases the drapes are all drawn back and you can see right through the building. You go down in the area where the cafeteria was, and the gymnasium, and the parking lot. The parking lot is all ruined because of the earthquake. It is really a testimony to the good intentions of men that have gone astray because of sin.

I know that I give a lot of sermons beginning with Isaiah 66; you know there's a reason for it, and there's something that we need really to learn out of this. There's something we need to grasp in our own lives. This is going to be perhaps one of the most important series of sermons I'm going to do (which is also part of the series of 1st, 2nd and 3rd John), which is understanding the love of God. So, here's just as good a place as any to begin.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me?... [You go through the Bible and every time someone builds a house for God they get in trouble, don't they? *They sure do!*] ...And where *is* the place of My rest?... [Anything you're going to do for God, you have to realize]: ...For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD...." (vs 1-2).

When they built the auditorium they got, supposedly, the best of everything. They even got gold overleaf, and at that time—believe it or not—gold was at \$42 an ounce. And they spent thousands, and thousands of dollars to gold overleaf the walls, and to put gold ceramics on the tile up underneath the roof. You would look at these pillars going up—

and I know a lot of people would come along and look at that—and almost break your neck looking up to that, and you can see the gold ceramic tile. Real gold up there!

In building the auditorium they tried to make it with the colors—as near as they could—as they found described in the Bible. And yet, *from day one* that Solomon finished the temple—and you might take this as an instructive thing to read; go back and read about Solomon—he started out with the best of intentions—didn't he? You read his dedication prayer; that's quite a prayer! Very similar to what I just read that Herbert Armstrong gave when the auditorium was opened, only much longer. God put His presence there, and God filled the temple with His Holy Spirit—with the visible cloud while the priests were trumpeting long and loud, and all the singers were singing. And there's every indication that that happened on the Feast of Trumpets; God came to His Temple.

Right after the Temple was dedicated and all that was done, and Solomon was done and dedicating, God began to bless him, and bless him with more and more. He became the wisest man in the entire world; he also became the richest man in the entire world. All the kingdom of Israel was the leading kingdom on earth, and they were bringing 666 talents of gold as tribute to Solomon every year.

Gold was so plentiful in Jerusalem that it was said that silver was counted as gravel in the streets, just stones to walk on. He had the best of everything. But what happened to Solomon and all of his best and good intentions? *He got carried away and didn't love God and didn't serve God!* Then he went after strange women; he got so obsessed with that, that he ended up with 300 wives and 700 concubines, and made leagues and alliances with those marriages.

Then as the master builder he went across from the temple over on what later was infamously called the Mount of Abomination, and he built temples to every one of the gods of the women he married and polluted Jerusalem with all of his wretchedness and pagan religions. So, it may be true that Solomon was the first Mason because he surely left God after he built the temple. We have something very similar to that repeated down in Pasadena, and we didn't learn the lesson.

Verse 2: "For all these things My hand has made ... [God says in another place all the gold is His, all the silver is His, everything that you make anything out of.] ...and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look...'" This is what God is interested in, this is what God wants, and because God can show His love to this kind of person—and this kind of person can receive the love

of God back to them—we're going to see that love is so great, and love is so fantastic, and love comes from God. We don't have it brethren, we just don't have it; God has got to give it. We have to work at it once we begin to understand it. But unless we experience the love of God in our heart, and in our mind, and in our lives, soul and being, we're just like this auditorium that's being shut down.

This is why God says: "... 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (v 2). Then He shows if you don't have this attitude, everything you do is as if it's a great and giant sin.

People can be correct according to the Law, but if they don't have love what good is it? Is not Judaism a testimony of law without love? *Yes, it is!* That's why God has preserved it so we will know and understand. I'll have to say I'll be the first to confess, in our past church experience, brethren, *we never learned of the love of God.* We did not! We learned about the commandments, that's true. We learned about the Sabbath, that's true. We learned about the Holy Days, that's also true. But we also destroyed thousands of lives, and thousands of children, shattered emotions, and broke hearts, because we were all so keenly bent on authority—right? Remember that? Wasn't that taught to our families? Didn't we institute that in our families? Didn't we create a lot of problems? And I include myself there, too.

I'm here to tell you that ***the administration of law and authority does not produce love.*** You may understand some things, which are right, but being right does not necessarily mean that you love.

- love is supreme
- love is so great
- love is from God
- the perfection of love is the whole reason why we were created and made and put on this earth in the first place.

Because of all of His creation, we alone were made to receive and to give love, and to receive the love of God that He gives to us, and in turn to give that to other people.

What I'd like you to do, since this is part of the series in Epistles of John, turn to the *Word Studies from the Greek*, pg 19—First, Second & Third John—I have a section there concerning love.

Let me mention that in James 1:20: "Because man's wrath does not [equal or produce] work out God's righteousness." You can put anything in there you want: *wrath, authority, anger, schemes, devices, way of man...* does not produce the righteousness of God. Likewise, it doesn't produce the love of God. Love is something that you come to

understand when you realize how deficient you are as a human being. I think the older you get the more you realize how deficient you really are. The Apostle John was the apostle that Jesus loved. And, in fact, on the Passover night he leaned back on His chest and asked Jesus who it was that was going to betray Him. Can you imagine the shock of the disciples the next day when they found out that it was Judas Iscariot? Can you imagine that?

John and his brother James were pretty zealous. When they first started out with Jesus they were rough fishermen, the sons of the Zebedee, and they left their father and followed Jesus. During the course of the things that they were doing—watching Jesus, and so forth—James and John got real mad one day because some people weren't willing to except Jesus coming into their village.

They came to Jesus and they said, Luke 9:54 "...'Lord, will You have us to call fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah did?'.... [because they didn't 'receive You']...But He turned *and* rebuked them, and said, 'You do not understand of what spirit you are. For the Son of man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*'..." (vs 54-56).

John had a long way to go to learn love. They were also called in another place, 'The Sons of Thunder'—which probably meant that they were loud-speaking, and whenever they speak there was a big booming voice going out, and they were very impressive. As a matter of fact, so much so that James and John, along with Peter, went up to the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17). They were close to Christ, and yet the Apostle John did not write until late in his life. I'm sure he did a lot writing before that.

Remember when we went through the whole Gospel of John verse-by-verse, and how much we began to understand about the love of God, the grace of God and the things that are there? How many years had we been in the Church before we did that? *Long time!*

Oh yes, we heard sermons on the Sabbath, and, yes, we heard sermons on childrearing—that you could beat them into perfection if you just beat the sin out of them—not knowing at that time being falsely taught that children are perfect until they learn sin from parents. *That's not true! That is an absolute lie!* And we based the whole doctrine of childrearing and discipline upon that—didn't we? *Yes, we did!* Did it fail? *Yes, it did!* It didn't work. I'm here as a testimony to tell you that it doesn't work. *You can't command love by law!*

John had to learn that! We all have to learn that! I'm here to tell you today, brethren, that the

reason why things are going wrong in the Churches of God is because most of them do not even have a clue as to what the love of God is.

Someone just handed me a church news here, and right out of the whole thing they're hell bent on condemning people that water down the laws of God. They haven't come to the point to get out of the elementary things concerning the Gospel. The Gospel is not only a call to repentance, the Gospel is *a true relationship between you and God the Father, and Jesus Christ, so each one of us can come to know the love of God!* That's what it's all about.

In our lives and in the world today it says the world is like this: 'because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold.' Even just the natural normal love that God built into human beings is so stifled, and squashed, and just crunched together—because of sin and iniquity—that who knows how to love?

- Do we not have topsy-turvy marriages?
- Do we not have topsy-turvy everything in the society?

And so perverse and so wretched that now homosexuality and every perversion under the sun is the ruling thing of the day. How do we, in coming to the Church of God, ever learn about the love of God if all we are doing is being beaten up by condemning and guilt ridden sermons and fear to smash your face into the fact that you are a sinner and that you've got to strive harder to keep the law. You got to be perfect because God is not going to except you unless you're perfect in the letter of the law. *Oh, that's just so much a lie, that's all it is, it's a lie!*

God the Father has reached down to *call you*. God the Father Himself *loves you*. That's why He called you. Oh yes, we need to be obedient to the Law, that's true. But *if you don't obey from the heart*, what good is it? Every religion on earth is a testimony to some kind of law, or rule, or regulation to try and make you a better person.

I hope that we're really going to learn the love of God, and that we can all experience one of the most profound things that God the Father wants us to have. That is to really *feel, and know, and understand the love of God*. Then we can begin loving each other. Then we can begin loving our neighbor as our self; not until then. People can even live and be married 40, 50, 60 years and still never know each other. They can still be like passing ships in the night, never love each other. Men have to exercise their authority, and women have to exercise their picky-ness, and no one is ever willing to say, 'I love you, just because you're you.' That's what it's all about brethren.

Then to come into the Church of God where the love of God is supposed to be taught and all you learn is authority and anti-love tactics. They *do not* work! They *will not* work! That's why God is doing what He's doing to the Church today. Because *if* in all the exercise of what we are doing, we don't learn the love of God, we haven't learned a thing.

Perhaps—concerning the Apostle John—he was able to teach and write about the love of God more deeply, and with more understanding, than any of the other apostles. In the Gospel of John, he wrote the most simple and yet most profound revelation about God the Father's love.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world... [Even to the wicked and the unkind, God is still steadfast in His love to them at the level that He has promised that He would sustain it. Do you understand that?] ...so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life."

Then he wrote in 1-John 4:8 and 16 that **God is love**. That's what God is! God delights in love!. God is also Lawgiver, because love is going to produce law. But law is only the fundamental expression of love. The deep spiritual love that God wants us to have is not the love which is 'phileo,' which means *brotherly kindness*, which means you as people generating love from you. You can have that love toward people.

There are some people that you love, and some people you don't love, and some people you don't like. But Christ came to change all of that within our heart, our mind, our soul and our being. We're going to see that one of the hardest commands to follow, because I know there are people who say, 'Well hey, hate is the only way to go.' But we'll understand why God commands us to love our enemies. That's a hard one—isn't it? That is a difficult one—isn't it? *Yes it is!*

The main verb for 'agapao'—which means *a love greater than one's own life*, God the Father's and Jesus Christ's love to us. In the noun form that is called 'agape'—means *Godly, Divine love*. In the Church we were with before, the only thing we learned about love was that love is an outgoing concern. What do you mean? *Never defined! Never taught! Never gotten into!* God's love for us is so profound brethren, that the whole creation and His whole plan of salvation—even after Adam and Eve and our forefathers, sinned—that God still loved us and is going to provide a way back. Now, you think on that!

It is most profoundly expressed by the love of God the Father for Jesus Christ and the love of Jesus Christ for the Father. That's why Jesus never did sin, though He had the capacity to sin by

carrying the law of sin and death within His flesh. The reason He didn't sin was because He loved the Father and the Father loved Him, and He was full of the Spirit, and full of grace, and full of Truth. That's why! He didn't run around repeating the Ten Commandments in His mind. **He loved God!**

I'll guarantee you one thing, the way you're going to overcome sin the most, the way any of us are going to overcome sin the most—because sin starts in the mind—is *if you love God, and if you receive the love of God back!* It isn't going to work any other way, and anything else out there is just 'playing church.' That's all it's doing.

We've got all this stuff! We've gone through heresies! We've gone through why we need to keep the Sabbath, and all that. Look, if we don't understand that by now then where have you been? That's why God is weeding all of this out. This is the kind of love that God wants us to have. Through the power of the Spirit of God true Christians are to develop, because this is something **you grow into**. You are to develop this profound and deep love of God—for God and each other. We are to come to have God's very own love in us. This highest expression of spiritual love can only come from God because **God is love**.

Love is a gift! Love cannot come any other way. We as human beings do not have the love of God, which comes from His Holy Spirit, naturally within us. We do not! We cannot, as one church looked around and said, "Oh, we're lacking love in this church." Well, Jesus said the world's going to know that they know us, that we are Christians *if we love each other*, so therefore, let's all love one another. While the words sound true it's fatally flawed, because human beings cannot, from within their own selves, generate the love of God. It isn't going to work.

Let's understand some things. Let's see what kind of love it is that we are to strive for and obtain. There's an awful lot in here, and we're going to be coming back to 1-Corinthians 13 an awful lot, because this gives us the true value, the true definition and the true interaction of love.

1-Corinthians 13:13: "And, now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love." Let's think on that, because that is the most profound thing—"...the greatest of these *is* love..." God has called us to grow into that love, brethren, to learn of that love. Not only to know the Word of God, but to receive the Spirit of God in your heart and mind that you feel and you experience the love of God in the most profound way. When you do, I guarantee it's going to change your life. When you do, I guarantee it's going to change your prayers. It just will!

So, the greatest is love. We're going to talk about the greatest thing, the greatest attribute, and the greatest expression God can give to us. Not only is God looking to the one who has a contrite spirit and a humble heart, He's also saying in that: 'The greatest thing I can give you is My love. I could give you a temple. Hey, I've created the world for all of mankind.' But is that the greatest expression of God's love? *No! He made us with a mind; He created us with emotions; He gave us feelings—did He not? He wants us to know and feel His love.*

I want us to understand how this is going to come. It's not going to come because all of a sudden you say, 'I'm lacking in the love of God, got to have the love of God, have to show myself friendly and loving.' *No!* It has to come from within with God's Spirit. That's what repentance is all about—that you repent of *your* way, and ask God for *His* way. You repent of *your* thoughts, and ask God for *His* thoughts. When we get close to the Passover we're going to understand the tremendous and profound love that God had for us in sending Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:16: "That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man." You have to have that Spirit of God first, and you must be strengthened in it first.

- When you do, *it is to grow!*
- When you do, *it is to develop!*
- When you do, *it is to produce fruit!*

Yet, all of that is from God.

Verse 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being **rooted and grounded in love...**" It does not say rooted and grounded *in law*. Law is all understood. That gives you the very basis for everything. Are you rooted and grounded in love? Are you growing toward that? Are you realizing that this alone can come from God?

"...may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [this is what God wants us to grow to, brethren] ...what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and **to know** the love of Christ..." (vs 18-19).

The word *know* is 'ginosko'—which means *to experientially understand it from having experienced it*. Have you experienced the love of God? Brethren, I want to tell you, when you do it's wonderful. I can't say that I've experienced the ultimate of it. I will have to say that after being, how many years in the Church of God, 32 years—29 of them as a minister—and I'm just coming to really begin to understand it. Have we not missed something somewhere? Have I not missed something somewhere? *Yes indeed!* You can't go back and undo what you should have done way back

when. There's nothing that can cover that except the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That's how loving God is. Think on that!

"...you may be fully able to comprehend... [v 19]: ...And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge..." (vs 18-19). There is no knowledge; there is no book you can go to. How many people have studied the Bible and still never have come to the knowledge of the love of God, because they're not willing to yield themselves to God.

You look back and you think of all the pride, and arrogance, and self-importance, and everything that the ministry in the Church of God has done. And you compare that with the love of God. What I want you to do—if you have old sermon notes—is count how many sermons that you heard on love. I want you to count how many Scriptures were actually read concerning the love of God. I want you to think about that! I want you to ponder that, and I want you to pray about it, because the only way we're going to get the love of God is go to God and say, 'God I don't know.' Because it is true, '...the way of man is not in himself to direct his steps'—it's just not!

Now let's go to 1 Corinthians 2, and what I want you to do when we're reading this, I want you to think about all of the stupidity that has been exercised in the name of God, in the name of religion, in all of the heresy, and all of the apostasy, and all of this sort of thing going on. It's even said, 'You know it's all right to work on the Sabbath now, because everybody sins a little bit every day.' *That is so far away from God. That is so twisting and perverting of the Scriptures, it can only come from Satan the devil.* That's not the Spirit of God!

Let's understand what is so important for us, 1-Corinthians 2:9: "But according as it is written, 'The eye has not seen...'" This ties right in with Isa. 66—doesn't it?

- What are you going to do?
- What is the greatest thing that you can accomplish?
- How good can you see?
- How well can you hear?
- How smart are you?

"... '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'" (v 9). You've got to love Him. Obedience is necessary, but you got to love Him beyond that. "...those that love Him." So grand! So glorious! So marvelous!—that God would give us eternal life and the kind of existence that He has. Isn't that wonderful?

I know, brethren, that as we get older—and we've got a lot of senior citizens with us—I talked to

a man who's 73, been in the Church 21 years, and I know that man has never truly experienced the love of God. I tell you what, when you get to be that age you know down deep inside in your own heart and mind, and your own soul, and down to the very marrow of your bones, the most important thing you want to know in your life is: **Does God love me?**

Everything of youth is gone: strength is gone, the eyes are gone, the teeth are gone—we may have false ones, we may have glasses, we may have hearing aids. The bones are decrepit and hurting; we may have replacement joints, or whatever. But out of it all when you get down to the innermost recesses of your very being, and the older you are the more this becomes true: **Does God love me?**

Do you love God? That's why so many senior citizens are taken advantage of, and bilked by smooth con artists. They think that this person is showing love to them, and they really need love. Do you not think that God wants that love shown to these people? Do you not think that God wants them to really grasp and understand what kind of love that He has for them? That they can face the end of their lives in love and assurance to know that yes, *they are safe in God and in Christ!* Isn't that the most profound thing we need to understand? *Yes!* God has to reveal it to us. We have to love Him. He will teach us the greatest and most profound things—won't He? *Yes, He will!*

Verse 10: "But God has revealed *them* unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.... [the deepest thing of God is His love] ...For who among men understands the things of a 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. Now, we have received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God... [or, out from God] ...so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God" (vs 10-12). That's what He wants us to know. So this is the greatest.

I think this is going to be most instructive at this time when we see what is going on, especially what is going on in the world and in the Church. You know the bottom line is, who cares what the world thinks. Are you ever going to please the world? *No!* But you can please God.

1-John 4:5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world... [that's what we're hearing coming in the Churches of God] ...and the world listens to them."

I talked to a man, that in their local church—in one of the biggest Churches of God (I don't think it will be the biggest one for very long)—what they're going to do is have an open house all during

the month of March. They're going to invite all the public in, trying to increase numbers, trying and get more money. If isn't of God, what good is it going to do? My comment to that individual was, 'I guarantee you will hear very little about the Passover, and how to prepare for it if they're going to have that all through the month of March.'

Verse 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. **We are of God...** [brethren, understand that]: ...**the one who knows God listens to us**; the one who is not of God does not listen to us...." (vs 5-6).

It doesn't make any difference if you bring them in—right? God has to call the individual.

- Can God call anyone He wants? *Yes!*
- Can God not call anyone He doesn't want to call? *Yes!*
- Who makes the decision? *God does!*

We can just be thankful God has called us, and not say, 'Oh, we're better than the world. God has called us.' *No way!*

"...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception. Beloved, we should love one another because the love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God" (vs 6-7).

(go to the next track)

It's interesting that much of the Bible is written in the present tense. It's not reflected that way too much in most of the modern translations, but in the original 1611 *King James* it was with the "eth" on it, as we have learned over the years. But the reason that is in the present tense is because what you are doing *now* is what is counting.

- what you did yesterday, that's fine even the good and the bad and the ugly.
- what you *did* that pleased God
- what you *didn't do* that didn't please God
- the sins that you *did do* which were very distressing to God

that's all gone yesterday—right? And you can't go back and undo it.

God does not want us have good intentions for the future, because 'what I did yesterday was so bad I will be better tomorrow.' God says *start now*. That's why it's in the present tense, that you *are loving*. Whenever there's great distress within the Church, which we are experiencing now, and the Apostle John was experiencing it when he wrote the Epistles of John—that you must have the love of God—is how God expresses His love on the Sabbath to each of us in addition to pouring out His Spirit to us, while we convoke together and learn of God's

way. He gives us His love, that is true. But when you hug someone, or you shake hands with someone, or you look them in the eye and you ask, ‘How are you?’ and you have the Spirit of the Father in you, the Father is loving that person—are you loving them back?

This is something, brethren! This is so great! This is so profound that I feel most inadequate in even trying to bring the sermons. I’ve tried to bring this sermon for about a month. I’ve had to fight heresy for so long and so hard I finally said last week, *that’s it! If you don’t understand the Sabbath you don’t even have a clue!*

Verse 8: “The one who does not love does not know God, because **God is love!**” You think of that with your past church experience—right? *Yes!* Are not the minister’s charged with teaching the love of God? *Yes!* Have not too many ministers—not only in the Church of God, but in the world, and in every religion with their own arrogance, and authority, and vanity—choked off anything to do with love? That’s why they’re all called ‘cults.’

“...because **God is love.** 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. In this *act* is **the love...**” (vs 8-10). We’re going to focus in on that when we come down toward the Passover time.

If you think you’ve loved someone; if you think you have given up for someone; if you think that you have wasted your life on something for someone; wait until you know what Christ did. And if you still feel like marching up to God in your prayer and asking for a merit badge because of what you’ve done, then you come and tell me about.

“...not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the propitiation for our sins...*” (v 10). It has to come from God. God loved you when you were still a sinner. God called you when you were miserable, and wretched, and rotten, and foolish, and stupid.

Verse 11: “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. *Yet,* if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us” (vs 11-12). And that’s a continuous ongoing process, brethren.

I think all of us, we look around and see the way things are, we have such a small window of opportunity now in the end-time, to truly understand the deep and profound love of God. May God inspire us to learn it! May He grant us His Spirit to do so. May we grasp the meaning of all of these words that God has inspired to be.

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... [the apostles] ...and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the Savior of the world*” (vs 13-14).

I imagine that is one of the things that the Apostle John never, never forgot, and one of the things that he would always see in his mind. All of us have experiences like that—don’t we? That there is something that is so profound that happened in your life that you can close your eyes and you can see it over and over and over again.

John was the only one of the apostles to witness the death of Christ. All of the others ran away. Only the women stayed. I imagine that he could see Christ dying on that stake. I imagine, just like all the other apostles when they saw that happening, they thought: How is this the Son of God? Later he understood. So, when he wrote this, “...*as the Savior of the world*”—not a, but **the** Son, **the** Savior—there isn’t any other. That’s the way it is in the Greek.

Verse 15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God... [to truly say that the way God means it to be said] ...And we have known and have believed the love that God has towards us. **God is love...**” (vs 15-16).

Everything that God does is based on love. Even to put away the wicked out of their misery, because you can’t live eternity without love. All it will do is end up just a repeat like this world. How would you like to live all eternity with the endless cycle of sin, and fighting, and warring, and stupidity, corruption? How would you like to live all eternity fighting a carnal nature? *No, that’s not love!*

“...**God is love,** and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (v 16). Brethren, can we dwell in the love of God? Can we live in the love of God in our minds, in our hearts, and our innermost being? *That’s the only thing that makes everything in this world worthwhile,* brethren. And that’s the only thing that really makes the Church of God, **the** Church of God:

- not the name
- not the title
- not the person
- not the preacher
- not the people who are there

We, all together—**if we have the love of God**—then that truly is **the** Church of God. That’s why God is scattering; it’s a punishment, correction. Why? *Because God loves us!* He wants us to learn that He

loves us. He doesn't want us to go out and repeat the same mistakes in the past. That's why God works out in everyone's life that you're going to come to a time that emotionally, mentally and spiritually speaking you're going to walk through the valley of your death.

When you understand the worthlessness of human nature, the abject sin that is so deep in your heart, and mind, and being, and then you see the Church of God falling apart all around you; you got a valley of death to walk through. All the brethren and ministers of God are now walking through the valley of death in their own lives, one way or the other. If they learn the love of God they're going to learn something, because God is love.

Here's the test that comes, v 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected with us..." John, when he wrote this, was a very old man. I imagine that truly if there was ever a life that the love of God was truly perfected in, it was his life. That's why he's the only apostle to truly write about the love of God, because he alone understood it—*perfected*.

"...perfected within us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, 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's what is in the Greek, *the love*.

- Can you understand what a detestable thing it is to God to run His Church by fear?
- Can you understand what a detestable thing it is, and why God must correct the Church?

When the only thing the Church has ever done is preach law, and law, and law, and law! Not to do away with it, because they're so incompetent, and stupid, and elementary, and juvenile they can't understand the love of God. And brethren, that is a shame!

Verse 18: "There is no fear in the love..." Why should you run a church with fear? Every time something went wrong with the Church were not the brethren condemned?

- you weren't tithing enough
- you weren't praying enough
- you weren't doing this enough

All the while politics was going on, back-stabbing was going on, hatred and vehemence among the top echelon of the minister's, so raging that they wouldn't even walk into the same room with one another. Then they have the gall to blame the

brethren. May God have mercy on them, and God have mercy on the brethren.

"...rather, perfect love casts out fear..." (v 18) And this is what we need to come to, brethren. Perfect love is casting out fear. Cannot a Church of God be run that way? Can we not? Can we not all set our own goals, and priorities, and love of God that we can go to God and say, 'God, grant me Your love. Let it be perfected in me. I know I'm not worthy of it, but Christ died for me that it can be, that it can cast out fear?'

If truly we are the Laodicean Church, and what we are all going through is repentance, believe me no one is going to endure martyrdom the way God wants them to, **unless you love God!** We're going to see that's why Christ did what He did because He loved God, and loved us.

"...perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment..." (v 18).

- Have you ever gone to church with fear and torment?
- Have you ever had a minister come over to visit you and you're all nervous, and anxious, and fearful, and in torment wondering why he's coming to see me? Huh? *Yes!*
- Does God want that?
- Should it be? *No!*
- Did we run our families and our lives this way?
- Fear and torment, and discipline, and beating, and shouting, and anger?
- Did that accomplish the righteousness of God?
- Did it develop love from the heart? *No!*
- What did it create? *Anger, hostility, hatred, fear, and torment!*

"...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God... [That's the whole goal brethren, to be made perfect in love.] ...We love Him, because He loved us first" (vs 18-19). When we understand that Jesus came down to be a human being, He came in the midst of His enemies. You think you've had a challenge for love? *We don't have a clue, brethren!*

Here's the test, v 20: ...If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, **he is a liar**.... [Is it any wonder that the things are taking place in any church that professes Jesus Christ, if they're not doing this. Are they not misrepresenting God? *Yes!*] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?"

Let's take this as a test. "...If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother..." Put in any name there you want: husband, wife, children, neighbors, even an enemy. We're to hate the sin that they do, but we're going to see what a profound thing it is to *love your enemy*. That doesn't mean be stupid and get in the way and get wiped out, like standing in front of an ongoing truck that's coming at you at 90 mph. *No!* Put any name you want there.

I never will forget the prayer that one man prayed when he was baptized. He said, 'Lord may there be love within the four walls of my house.' I think maybe that's a good prayer for everyone of us—isn't it? How are things within the four walls of your house? How are things within the four walls of my house? I think some of the things we've done in the past, I would have to say that within the four walls of my house it's not what it ought to be. And the only repair is what God can do with His love. Can't be any other way—can it? So, try that as the test.

Verse 21: "And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God, should also love his brother." How many times does this not save a lot of problems within the Church? You step back with the love of God and you look at all the arrogance, and the vanity and the little petty Hitlerian authority that so many people had. Isn't that stupidity, and against God? *Yes!*

1 John 5:1: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him Who begat also loves him who has been begotten by Him. By this *standard* we know we love the children of God: **when we love God and keep His commandments**" (vs 1-2). That's what is in the Greek.

- love is priority
- love comes first
- commandment-keeping is a result of love.
- love is not the result of commandment-keeping

Commandment-keeping will result because you have love, it's the first step of love, but it is not the totality or the perfection of love.

Verse 3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." That's the first expression of love; yes, it is. But should we always have childish and elementary love? Is that the perfection of God? *No!*

We've gone over this a lot, but you know there's so much there it's amazing what we can learn from Matthew 22:34: "But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before Him*. And one of them... [A Pharisee

is a real stickler of the Law—isn't he? *Yes, he is!*] ...a doctor of the law, questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, 'Master, which commandment is *the* great commandment in the Law?'" (vs 34-36).

This means the whole overriding purpose of the law. This is a commandment over all the other commandments. If you operated all the commandments below this, you're not perfecting the love of God.

Verse 37: "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all thy heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" That's how you begin. How does God want it? *He wants all your heart!* That means:

- all your emotion
- all your feeling
- all of your capacity

that God has put in there that is known as the heart. It's got to have feeling, it's got to have meaning, it's got to have emotion and expression to it.

"...with all your soul..."—and your soul is your full physical being. Why? *Because that is the temple of the Holy Spirit*—is it not? Did He not say that 'you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you'—which brings us full circle back to where we started in Isa. 66:1-2? *Yes!*

"...and with all your mind..." That's why God has given you a mind, to love Him with every fiber of your being. That's what God wants from us.

Notice what then this will do, v 39: "...And *the* second one *is* like unto it: 'Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The truth is *you can't love anyone unless you love God first!* Oh, you can from a human point of view, yes you can, with the 'phileo' love. But the deep profound 'agape' love, which is Divine Godly love that loves in spite of problems and difficulties.

There are certain requirements to be met, but God wants us to come to the point that our love for Him has absolutely no conditions at all.

- God, I will love You *if* you bless me.
- God, I will love You *if* you give me faith.
- God, I will love You *if* you give me understanding of prophecy.
- God, I will love You *if* You give me wisdom.
- God, I will love You *if* You give me knowledge of languages.

No! God wants you to love Him without reservation with all your heart. That's what God wants to give back to you—is that not true? God wants that to come back to you so that you will know how to

express love, and you can't do it until you have experienced the profound love of God, and you give back to God that love with all your heart, your mind and your soul. Then you can love your neighbor as yourself.

Verse 40. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." That's something! ***Everything that God has ever done flows from His love! Every law that God ever gave comes from His love!*** So, the one who doesn't love God hates His laws—right? 'Not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be'—right? 'And His commandments are not burdensome.' Do you think that God ever gave us a command we couldn't fulfill? *No!* He wouldn't give it if we didn't have the capacity to do it. It's the same way with the love of God. He wants to give us of His Spirit

- so that we will be perfected in that love
- to grow in that love
- to let that be the whole, complete, absolute consuming thing in our lives

Why? *Because that's the foundation of eternal life, brethren!* That's what God wants to give us. Share His existence of eternity with us forever and ever, and to know that we love Him and He loves us, and all of us together in the Kingdom and Family of God are loving each other, and that is the whole purpose of it, brethren.

There's so much to say and if I get into something else I will be spending much too much time more than I ought to, so even though this is cutting it just a touch short, I think there's a lot there for us to work on and digest.

Let's see if we can take these things and ask God for that love. What you need to do is, when you pray:

- ask God for understanding of His love
- ask God to grant you His Spirit, to fill your heart and your mind with His love

He will! It will be a great and a deep and a profound experience, brethren. And that is something that God wants you to have repeated over and over again. ***God created us to receive His love, and to give His love!*** And as one man said, 'Yes, we were created to be lovers.' ***Unless our love with God is fully established, then nothing else in this world matters!***

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

Scripture References:

- 1) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 2) James 1:20

- 3) Luke 9:54-56
- 4) John 3:16
- 5) 1 Corinthians 13:13
- 6) Ephesians 3:16-19
- 7) 1 Corinthians 2:9-12
- 8) I John 4:5-21
- 9) I John 5:1-3
- 10) Matthew 22:34-37, 39-40

Scriptures Referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 17
- 1 John 4:8, 16

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

- *Epistles of John*
- *Gospel of John*

Love of God I

Fred R. Coulter

In my travel this past week I found that one of the most important things that's missing in the Churches of God is *understanding* about the love of God. And that's a shame, because they all focus on the Law, which we need to keep; there's no problem with keeping the laws of God—we understand that. But all the laws of God are attacked so much and everybody is so busy defending them that they never have time for the love of God. And they don't understand the *love of God*, they don't understand how to apply it, and in many cases we find that people live their whole lives in the Church and never understand about the love of God at all whatsoever—and that is a shame.

It's not just happening here, but it's happening in the Church of God Seventh Day and Seventh-Day Adventist Church. I just heard when I was over in Grand Junction that there's a Seventh Day Adventist Church that just went to Sunday-keeping. So, you know this thing is really kind of a much bigger thing than we have anticipated; because here we are, just our little old group doing what we see in the Bible that is right, but out there in the world there are so many things going on that once in a while we come across it and we say, 'My, this really is significant.'

Well let's just review a little bit concerning the *love of God*. Let's go to 1-John 4 and then we will get into the love of God as it is expressed to the world, because the love of God *is also* expressed to the world, if people would just realize and see how it is. One of the greatest characteristics of God is that **He is love**.

1-John 4:16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us...." That's what we want to focus in on, because there's a special love that God has for the Church, that is true. There is a special love that God wants us to enter into with Him, which goes beyond just the love that God has for the world in general.

"...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. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us..." (vs 16-17). That's the whole purpose of Christian life: that in the final analysis at the end we have *perfect* love, and that's a big goal; that's something we need to really keep as the goal, that we need to head for.

"...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love of God; rather, **perfect love casts out fear** because fear hath

torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him **because He loved us first**" (vs 17-19). That's what's so important. We're going to focus in on how is it that God loved us *first*, and how did He express this love to us *first*? We're not going to get into what Christ has done for us, or God's love through Christ to us today, but let's see how God has expressed His love to the whole world.

Let's go back to the book of Genesis and let's understand that part of the very creation of God expresses His love in many, many different ways. I talked to a man who did a video. He wrote the words and music and everything to it, and it's talking about the great God. He goes through and he says that

- God is revealed in the thunder
- God is revealed in the lightning
- God is revealed in His creation
- God has to have humor

He shows a lot of the funny animals that God has created. It must be quite a really nice work, so I'm happy he's going to send it me.

But God did something special for human beings. And this expresses His love to us. We know that this is so basic, yet, it is so profound. Right at the very beginning of the creation God declared His purpose—didn't He?

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image...'" The very image of God! We're not made like any of the animals. When you are the image you are made in the image of the reality that is God.

"...after Our likeness..." God—in His love in creating us—gave us all the attributes a little lower than Himself, because it says that God made man a little lower than Himself, a little lower than God (Psa. 8:5_[transcriber correction]). He's given us a mind! He's given us choice! Choice is also an act of love, an expression of love to every human being. In making us He also gave us dominion, gave us the whole earth.

Verse 27: "And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female." The very fact of the way that we are made and created is that we are created *to give* and *to receive love*, not only from God, but from each other. Being cut off from God there is a human love. And that human love then has been built in as part of the very creation of God that God has given to all human beings. It's expressed in love for husband and wife, love for a man/for a

woman, and the very creation and the act of love in creating male and female have a lot of different aspects of love that are differentiated from all of the other animals. None of the rest of the creation of God, in their procreation and expression of love for one another face each other face-to-face. But God made human beings that way. This is a very important thing that God wants us to understand about Himself. This is also an attribute of God that He gave to human beings, which relates then part of the relationship between Christ and God the Father.

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God**, and the Word was God.” Where it says, *the Word was with God* the Greek means, *toward* or *face-to-face*. So, in creating human beings to give love, to receive love, or to be lovers, as it were, they actually were given the kind of relationship that God the Father and Jesus Christ have of being face-to-face—and God gave this to **all** human beings. That’s a tremendous expression of His love, and God’s love in the creation is evident everywhere. God has given us:

- wonderful things to eat
- tremendous things to enjoy
- the ability to see
- the ability to hear
- the ability to express ourselves
- the ability to think
- the ability to choose

And all of those are part of the expression of the love of God that he has given to every human being.

God also gave something that takes a lot of love to do so. You think about this for a minute: *It takes more love to give choice*—as God has given choice—*than it does to create robots*. In giving choice, you also risk that the choice might be exercised the wrong way. Now, that takes a lot of love—doesn’t it? Not only to risk it, but also know that probably it’s going to happen.

Yet, God gave that! God gave choice to even what we would say is the most wicked person on earth, whoever that may be; because you cannot ‘fiatize’ love. (I maybe have coined a word there.) In other words, you cannot demand it by order. It is something that you must give, and it is something that you must receive, but you have to choose it, because love is a choice; love is a decision.

Same way with God’s relationship with us. God made a decision to create and make us this way. God, in His plan, is reproducing Himself in love, just like families reproduce themselves. That’s why one of the most simple explanations of the plan of God is this: We know that God is reproducing Himself because He created mankind male and female so they could reproduce themselves, recreate themselves. God is so great, and God is so unique,

and God has given love to every human being, so that when they come together and have children even their children are unique, even though they are created in the image of the father and the mother. So, that’s tremendous! God has so much love for human beings and His creation that He made each one distinct, each one separate, each one unique, whether they know God or not. Now, that takes an awful lot of love, commitment and understanding.

We know they made the wrong choice, so let’s look at another aspect of the punishment that came: the aspect of love within punishment. Sometimes that’s very hard for people to distinguish, but notice right after they sinned, right after they chose to go against God’s way.

God said, Genesis 3:11: “...Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?” They began all their excuses and finger-pointing.

Right after He got done sentencing the serpent He said, v 15: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Right in that is the prophecy of the coming Messiah to undo the wrong choice that they made; which then takes a tremendous amount of love to even provide that for us—right?

I think this is something that we have missed an awful lot with our children, with the teaching in the Church, and with correcting. We have given correction *without* hope, which is not right. God has given correction *with* hope—didn’t He? He gave the hope of coming out of this difficult situation, and understanding what it is. That’s really something!

When you go back and you look at **all** that God has done, and **all** that God has provided, and **all** that God has made—even when they sinned so greatly that it grieved Him—it repented Him that He made man that He was on the earth. When we come to the time of Noah, He said, ‘Ok, now we got a new start, I’ll make My covenant with you. You go on out and you multiply and replenish the earth. Let’s this time get it right.’ But He still gave free choice. ***God will never take the free choice away from anyone.***

In that there’s a great risk. Look what happened before the Flood. God had to destroy all human beings. But in His love He’s going to resurrect them and give them some hope.

One of the covenants that God made with Abraham—as we get closer to the Passover time I’m going to explain the three covenants that God made with Abraham—is one not only to *express* His love, but to *test* love, and to test Abraham’s love. This is really quite profound when you go through and understand how that Abraham got his son from his

own body, supernatural conception of Sarah to bring forth Isaac. We don't know whether he was between 12 and 30, but somewhere between there, Abraham was asked to take his only begotten son—to take him out and to make an offering of him—wherever God said to go.

A lot of people misunderstand why Abraham did that. There are two reasons why: We find in Heb. 11, that it said there that he was willing to sacrifice his son *because he knew God* would raise him from the dead. Some people, in trying to accuse God, ask, 'Why would God command Abraham to sin?' Would God command anyone to sin? *No!* There's a tremendous and a valuable lesson, which is a forerunner of what God was going to do with His only begotten Son, and in relationship to us.

You know the whole account. He put his son up on the wood that was laid out there and he was ready to sacrifice him. Genesis 22:9: "And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there..." I don't imagine he was going about that too quickly putting the stones together and so forth. If you try and imagine what's going on in his mind and saying, 'Well, I know God said this and I know God won't command me to do anything that's a sin. But boy, after waiting 25 years for my son to be born and finally he's born now. You know this must really be something. Well, I know that He will resurrect him if I sacrifice him.'

"...and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood, upon the altar.... [Abraham took him and tied him, laid him on the wood] ...And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am'" (vs 9-11). It makes you wonder what also was in his mind when that happened, 'Whew! I'm glad to hear that.' Could very well have been.

Verse 12: "And the LORD said, 'Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'"

This shows what? *A complete dedication to God in love, a greater love for God than for his own son whom he loved greatly!* This also is a lesson of God the Father for us. We find in the book of John that the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, *but* the Father was willing to sacrifice His own Son to lay down His life for us.

Out of this, then, we have something quite profound, v 13: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked. And, behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son." This tells us something

else. This is a profound lesson for us, too. *God has provided a substitute sacrifice through Jesus Christ to pay for our sins, to make us acceptable to God the Father!*

So, right here at the very beginning of the Bible we have all of these things that express and show us the love of God. I think that that ram was supernaturally created, because obviously he couldn't see it when he went up there to offer Isaac, so this had to be supernaturally created. Just exactly like it was with Jesus Christ. It was a supernatural act for Jesus to give up His whole being as God to become a human being, become the sacrifice for all the sins of mankind.

Now notice what else this also said here and what it bound God to do, v 15: "And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By Myself have I sworn,' says the LORD, 'because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son'" (vs 15-16).

He had to do it by choice; he had a lot of mistakes. You go and you see what Abraham did. It took all this time—from the time he was 75 until, we'll just say 20 years, so that's 25 and 20, that's 45 years—longer than any of us have been in the Church of God, before God said, '*Now I know,*' completely!

That's why there are so many strange things going on in the Church, and so many strange things with people, and so many strange choices that are going on, because God doesn't know what they will do. So therefore, these things are coming upon them to see what they will do. And it's all based on:

- *Do you love Me?*
- Are you going to keep My commandments?
- Are you going to choose to just go your own way?

So like with Abraham here, He said, v 12: for now I know... [after 45 years] ...that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Then God said because of that, v 16: "'By Myself have I sworn... [God doesn't have to swear at all—does He? But if God swears you *know* it's going to happen, without a doubt.] ...because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.'" (vs 16-18). And really, that's a test for every Christian—to *obey the voice of God*—when you

really come to understand it. Now then, because **he chose to love God**—

- more than anything else
- more than his only begotten son
- more than his wife
- more than all that he had
- **and he was willing to go out and sacrifice his son**

—God supernaturally provided the substitute sacrifice, and now **He entered into an unconditional promise to Abraham**. There was no turning it back. What happened after this did not necessarily depend on the righteousness of the descendants of Abraham. But God always refers back to *His* love.

Let's see that the whole relationship with Israel was based on the fact that God loved the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We're going see quite a bit here in the book of Deuteronomy, how that God expresses His love to us, His love to His creation, even in calling the children of Israel. Yet, remember when we did the study on the Sabbath how that God said He almost destroyed them in Egypt because of their sin, but held back His hand, because God is love.

Deuteronomy 4:29—He's talking about if you're scattered among the heathen: "But if you shall seek the LORD your God... [In all of this, brethren, in all that went on with Israel, in all that's going on in the world, in everything that's taking place within the Church, this is what God wants]: ...from there, **you shall find Him**... [That's what God wants everyone to do on an individual and a personal basis.] ...if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

That's all that God ever wanted from anyone— isn't it? *Yes!* What did we cover about what is the first and great commandment? '*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, with all your being*'—right? *Yes!* It's the same thing here. Always remember, 'Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.'

Verse 30: "When you are in trouble and when all these things have come upon you in the latter days..." So we're talking about what is happening now and what's going to happen in the future.

Let's stop and think for a minute: Before the trumpet plagues of God, what is God going to do? *He's going to seal 144,000 of the children of Israel*—correct? *Yes!* They will be calling out to Him—won't they? *Yes!*

"...then you shall return to the LORD your God and shall be obedient to His voice, for the

LORD your God *is* a merciful God. He will not forsake you, nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them" (vs 30-31). One of those covenants has to do with Jesus Christ. In everything that God does He wants to show His mercy, He wants to show His goodness and love, but *we have to choose it*. He's not going to force it upon us. **We must choose!**

Verse 32: "For ask now of the days past which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, where there has been any thing as great as this, or has been heard any thing like it. Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard and live?" (vs 32-33). We haven't! We've never! That was a one-time occurrence. It was supposed to be so spectacular and so convincing that it would help the people make the choice that they would follow and love God and do the things that He said.

Verse 34: "Or has any god attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great *awe-inspiring* terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? It was shown to you so that you might know that the LORD *is* God, *and there is none other beside Him*. He made you hear His voice out of heaven so that He might teach you. And He showed you His great fire upon the earth. And you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. And **because He loved your fathers**..." (vs 34-37). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were already dead when this occurred.

- God's love is *eternal*
- God's love is *everlasting*
- God's love is *perfect*
- God wants to *show His love*

—and based upon His promise that we read about.

"...therefore, He chose their seed after them, and brought you out in His sight with His great power out of Egypt" (v 37). Then He says he's going to drive out all the nations, and drive them out so that you can inherit the land.

Verse 39: "Therefore, know this day and fix it in your heart that the LORD *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is none other.... [Here is the first level of your expression of love back to God]: ...Therefore, you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you this day, **so that it may go well with you**..." (vs 39-40).

There are a lot of people who claim that God called the children of Israel out because He wanted

to curse them, He wanted to punish them; that the whole Old Covenant was a matter of cursing and punishments and hatred on God's part. *Not so!*

"...that it may go well with you and with your children after you... [because God loves all the children] ...and so that you may prolong your days upon the earth which the LORD your God gives you forever" (v 40). That's really quite a thing, if you really put that in perspective of God's love, that He did this because He loved the fathers, and every time that GOD deals with the children of Israel He stretches out His hands to see whether they are going to love Him and keep His commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:1: "And Moses called all Israel and said to them, 'Hear, O Israel...'" This was a very important event, because they were ready to cross the Jordan River and go into the 'promised land.' Those lands on the east side of the Jordan, they already had conquered. This was Moses' farewell sermon. He knew that when he was done with this that he was going to die. So, this is a formal gathering of all the tribes of Israel to hear what Moses said.

Verse 1: "And Moses called all Israel and said to them, 'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day so that you may learn them and keep and do them.'"

By the way, I'm reading a publication that goes through and analyzes what is called *the book of the Covenant* in the Old Testament. Let's go to Exo. 18 for just a minute because this is important when we understand concerning the laws, and statutes, and commandments of God. The whole proposition of what I'm reading is this: the book of the Covenant, which God gave to Israel, was also the book of the Covenant that God used elsewhere, and these things were added to it. Remember, this is before Moses went up on the mountain, Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 18:15 "And Moses said to his father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come to me. And I judge between one and another... [make a notation of it so that when I get to Mount Sinai and find out what God wants to give me, then I can tell them what to do.' *No!* It doesn't say that.] ...and I make known the statutes of God and His laws'" (vs 15-16).

- How could he make them know that unless they were written down some place previously?
- Do you think that the first writing of the Law was what Moses did?

or

- Was not a lot of that what God had already done?
- Have we not gone back to Gen, 26:5 many

times? *'Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My judgments.'*

- Were they not written down?
- Don't you think that Abraham had those written down? *Sure he did!*
- He had a big household—didn't he?

You talk about a household—it's more like a little colony—right? He had 3-400 people with him all the time. He taught them.

Those things were written down. I think it's quite important when we begin to understand that God's laws are eternal. His statutes and judgments between human beings are always the same—are they not? Why would they be any different? *Human beings are the same*—aren't they? I mean, we may have modern appliances; we may drive instead of riding on horseback. I tell you, if you had to ride up here every Sabbath on horseback it would be another story altogether. It would be more than city slickers becoming a cowboy.

But the needs of human beings are the same—aren't they? *Yes!* Aren't the disputes that people have the same? *Yes!* Who owns what, and how much, and how do you settle it? 'You smashed into my car so you have to take care of it.' Back then it was 'you ran into my oxcart and your ox gored my donkey and it's got a wound here. Now, how are we going to settle this?' *Well, we'll go down to Allstate Insurance guy he'll take care of it.* No! These things are eternal, even the statutes and judgments of God in addition to the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:2: "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.... [A covenant is not **what** commandments alone, but **how**—*it's which ones and how.*] ...The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, all of us here, alive today. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mountain out of the midst of the fire; (I stood between the v and you at that time to show you the word of the LORD, for you were afraid because of the fire, and did not go up into the mountain,) saying" (vs 2-5).

Let's really understand this, v 6: "I am the LORD your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me" (vs 6-7). What I want you to do is analyze the Ten Commandments as we go through:

- Why did God give the Ten Commandments?
- Were the Ten Commandments a punishment?

John says the commandments of God are not

burdensome.

First Commandment:

Verse 7: “You shall have no *other* gods before Me.” Why did God say that? He wants to deprive you of other gods, and statues, and idols and things? *No!* He knows that He alone can give His love to you. No other god is God. It’s just a figment of the imagination and cannot give you the love that God can give you. That’s why! Since God is the real God, since God is the true God, why have any other gods before Him? Kind of ridiculous— isn’t it?

Second Commandment:

Verse 8: “You shall not make a graven image for yourself of any likeness *of anything* that is in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generation* of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments” (vs 8-10).

That’s exactly what Jesus said, ‘If you love Me keep My commandments’ (John 14:15)—right? There’s New Testament doctrine right out of the Old Testament. The truth is you can’t have New Testament doctrine without the words of the Old Testament—can you? *No, you cannot!* God wants people to love Him back, and the first expression of it is keeping the commandments. We already covered the one concerning the Sabbath, so we won’t read that except it says ‘keep it.’

When you go through Matt. 5 and understand what Jesus was really saying, we are not to just keep the commandments—that’s a basic requirement—to keep them in the Spirit means that we *fulfill them* in our keeping of them.

Do you understand what that means? *You keep them to the fullest extent possible in the Spirit*, not in the letter, based on the love of God. So therefore, when the Sabbath Day comes you don’t just keep the Sabbath. You do, but you *fulfill* the Sabbath by making the Sabbath the best day of the week because it is the day in which God has put His presence. It is the day that God in His love has set aside for us that we can love God, we can fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ spiritually.

- When we come together with Sabbath services with that in mind, is that not a better Sabbath? *Yes, it is!*
- Do we not love God more because of it? *Yes, we do!*
- Do we not love each other more because of it? *Yes, we do!*

I’ll tell you what brethren, wherever I go those people that God is calling to be with the Christian Biblical Church of God, there is that same attitude of love and dedication, there is not the striving of politics, there is not any of these things going on. It’s really a wonderful and profound thing for me to realize that when I go out and meet these people of God that what they want is the love of God, and what they need is the love of God. That’s really been quite an experience for me.

Let’s go on and see what else that God said here. After they said, ‘You speak to God and then you tell us’—v 28: “And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken.’”

God bound Himself to Abraham with a promise—correct? So even though the children of Israel said, ‘Now look, we don’t want to hear the voice of God. You tell us Moses.’ God still was faithful to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—was He not? *Yes, He was!* Even in spite of this fact:

Verse 29: “Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would **fear** Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”

Let’s just take that little word ‘fear’ and right along side it write *love*, because that’s the whole purpose of 1-John 4, that we would love God and keep His commandments always that it might be well with them and with their children forever. That’s what God wants. *Yes, it is!* God can enter into a relationship with someone that just fears Him—that is true, without a doubt. How much better is it to have a relationship where there is mutual love on both sides? *That’s what God really wants!* That’s the whole purpose of the New Testament.

Verse 32: “And you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.” Oh, that some people would learn that—correct? Not only are they turning to the right hand and left hand, they’re going berserk; they’re going around in circles and destroying everything that God has said.

Verse 33: “You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you so that you may live and that *it may be* well with you, and you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess.” Here even carnal people—fit for destruction—God was angry with, that God said He held back His hands many times from correcting and disciplining them because they didn’t obey Him and love Him and keep His commandments. Yet, He says, ‘I want it to go well with you.’

Isn't that what we want with our children? But one of the greatest disappointments we have, and a lesson that God teaches us, not all of your children are going to do as you recommend, because God has also given them free choice. In giving every one of your children free choices God has given you free choice, that even though you want it to go well with your children, and with all your heart you'll do anything for your children—won't you? When your children do things which are not right you try every way to try and work it out to see if you can make it right—is that not correct?

Well then you're doing what God is doing—right? Like how many times God said that He sent the prophets so that they would hear, and the people of Israel didn't hear. He said, 'Now, I've got to cast you out.' God didn't want to cast them out. He even said, 'Look, just go find one man and I'll forgive the whole thing.' (Jer. 5). That's something to think on! *That's because of the love of God.*

(go to the next track)

And even though we want to do what is right as parents, a lot of times we don't do what's right with our children, and that causes additional problems, too. But God, even in spite of all this, said: "...that *it may be* well with you, and you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess" (v 33).

Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, that you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged" (vs 1-2).

Every time God in His love says, 'Look, I want it to go well with you, I want you to live long, I want you to have healthy lives. In all of this I've given you these laws for this purpose and I want to have a relationship with you.'

Verse 3: "Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you..." Look at that: Deut. 5:29 & 33: ***may be well with you!***

Verse 3: "...so that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey."

I remember one time I checked a book out of the library called *The Botany of the Middle East*. It said that from all the layers of soil they've dug, in the Middle East, they knew that in the time that the children of Israel went into the 'promised land' there

were trees, there were brooks, there were flowers, there were animals. It was just a wonderful place. Not like it is today: barren, hot, desolate, stony and cursed—*it is*. The Middle East is cursed, *cursed*, ***cursed!*** It wasn't originally.

"...in the land that flows with milk and honey.... [this is what Jesus quoted when He was asked what is the great commandment] ...Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart..." (vs 3-6).

Even then, God wanted them to know the commandments so well they would be in their hearts. Not that they would cast them away but remember them and do them and keep them. There's just something about a carnal mind and God that's almost completely incompatible—*isn't it?* What does it say of the carnal mind? *'The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it be!'* (Rom. 8:7)

I remember when I was 10-years-old and my folks wanted me to be confirmed in the Lutheran Church. We were not 'churchy' people; there are some people who are 'churchy'; we were not. My old carnal mind really was rebellious, sneaky and devious. So, my folks would drive me up to the house of the pastor and let me off. I'd wave bye-bye. It was understood that when I was done I could go downtown—this was in Poulsbo, Washington—and I could go fishing afterwards, because you could walk down off the pier and fish and catch pogies, and perch, and all that sort of thing. I loved that and used to do that.

So, as I was waving bye-bye, I made sure the car went and I would walk up on the porch and very quietly so you couldn't hear. When I knew the car was gone I jumped over the side of the porch on the other side and ran off and did my fishing. They could not get me to take confirmation. It was an impossibility, because I exercised ***my choice not to***. That's just the way it is. But my folks were trying to do the best they could for me.

God always wants it that we love Him. He always wants a relationship based on love; a relationship based on obedience is better than no relationship at all, but He wants that relationship based on obedience to grow *into a relationship of love*, and that it is with your whole being.

Verse 7: "And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your

house and on your gates. And it shall be when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you did not build..." (vs 7-10).

Kind of like going into the Kingdom of God—isn't it? What did Jesus say? *'I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again.'* They walked in and inherited crops, houses, cities, animals, everything, all prepared. And in preparing it I'm sure that all these heathen thought all the time that their gods were blessing them with all of this, but they weren't. The true God was preparing for the children of Israel. So you see, sometimes not everything is how it appears on the surface.

Verse 11: "And houses full of every good thing which you did not fill, and wells which are dug... [if you've ever dug a well you know that's a big job] ...which you did not dig; vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be full." This is always the problem with love—isn't it? This is not talking about being overweight, as some of us may find ourselves in that category. This is talking about taking God for granted.

Verse 12: "*Then **beware** lest you forget the LORD...*" That's what people do because they don't love Him. He said first, *love Me*—didn't He? And what kind of love? *Total dedicated love, so then you're not going to forget!* That's why it's so important that we understand that there is nothing we haven't received. We can't go around this world and claim how great we are.

Here again is the kind of relationship that God wants. I want you to magnify this with our understanding of the New Testament. Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you *are* a Holy people..."

What did Peter say? 1-Peter 1:16^[transcriber's correction]: "For it is written, 'You be Holy because I am Holy.'" *You're a Holy people!* Are not those in the Church of God today Holy? What makes a person Holy? *The Spirit of God, because the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit that sanctifies you.*

God doesn't want us to get all lifted up and think we're better than other people, because I'll tell you what, there's one thing that's very, very true: Once you enter into a relationship with God, when you rebel against Him, you're going to be in worse shape than the people in the world. Unfortunately, the people in Pasadena did not learn the lesson of Jerusalem, which is this: If God places His name somewhere because He loves the people and loves them in the relationship into which He has called them, if they rebel against Him and reject Him and His Word, He is going to scrape the earth clean. He is going to send them off into exile. He is going to send them off into their own devices. That's exactly

what is happening. God is going to clean out Pasadena and Big Sandy! Everything is going to go, brethren, because *they haven't learned how to love God.* I'm not saying that I delight in it; I don't. But it's going to go, because we are a Holy people.

Deuteronomy 7:6: "...the LORD your God has chosen you..." This is New Testament doctrine.

For all of those who want to throw away the Old Covenant and say, 'Oh we don't need that, that was for those people there.' Do you know that they're even saying now that you don't even need baptism? Once you have Christ in you, you don't even need the Bible.' *Spare me!* Coming out of the Church of God, can you believe that? That you don't need the Bible. *That's nonsense!* The Bible is the greatest thing that God has ever given us aside from His Holy Spirit.

In a sense what I'm trying to do here is reconstruct one of the sermons of the Apostle Paul. Because I'm sure that he must have taught in the way that I'm going to teach here in just a minute.

2-Timothy 3:15 "And that from a child you [Timothy] have known the Holy Writings..." We're reading them—the book of Deuteronomy. That's what was called the Holy Scriptures: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. That's the Law, and then you have the Writings, and then you have the Prophets—all the Holy Scriptures.

"...which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith... [So you have to add the ingredients of faith and love.] ...which *is* in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine [teaching], for conviction... [which is to straighten one out] ...for correction... [maybe a little severe correction] ...**for instruction in righteousness**; so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (vs 15-17).

A special people; has chosen you. We know that God the Father Himself has to draw everyone—correct? *Yes!* The Church in Greek is called, 'he ekklesia'—*the called out ones or the chosen ones.*

Deuteronomy 7:6: "...chosen you to be a special people..." So therefore, we need to change our whole attitude in relationship to things—right? What is wrong with so many Churches of God is that they don't teach the love of God, so therefore, they have these high, exalted mucky-mucks that run around thinking that they are the greatest thing that has ever been. ***They are to be teachers of the Word of God!*** God is the One Who is the high exalted Being, not us.

"...a special people to Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love upon you... [Here again, God's love expressed to Israel—right?] ...nor

choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you *were* the fewest of all people...” (vs 6-7). Who did it start out with? [Abraham^[transcriber's correction]]. And what did God promise him? *Step out here and look at all the stars, now if you can number them, that's how your seed is going to be!* It hasn't stopped since then.

Remember, that's not just Israel, all the descendants of Ishmael—correct? All the descendants of Esau, even our antagonist—correct? *Yes!* All the descendants of Abraham by his second wife Keturah are *all* the descendants of Abraham. And when Abraham is resurrected and God standing alongside of him, and He says, ‘Now, Abraham we're up here on the Sea of Glass. Here are all of your children right here that have been resurrected in the first resurrection.’ Why? *Because, ‘if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise’*—right? Even our calling is based upon Abraham—is that not correct? *Yes!*

Abraham is going to be overwhelmed. And then when God says, ‘I want you to look down here on the earth, Abraham. We're going to have to have a little war here, but unfortunately a lot of these are your children. As you know, not all your children worked out just the right way, the way that we wanted. But at the end of the Millennium I have the second resurrection, which we're going to give them all a chance to enter into the Kingdom of God, and the Family of God, and eternal life, so I can keep My promise to you.’ And Abraham's going to be overwhelmed! *Yes, he will be!*

Verse 8: “But because the LORD loved you and because He would keep the oath, which He had sworn to your fathers... [Did we not see where He said that ‘I swear by Myself that in multiplying I will multiply, and in blessing I will bless’?] ...the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him... [Again, there it is right in the Old Covenant—the love of God and loving back to God.] ... and keep His commandments... [I'm going to put John 14:15 there, too, because that's exactly what Jesus said. This is New Testament doctrine, brethren.] ...to a thousand generations” (vs 8-9).

Now then, there needs to be a little *hearing and fearing* also added in there that if you reject this love of God, and you reject what God has commanded you, v 10: “...And he repays those who hate Him to their face...” I imagine there were quite a few sermons given on the Lake of Fire right out of this one verse—right? God Himself is going to make the judgment, God Himself is going to execute it,

God Himself will determine it, and He's going to do it face-to-face.

“...to destroy them. He will not be slow to repay him who hates Him. He will repay him to his face... [Always in the midst of everything that God says, there's always *a warning*]: ...You shall therefore keep the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which I command you today to do them. And it shall come to pass, if you hearken to these judgments to keep and practice them, *then* the LORD your God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you...” (vs 10-13). Let's think of that in terms of spiritual blessing, spiritual love, multiplying our relationship with God, greater than just the physical blessing of what they would have, where He would:

“...multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you” (v 13).

How much better is it going to be with God's love and blessing to us if we really now understand the fullness of the New Covenant, that it's based on love not only just obedience, but love that is so profound that the obedience you do is to fulfill. Your keeping is fulfilling the fullest extent.

Verse 14: “You shall be blessed above all people. There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. And the LORD will take away from you all sickness and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you know, upon you. But He will lay them upon all who hate you” (vs 14-15).

Let's understand that even in the trials that we go through, even in God loving us, He's going to let us go through trials and difficulties, and most of them we don't like; I don't like trials; I don't like difficulties. I have never yet seen one that was one I thought of that I figured in my own mind ahead of time that I can handle. Have you ever done that? Have you ever *figured out* this trial or that trial? *Nonsense!* You know those are never going to come upon you. They're always going to come in a way that you don't expect. But there's a reason for it.

Deuteronomy 8:2: “And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness...” I bet they were just so ready to get out of that wilderness—right? What if you were 19-1/2 when God gave the judgment? In 38-1/2 years you'd be 69-years-old entering into the ‘promised land.’ Boy! You had seen heat, scorpions and death. How many people did you have to bury because they died because of the cursing? And all you had was manna all this 40 years—no meat, no

bread—manna. Maybe there was a goat you could kill once in a while, but all manna.

Now you're standing here ready to cross the Jordan River, and you look over there and you see all these grain fields, but God said, 'You can't eat any bread or grain until you wave the sheaf of the wave offering after you come into the land. Now you're going to go in there. I want you to remember all this desert that you walked through.' You're thinking: I don't want to remember a minute of this! No, you don't!

Here's why: ...in order to humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart..." (v 2). That's what God wanted to know, because all human beings are in effect heart cases before God, because He wants what you do *to come from the heart*.

"...whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know... [you didn't really ever understand except you went out and gathered it] ...neither did your fathers know it; **so that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live**" (vs 2-3). That's the whole purpose in it! That's the whole purpose in any life! "...not live by bread alone, but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live." This ties right in with what we've already seen, to obey the voice to the Lord your God—right? ***If you will indeed obey My voice***—correct? Always goes back to that—doesn't it? *Yes!*

We have, printed here, all the words of God, that if He came down to earth He'd say the same thing again, because human experience is no different than it's always been. Human nature is no different than it's always been. A lot of people will say, 'Well I'll believe it if God will come down and tell me.' ***No!*** You really don't want God to come down and tell you, because if He did you might not be alive. He's done it nicely. He's done it easily. You don't have to worry about standing before God, ***flaming God!*** You just go get your Bible off your shelf and read it. Isn't that easy?

Then when you read it you believe it, because these are all the words that proceeded out of the mouth of God—are they not? *Yes!* If you want to know how to live, that's how do it, it's right there. He even led them 40 years, even though their shoes didn't wear out, their clothes didn't wear out. How would you like that? Well, here's a 40-year-old pair of shoes, pass them on down. Their feet didn't swell. God still loved them. Even in all the punishment, ***God still loved them***. He just wanted to get rid of the rebels.

Then He also gives *a warning* now and He

says that when you get in there, in the land, with all of these good things here and so forth, v 4: "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. And you shall consider in your heart..." (vs 4-5). I remember in Spokesman's Club we always had a speech, which was the last one—# 12, and it was to be a *heart to heart*. A *heart-to-heart* meant that you kind of bear your soul a little bit. Well, no one really ever did, but at least they tried. If you really told what was really in your 'evil' heart you wouldn't want anyone to know that, because then you would have no one liking you. So, what God says is that He wants *to know* your heart, and He wants you *to know* His heart. So, this in a sense is a *heart-to-heart* from God to us.

Verse 5: And you shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you. And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him" (vs 5-6). Then He says He's bringing you into this fantastic land you're going to lack nothing, you can even dig brass out of the hills (vs 7-9 paraphrased).

Verse 10: "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you."

I remember one time—this was good, and it was well intentioned at the time—we sat down to eat, and you know how it is sometimes when you're around people you haven't been around for quite a while, or maybe you haven't known. Generally, the blessing is going to be asked. Well this person said, 'God knows we're thankful. Let's eat.' That's right, but God wants *to know* that we are thankful. It was true, and he was a real humble man and he didn't say it in any way that was not the way it should have been. But anyway, that's really something!"

"...then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today" (vs 10-11). It's amazing how many times it says *beware, don't forget, do this, keep that!* Then all religionists come along and say, 'Forget it, you don't have to do it, God doesn't require it.' It's unreal!

Verse 12: "Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*.... [Think about Pasadena and Big Sandy when I'm reading this, because it is all going, *because they forgot God!*] ...And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage" (vs 12-14).

You forget the calling of Christ Who brought you out of sin. You get all involved in politics, and numbers, and money, and people, and doing good, and all this sort of thing, and you forget God. That's why God has to recycle things a lot of times. Because when people get to this point there's just something that happens, that He's got to do something to break it down and start again, because people have forgotten God. You need to remember. So, whenever you think things are so great, think about what your life was before God called you, *spiritually speaking*.

Verse 15: "Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, so **that He might humble you and that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end**" (vs 15-16).

That's why we're going through all of these trials and tests. And I know I've had some brethren that I've just had to go to God and just say, 'I don't have a clue.' I didn't! I did not have a clue! But I knew God was there, I knew God is true and right and loving. But I needed to learn some things. In all of our lives we need to learn some things, and the whole thing is to learn the love of God.

Again we're going to be amazed how much of this is really New Testament doctrine. Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." That's New Testament doctrine—isn't it? *Yes it is, it sure is!*

Verse 13: "To keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it" (vs 13-14). God is saying, 'Look, I own everything, and if you do this you are really connected with Me. Nothing else will connect you with Me unless you love Me.' Isn't that something? That God is going to grant us all of these things *and* eternal life.

Verse 15: "Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today. Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked" (vs 15-16).

That's all God ever wanted from anyone, and that's the whole purpose of the New Testament. He's not only just saying do it, He saying, 'I've given My Son Jesus Christ because I love you, to make that possible; I've given My Holy Spirit to

make that possible.' That's the whole purpose of the New Covenant.

I wonder how many sermons Paul started out with Deut. 10? They knew from right here that the ultimate circumcision *was of the heart*. That's why there was such a fight in the New Testament Church over physical circumcision. They knew that.

Verse 17: "For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, the mighty and awesome God Who does not respect persons nor take a bribe." What does God think about all of our stupid little games we play down here? Huh? Oh my, the politics we play? Forget it! You're not going to impress God. God owns everything. He controls everything. What are we going to do with it anyway? Can you build a Church of God on all that kind of stuff? Will it succeed? *No!* God has to open the way.

What did Jesus Christ say back there to the Philadelphia Church? *He says, 'I open and no man shuts, and I shut and no man opens.'* So, if God now is shutting the door on something, then you're not going to go back and reopen it by doing the same thing. He wants you to learn.

Verse 18: "He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger in giving him food and clothing.... [What was Judaism based upon? *Hating the stranger!* Anyone who was not a circumcised Jew was absolutely an anathema.] ...Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve Him, and you shall hold fast to Him, and swear by His name. He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen" (vs 18-21).

He wants to know where they started from, v 22: "Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons. And now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude." Then He continues. Read all the rest of the way through the book of Deuteronomy: love God/keep His commandments all the way through.

Let's go to Psalm 91 just to show how the love of God is. As a matter of fact, this is a prophecy of Jesus Christ and God the Father, when you come to understand this. Let's think of it this way: in our loving of God, we have to understand how much God has loved us coming back, then we can begin to really understand the love of God, which we will as we get into the New Testament a little more next time. But I just want us to all know, for us to all realize, that even dealing in the carnal world God still expresses His love to them. God still provides food for them. Believe me, a nice steak tastes just as good to someone uncalled in the world as it does to us. And God provided for them, too—right? *Yes!*

Psalm 91:14: “Because he has set his love upon Me...” Therefore, I want you to take this personally to yourself, because God has called you because He has loved you. He set His love upon you in a profound and a peculiar and a direct way. But we have to be responsive to that. How many years did we go around with all of our Gestapo tactics for years and years and years and pushed away the love of God; because we wanted to be right?

“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore, I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known My name. **He** shall call upon Me, and I will answer him...” (vs 14-15). Notice that individual, personal, one-to-one relationship—correct? You call upon God and sometimes you don’t even know how did do it except, ‘Oh, God, here I am. I don’t know what to do.’ *He’ll answer!*

“...I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him” (v 15).

- Did not God the Father honor Jesus Christ?
- Did He not say, ‘This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased’?
- Did He not give Him a name that is above every name?
- Is He not at the preeminence of everything that’s going to be in the resurrection? ***Absolutely!***

Verse 16: “With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.” Now He has eternal life.

We have covered before when we went through whole series: *Who Is Jesus*. Hebrews 5:7: “Who, in the days of His flesh... [and that’s what we just read about there in Psa. 91] ...offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death... [Jesus Christ **needed** the spiritual salvation from death that only God the Father could give.] ...and was heard because *He* feared *God*. And having been perfected, He became *the* Author of eternal salvation **unto all those who obey Him...**” (vs 7-9).

Oh my, there’s that little word again in the New Testament—***obey***. Isn’t that something? If you think you’ve had a trial, how would you like to have a trial like Jesus Christ? *He did it because He loved us!* Every once in a while you may find yourself in a situation where everyone is your enemy. Please understand, Jesus Christ lived His whole life that way. He knew what was in man—didn’t He? *Yes!* How would you like to spend 33-1/2 years in the midst of your enemies because you loved them, and you knew what they were going to do to you? Yet, at the end, the profound love that Jesus had He said,

‘Father, forgive them they don’t know what they are doing.’

Zephaniah 3:14: “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD has turned away your judgments... [judgments against you] ...He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the LORD, *is* in your midst; you shall not fear evil any more” (vs 14-15). That’s got to be some sort of an anthem for us at the resurrection. It’s got to be!

Verse 16: “In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, ‘Fear not! Do not let not your hands be slack, O Zion. The LORD your God *is* mighty in your midst; He will save; He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love; He rejoices over you with singing” (vs 16-17). There is the whole purpose and modus operandi that God wants. Isn’t that something? That’s going to be a time.

Why can’t we have church and church services more like this? I think we do here, but I’m saying in general to the whole Church of God everywhere: That would be nice to have church like this. *Come together and God’s Spirit is there!* We’re fellowshiping with the Father, we love Him, He loves us, we love each other. Solves all the hassle—doesn’t it?

Verse 18: ““I will gather the ones who grieve over the appointed Feasts... [That does have to do with assembling together—doesn’t it?] ...who are among you, and will lift the burden of reproach from her. Behold, at that time I will deal with all those who afflict you. And I will save her who is lame, and gather her who was driven out... [talking of the church] ...And I will give them praise and fame in all the land...” (vs 18-19).

- Are we not going to be given a new name? *Yes!*
- Are we not going to be worshipped as God? *Yes!*
- Will we not have praise in every land where God sends us to help rule as kings and priest under Christ? *Yes!*
- Why? *Because He loves us!*

Now then, this also has to do with Israel, because when you get to these Old Testament prophecies many times there are many things that are in there that have to do with the Church as well as Israel, because the Church in fact is Israel. So, when you carry them out to the spiritual fullness of it, it’s talking about the Church in the state of resurrection.

“...where they have been put to shame.” (v 19). Oh, isn’t that going to be nice. Think of that! God is going to send us to where we have been given the most trouble. And guess what? It’s going

to be just like Mordecai and Haman—right? Remember that? Mordecai was hated and despised by Haman. He would not stand and rise when Haman came by, the Agagite. He was the big pope over there in Persia with King Ahasuerus.

Mordecai was just wasting away, and one night the king was reading an old left-over newspaper. It was called the *Chronicles of the Kingdom*—right? We have a paper over here called the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He read where Mordecai saved the king from death. So, he called in Haman the next day, and Haman was expecting this **great** promotion—right? *Yes!* Ahasuerus said to Haman, he said, ‘Now, tell me Haman, I need your advice. What do you think that the king should do to the one he wants to honor?’

Haman said to himself, ‘It’s me!’ And the king says, ‘Well, put him on your horse and have someone take him around and say that this is the one whom the king favors. Haman that’s a good idea. You take my horse and you lead it with Mordecai sitting on it, and you go through the whole city and say, ‘This is the one whom the king favors.’

That’s exactly what God is going to do with us when we rule in the Kingdom of God. So, don’t worry about all those troubles and difficulties.

- Genesis 26:5
- John 14:15
- Matthew 5
- 1-John 4
- Jeremiah 5
- Romans 8:7
- Deuteronomy 8:7-9

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Who was Jesus?*

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

Scripture References

- 1) 1 John 4:16-19
- 2) Genesis 1:26-27
- 3) John 1:1
- 4) Genesis 3:11, 15
- 5) Genesis 22:9-13,15-16, 12, 16-18
- 6) Deuteronomy 4:29-37, 39-40
- 7) Deuteronomy 5:1
- 8) Exodus 18:15-16
- 9) Deuteronomy 5:2-10, 28-29, 32-33
- 10) Deuteronomy 6:1-12
- 11) Deuteronomy 7:6
- 12) 1 Peter 1:16
- 13) Deuteronomy 7:6
- 14) 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- 15) Deuteronomy 7:6-15
- 16) Deuteronomy 8:2-6, 10-16
- 17) Deuteronomy 10:12-22
- 18) Psalm 91:14-16
- 19) Hebrews 5:7-9
- 20) Zephaniah 3:14-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 8:5
- Genesis 2
- Hebrews 11

Love of God II

Fred R. Coulter

Have you ever wondered if there's any connection between all of the weather problems, upset things, and political problems we have in the United States today, and the condition of the Churches of God? There very well may be a connection

Here's what happens, Matthew 24:11: "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.... [What happens when deception comes in?] ...And because lawlessness shall be multiplied... [iniquity grows, sin increases] ...the love of many shall grow cold" (vs 11-12). I would have to say that the majority of us may have come from circumstances where we never really have understood love—even in the sense of family love, personal love, friendship love—in the way that we ought to know and experience as human beings.

Everywhere you look on television today it is iniquity upon iniquity, and deception upon deception on an ongoing basis. Our minds are literally flooded with it, and filled with it almost beyond our ability to comprehend how bad it is. I heard a teenage girl expressing her delight in this movie, and how funny it really was, and it was really a very bad movie because it was killing and murder and mayhem, and all of the perverse things you're seeing today; especially with cartoons for children. They're being fed demonic, perverse things of the worst sort.

- How can we understand the love of God?
- How can we understand how to love each other?

I think that is the greatest sin that is in the Churches of God today. They don't know, they don't understand, they don't comprehend, nor do they preach, nor do they study about the love of God.

Let's go to 2-Peter 3:3 where we find the way that the society is; it's difficult. You can't trust anyone. You can't help anyone, because someone is out there trying to take advantage of you. Someone is out there trying to rip you off; someone is out there trying to do you in. How many here have ever experienced the betrayal by a friend? *I mean a real betrayal!* Devastating—isn't it? How many have experienced that within the Church? *Yes!* I raised my hand with that one, too. Isn't that more devastating? Someone that you trusted? Someone that you confided in? Someone you thought would stand with you through thick and thin—right? Didn't do it—did they? *No!*

That's why God inspired that one of the apostles that was called was Judas; so that we would understand that the love of God can only come when we truly love God in spite of everything that goes around us. In the hymnal there's a song from the Psalm, which goes (paraphrased): 'Twas not a foe that did me in. It was my friend, a guide. And we sat down and had meals together, talked together. But his words were smoother than butter and in his heart was deceit.' We find much the same thing right here that we have in the world today and the way that religion is.

2-Peter 3:3. "Knowing this first [primarily], that in the last days *there* will come mockers..." These are not only just atheist, these are religious scoffers. Have you been hearing that lately? 'God didn't mean what He said. God's Word is not what He wrote.' Scoffing at it.

Verse 4: "And asking, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' For ever since the forefathers died, everything has remained the same as from *the* beginning of creation. But this *fact* is hidden from them—they themselves choosing *to ignore it*—that by the Word of God *the* heavens existed of old, and *the* earth came forth out of water and amid water, by which the world at that time, having been deluged with water, had itself been destroyed" (vs 4-6). Didn't learn a single thing—did they? *No!* The Flood didn't teach them one lesson.

Then we find what that leads to in relationship to people who claim they know God; who claim to be religious; who claim to understand God's way.

2-Timothy 3:1: "Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self..." (vs 1-2). Never have we had a time when all that the children learn now in school is *self-esteem*. That just builds vanity and ego. Unless people know that love comes from God, they can't have it. Unless they know that God Himself created everyone in His image, they can't have any self-esteem or self-worth. So, they love themselves. Look what we have. Then it list all the things again:

"...of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having an outward appearance of godliness, but denying the power of *true* godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these." (vs 2-5). I think I just described some of experiences within the Church of

God—did I not? *Yes! Why? Because they don't know the love of God!* They don't have a clue.

I think that when we come understand how great the love of God is, and how important it is for us in our lives; and how that is the greatest, and most fulfilling thing we can do as human beings, is to understand the love of God and love each other in the way God wants us to, that we have not really been preaching the Gospel.

- We've been preaching **about** Christ.
- *We have not been preaching Christ!*
- We've been preaching about law.
- *We have not been preaching about love.*
- We've been preaching doom and gloom
- We've been preaching to repent *in fear* from the doom and gloom.
- *Rather than repent because God loves you!*

All backwards! It was the same thing in Christ's day. Again this sounds just like the church experience we have been in.

Luke 11:42: "But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God." Just pass over, just completely leave it behind. How many sermons have you heard, in your past church experience, of the love of God? *Probably very few!* I know one time someone came up to me and they said, 'You know this church organization does not have very much love. Now, there's more here in this congregation, but truly there is no love.' And I said, 'Ah no, you can't be right.' I gave a sermon on love. I didn't have a clue, brethren, *I did not have a clue!* You don't solve the problem by preaching a sermon; I have learned that:

- God wants you to *experience* His love,
- God wants you to *feel* His love,
- God wants you to *express* His love.

Have you ever felt loved by God down to very depths of your soul? Sometimes you can't know that's there unless you experience some difficulties along the way. So yes, they pass over the love of God, because if you pass over the love of God, then you don't have to get down to the realities of life. You don't have to examine your own heart, mind and soul.

What we are going to talk about is the greatest thing, the greatest character attribute, the most fulfilling aspect of your Christian life, and the very reason and purpose why you were called. This then strips away all playing of religion and gets us where we need to be.

I'm going to cover every place in the Epistles of John where he talks about the love of

God, and behold, there are 46! Is the love of God important? *Yes, indeed!*

1-John 4:8: "The one who does not love does not know God because God is love." How could you ever really know the true Truth, the whole Truth about God, unless you know the love of God? were taught the love of God?

Verse 9: "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." If you remember, John 3:16 says, 'For God so loved the world.' I'm going to have a couple of sermons starting there when I talk about the love of Christ and what He did to be the Passover sacrifice for us—"that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone"—meaning anyone, any person. This is not restricted.

God wants that relationship with each one. God has perfect love and can perfectly love everyone in the world. That's something! God is not going around looking for people to correct, looking for people to put down, looking for people to put them in fear. ***God is looking for those who really desire a relationship with Him, with His love!*** That's what God wants. That's why He sent Christ.

Verse 8: "The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love.**"

Verse 10: "In this *act*, is **the love**... [that's the way it is in the Greek]...not that we loved God... [we don't learn the love of God until He first loves us] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the propitiation* for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is **perfected** in us" (vs 10-12).

How's a person going to know that God loves them? *Well, when they come to Sabbath services, because Sabbath is to be a day that we fulfill!* Do you understand the difference between just keeping and fulfilling? The difference is this: *if you keep, you go by the letter of the law; if you fulfill, you gather the full spiritual meaning out of the whole day!* So, the Sabbath should be a day to fulfill. That begins with what? *Fellowshipping with God the Father and Jesus Christ* (as we learned in the first chapter), 'Indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and His own Son, Jesus Christ.' When we **fulfill** the Sabbath, rather than just observed the Sabbath, then we get the benefit out of it and God's Spirit that He wants us to have.

God is looking for those people that want to fellowship with Him. When we have God's Spirit in us and we fellowship with each other, that is Christ in us/the Father in us, showing and expressing love

to those that He has called. That puts everything in an entirely different basis—doesn't it? Why should you come to church and be fearful?

- You cannot ever have the love of God with a *spy system*.
- You cannot ever have the love of God with a *fear system*.
- You cannot ever have the love of God with *command and control*.

It just won't work! We're duty-bound to love one another with God dwelling in us; that's how it is perfected. The love of God is the perfect love and ***our whole lifetime goal is to let that love be perfected in us!*** That may require suffering; that may require trials; that may require things that there are times you're going to say, 'God, what on earth are You doing?' God works things out far differently than we think they should be because He wants that love *perfected* in us.

Verse 13: "By this *standard*... [by this means] ...we know that we are dwelling in Him..."—present tense. Let's understand past tense was yesterday, future tense is tomorrow. We don't know what we're going to do tomorrow, and we know what we did yesterday we can't do anything about. That's why this is in the present tense, *loving*, because that's what God is interested in, what you are *doing*—not what you plan to do, not what you have done—but what you *are doing*. That's why it's written this way. It's magnificent the way it's written.

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).

Confessing is very profound. You cannot confess that He is and do like the Catholics and remove the second Commandment and have idols and have statues and have saints and all of this sort of thing. You are not confessing Christ truly. You are using His name. So, this means the true confession.

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." Brethren, that is the highest form of Christianity that God wants us to have. This is what we need to be perfecting. This is what we need to be working toward.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love... [that's describing His highest characteristic] ...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, **the love of God is perfected** within us..." (vs 16-17).

It is ***the love***, because it is ***the love*** which comes from ***the God***, which means it's an ongoing perfecting,

- as we are walking
- as we are growing
- as we are praying
- as we are studying
- as we live our lives and understand what the love that God has for us
- how we can love each other

I would just have to say, brethren, that years ago we didn't have a clue as to what that really was, what it really is.

It's to be: "...perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the **day of judgment**..." (v 17). Not fear—***confidence!*** One of the worst things in the world that has been done in the name of Christ is to constantly, every week, *put the brethren in fear that they're going to lose their salvation*.

- God didn't call you to lose salvation!
- God didn't call you to give His Spirit to take it away!

He did not!

- He gave His Spirit that it may be perfected.
- He gave His Spirit because He loves you.

Just the opposite!

That's a tremendous thing. We need to really have confidence in the 'day of judgment' so when the 'day of judgment' comes, what is God the Father going to see? *Christ standing there in our stead*—right? *Yes!* This is the great and tremendous thing that God does. This is a clue for overcoming: ***When you're loving God, you're overcoming!*** You are overcoming. When you're focusing on that, you don't have to beat sin to death. You try it, you'll see.

If you've never experienced the love of God, I'll tell you what to do. You're praying, you ask God to help you understand the love of God. ***He will!*** *He'll answer that prayer!* Continue praying that and the day will come when you will be praying you will ***feel*** that love of God, and you will ***know*** that love of God, and you will ***know*** that it is true, because it comes from God the Father directly to you. You will have confidence. No fear! No torment!

“...because even as He is, so also are we in this world” (v 17). Think on that! That is a tremendous promise! When you’re loving God that way, God imputes His righteousness to you, the very righteousness of Christ:

- to inspire us to do good
- to inspire us to love God
- to inspire us to overcome

If and when you sin, which you will, Christ is there cleansing us from every unrighteousness, every sin. Why? *Because He wants you in the Kingdom of God*, that’s why!

Verse 18: “**There is no fear in the love of God...**” I’m beginning to understand that. Therefore, you cannot run a Church of God on fear. The greatest thing of the Gospel is the love of God—is it not? If you’re going to preach the Gospel and you’re going to serve the people of God, how can you do with fear?

“...rather, perfect love casts out...” (v 18). It is a process. As God is perfecting that love in you and you are striving, with God’s Spirit, to grow in that love—which is the greatest fulfillment of your whole life. I want you to understand that. This is a long-term, lifelong goal. This is something that we need to grow in every day; it’s not just something that comes all at once—you will have experiences when that happens—but it’s a continuous thing.

“...casts out fear...” (v 18). What does that do for keeping your job and Sabbath? God will take care of it! You don’t have to worry; you may have to suffer a little bit, but you don’t have to worry. Now, that may sound contradictory, but you don’t have to worry, God will take care of it!

“...because fear has torment... [and when you have torment and you have fear] ...**the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God**” (v 18). That, brethren, is the biggest sin of the Churches of God today. It can be corrected, God wants it changed, but we have to be willing. We have to go to God and say, ‘God, I don’t have a clue. Please help me to understand. Please guide and lead me with Your Spirit.’

Verse 19: “We love Him **because He loved us first**.... [Never forget that. He first loved us. That all ties in with the Passover.] ...If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar....” (vs 19-20). I’ll tell you, the politics and stuff that have gone on in the Churches of God—the hatred, the vehemence, the back-stabbing—there was not the love of God. Were there liars? *Yes, absolutely!* You can apply this to any church. You can go to the Seventh Day Adventist, Church of God Seventh

Day, or Sunday-keeping churches. You get on these boards and the politics that are there.

I talked to a man who used to be a Baptist and he was on all of these boards and everything like that; it just gets so carnal. Who’s going to be promoted, who’s going to be ordained, who’s going to be a Sunday school teacher, and superintendent? *Backbiting and all that nonsense!*

“...For if he is does not love his brother whom he had seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?” (v 20). You can put any name there! If you have family troubles put the name of the one you’re having family troubles with. Do you a great deal of good; did me a great deal of good. Sometimes you have children that their behavior is such that you almost literally hate them. God says if you hate them you’re not loving God. Well, how do you solve the problem then?

- You can’t solve it by yelling and screaming, because that won’t do it.
- You can’t solve it by discipline, because it’s way beyond that if it’s deteriorated.

I’ve found a way to solve those things: Put it in God’s hands, and say, ‘God, You alone can solve this. Help me to do my part, but please put in the mind of this person what *You* want.’ God can change a mind—can He not?

- Did not God call you?
- Did He not change your mind?
- Do you not have enough faith that God can change that person’s mind?

Just put it in God’s hand and let Him do it! *Yes!* That solves a whole lot of problems. Then you may have the experience of the prodigal son coming home—that’s a tremendous experience, believe me! *Love works*, and God will make sure that it works if we’re crying out to Him so that it does work, because it’s the greatest thing there is.

Verse 21: “And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother.”

Now, let’s come to 1-Corinthians 13. I’m going to read out of the *Interlinear*. One time a person asked me what translation of the Bible ‘do you use?’ And it never dawned on me, that when I read the *King James*, I read what it *should read* because I’ve studied the Greek behind it. In much of my teaching and preaching I use the *Interlinear*, because I have the English and the Greek. Now unfortunately in the old *King James* 1-Cor 13 translates the Greek word for love—‘agape’—as *charity*—and that is really a very unfortunate translation.

As you know, there are three words for love in the Greek:

1. 'eros'—not in the New Testament—is *sexual desire and love*, which can be perverted into erotica.

That's what most of the world knows today, nothing but erotica.

2. 'phileo'—from which we get the word *Philadelphia*, the lover of the brethren.

That is just human affection, and human love toward human beings and between human beings, and there is precious little of that; there is some of it still in the world, but precious little.

3. 'agape'—the highest form of love—Godly, Divine love—which only God can give as a gift.

This Godly, Divine love also, because of the sacrifice of Christ, can be referred to as *sacrificial love*, because you will do in love for the other person, without seeking anything in return. Also, 'agape' love is the highest and the greatest love we can attain because it *comes from God* and is one of His greatest characteristics.

1-Corinthians 13:8 (*Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*). "Love never fails..." Think on that! Have you ever wanted a sure thing in your life? We'd all like to have a sure thing on making money, and that's how a lot of people get taken down the garden path—right? 'This is a sure thing; put your money in it.' *Gone!* A lot of these people who invested their retirement funds into derivatives—*gone!* How many are in derivatives in the Mexican market today? *Gone!* Fails!

- Health fails!
- Friends fail!
- You fail!
- The whole society is going to fail!

But there is one thing that *never* fails: ***the love of God!***

"...**Love never fails**... [in the Greek it is *the* love, with a definite article] ...**never fails**..." (v 8).

Verse 13: "And now abides faith, hope, love; these three things; but the **greater** of these [is] love." The *King James* has the 'greatest.' How great is love? How important is love? *It is the greatest and it never fails!* There is nothing else in this world that you can compare to that—is that not correct? *Yes!*

Let's begin to understand how the Apostle Paul really brings home the point. I want you to understand this in relationship to the whole backdrop of all the problems in the churches at Corinth. I remember one time a person asked me, 'What church era do you think we're in?' I said, 'Well, if you could express any church era we're in, I would

say 1-Corinthians,' because every problem that's in 1-Corinthians you see: follow this man, follow that man; divisions, heresies; weird, odd doctrines; adultery, fornication; corruption, taking people to court; wanting to have Pentecostal experiences, speaking in tongues; and who's the greatest and all of this sort of thing.

Who has the Spirit of God? What organization is it in? ***It's not in any organization; it's in you!*** They got so bad that they were saying in 1-Cor. 15, that the Resurrection didn't occur; there's no resurrection. I mean, within the Church of God! Think of that with the backdrop of all of this: you got your Christ party; your Peter party; your Apollos party. So he says, 'Brethren, I want to show you a better way.'

1-Corinthians 12:31 (*Int*): "Be [zealous or be desirous or] emulous but the gifts better, and yet more surpassing [or, a more excellent] a way to you I shew." Let's understand, as I've mentioned before, Paul is talking about himself. This is a twofold application. And you could also have a threefold application: to Christ, to you, and to the ministers.

Notice what he says, 1-Corinthians 13:1 (*Int*): "If with the tongues of men I speak and of angels, but love have not, I have become brass sounding or a cymbal clanging."

So much just un-orchestrated noise. The best expression I can think of that is: if you would take a sharp instrument and run it backwards on a blackboard—it just grates right down to the nerves. So, love is more important than communicating, even if you could speak all languages of the world. You'd be thought of a great person—right? Even if you could bring in something new, and whatever the language of the angels would be, you could speak that and have not the love of God—*nothing!*

Verse 2: "And if I have prophecy..." That's what everyone wants; people want prophecy. Are not churches built on prophecy? There's even one magazine that comes out, *Prophecy Flash*. Boy! You can get a following if you want a following, if you want lots of people, you tell them prophecy. *Yes!* That's why they sell so many of these weird tabloids at the checkout stand. That's why so many people come into churches—they want to know! Listen, if you understood every prophecy, but didn't know Christ:

Verse 2: "And if I have prophecy, and know [the] mysteries all and all [the] knowledge... [You had the greatest brain in the world, you understood every philosophy, you understood everything that there was concerning human experience.] ...and if I have all faith, so as mountains to remove..."

Faith is important—isn't it? *Without faith it's impossible to please God*—correct? But if you had faith to where you could move mountains—earth moving faith. I'll tell you, if anyone wanted to build a church, get earth moving faith and get yourself the media and have them come out there and put this on television, immediately you would have millions of followers—right? You would have them coming to you by the trainload, by the planeload, by the carload, by the busload and just saying, 'Heal me! Change this! Change that! Change everything!'

If you had all of these things and even earth moving faith, but you have not love, what you amount to? Paul's talking of himself. Every minister ought to read that and say that of himself. Every person needs to understand that in relationship to the love of God you can have all these things, but if you don't have love the truth is the other way around; ***you will never have any of these things unless you have love!***

- Do you think God is going to give earth-moving faith to someone who doesn't love Him?
- Do you think God is going to give knowledge to someone that doesn't love Him? *No!*

What if you're a philanthropic person and you give things? There are a lot of people who give things away and have big charity things—don't they? They like to get their name in the paper. That's how you get well-healed in the establishment. They have all of theirs—don't they?

Verse 3: "And if I give away in food all my goods [to feed the poor], and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned..." That's quite a sacrifice—isn't it? Never will forget on the news one time during the Vietnam War. They showed this Buddhist priest, and he got down in the lotus position, poured himself with gasoline, crossed his arms, struck the match and burned himself to a crisp to protest the war. If you don't have the love of God it doesn't do anything. You can even do that, the greatest self-sacrificing, outgoing thing you could do, if you don't have the love of God, it's nothing.

"...but love have not, nothing I am profited" (v 3). So this gives us a comparison as to how important love is. Love never fails and love is the greatest.

In preaching the Gospel, what do you think should be the main focus of what we should preach? Granted, love takes a little longer, because:

- love is a process
- love is an experience

- love is something you live and go through

Here's what love does for you. It allows you to have these qualities. You can't work this kind of love up. You can't just get a feeling in your heart or whatever it may be, and work this up.

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit... [comes from the Holy Spirit of God] ...the fruit of the Spirit is love..." When you truly have love, then love enables you to have joy. I know sometimes I would read that and think of my experience in the Church and say, 'I'm miserable.' No joy!

I would like to read and describe to you Christ's view of the Church. People like to beat up on the Laodiceans—don't they? *Yes!* What if Laodiceanism is an age? What if we've all been Laodiceans all along? What if what we are experiencing is that *we are repenting Laodiceans?* *Yes!* The Laodiceans have been labeled as the worst and the nastiest thing in the world. They're not! Christ says, 'I love you'—does He not?

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God." Let me just mention something right here: this the active tense, 'the beginning,' the subject in the nominative case, meaning *the cause*, not in the accusative case, 'having received' as the first beginning of the creation of God, the first creature that way. This the beginning cause.

Verse 15: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot.... [I want you to understand think about your church experience.] ...So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (vs 15-16). These are in the body of Christ already. You can't be vomited up unless you're in the body. One minister said, with all the troubles going on: 'Well, I just try and stay right in the middle.' And I said, 'What does that describe? *A perfect Laodicean: neither hot nor cold—but right in the middle.*'

Verse 17: "For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy..." I don't know of any church in the history of the Church of God, that had sent to it over \$4-billion—that's a lot of money—and didn't even preach the love of God. You know why it's going down? *That's why!*

"...become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and you do not understand that you are wretched... [This has described our church experience—right? Isn't that true?] ...and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (v 17). Have you ever tried to talk to someone who doesn't want to open their eyes? 'Don't bother me with the facts.

Don't confuse me with the Truth. What ever they say, I will do.' *Setting yourself up for a deception.*

Verse 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire... [When we repent God wants us to go for the gold, which is His love. That's what so important. That's what He wants us to get: **His** love.] ...purified by fire... [So you're going to have some difficulties in it; it does not come easy.] ...that you may be rich... [If you're rich in Christ, who cares about anything else—right?] ...and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed..." Which means **God is going to expose it all!**

(go to the next track)

If God exposes the whole world for what it is, do you think that God is going to hide and cover the things of the Church of God that were sin and corruption and let it never be known? *No!* Jesus said, 'That which is spoken in secret is going to be shouted from the house tops.' And I guarantee you, brethren, part of the punishment for all of the things that have been done in the name of God—which should never have been done—you are going to hear and understand some of the most horrendous, unthinkable things. May they all repent! But God is not going to let that go without being exposed.

"...and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see" (v 18). I'll have to just tell you, that part of the experience we have gone through, and if you listen to some of the older sermons, you will see, BANG! 'Well I never saw that before. I never thought of that before. I didn't know that was in here before.' What's happening? *You're seeing—right? What's the greatest thing you need to see? The love of God, the Word of God, that's what He wants you to see!*

Verse 19: "As many as I love... [While different ministers may hate the Laodiceans, Christ says *He loves them.* That's what we need to focus on.] ...I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent." That's all God wants. As I've said many, many times if you think you're so far gone you can't repent, read about King Manasseh. He went through everything—didn't he? Fifty-five years of Bill Clinton, I've said before. Yes, he repented! So there's hope!

Now back to Galatians 5:22, these are the **fruits of the Spirit**, so if we haven't had them in the past, we haven't exercised the Spirit—right? *Yes!* "...love, joy, peace..." Instead of fear, *peace of mind.* That's something—isn't it? When you love God I guarantee you're going to have peace of mind. When you love God things can go on and you can understand God is going to work it out. You concentrate on loving God and expressing that love.

"...long-suffering..." (v 22) This means the capacity to suffer long. Most of us have a short fuse, and we're going around ready to explode. Long-suffering—you may have a disease; you may have a sickness; you may have a malady.

I remember one of our founder as a matter-of-fact, the woman who called and said, 'Would you come up and have a Bible study with us,' Esther Greisinger. She had diabetes, could hardly see, it got worse and worse, the tendons in her groin in her right leg would pull up and lock up, and she was in tremendous pain all the time. She gradually went blind, had to walk with a cane, gradually ended up in a wheelchair just suffering excruciating pain. Yet, any one of the brethren who would call her, she would cheer them up, and she would give them hope. In her pain she gave them hope.

The story about how her husband was baptized is a long story, but there are going to be some things that we have to suffer. God gives you the ability to suffer long and see it through to the end.

"...kindness [gentleness], goodness..." (v 22). That's anything but what we've experienced, and that's anything but what I am as a person naturally, so it has to be a gift of God. I remember we were told, we were commanded by the administrator of Church Administration, once a year give an attack sermon. So, as a new minister I went out and my second year, I gave an attack sermon—first and last. I attacked everything under the sun, and everyone in the Church, and every sin I knew of anybody in the church. And boy, they cut a wide swath away from me. I alienated the whole congregation. It took me over a year, to win them back. That doesn't accomplish it! James says, 'The wrath of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.' Besides why can't the brethren of God be inspired in love? Should that not be better? *Yes!*

"...goodness, faith... [Notice where faith comes in relationship to love.] ...meekness, self-control... [How are you going to overcome sin with self-control? *By first loving God!*] ...against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit. We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another" (vs 22-26). If we *walk* in the Spirit, let us *live* in the Spirit, and ***the fruit of the Spirit is from God!***

Let's understand something about the Church; how God deals with us. Sometimes we overlook the obvious. The Church of God is not likened to a tree; a tree grows up. The Church of God is likened to a vine, ***which spreads out.*** Isn't that something? That very simple instruction ought

to tell us that a hierarchy is wrong. I've got a sermon coming, *Invisible Idol/Visible Man*. You're going to understand what happened.

Jesus said, John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.... [He's the one doing the works. Who is it that is in us doing the works? *Christ, and the Father*—correct? *Yes!*] ...He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [Are we seeing that happen? *Yes!*] ...but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit" (vs 1-2). That's what God wants: more love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, kindness, long-suffering and temperance.

Verse 3: "You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you.... [Christ is constantly cleansing us] ...Dwell in Me... [this is all part of the Passover] ...and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me.... [here's the only hierarchy]: ...I am the vine, *and you are* the branches..." (vs 3-5).

I'll have to confess to you, brethren, that in 13 years I've not had to exercise one bit of authority—and I don't intend to—because if we're all submitting to the authority and the love of Christ, is that not a greater authority? Then when we come together to do what we need to do, can we not do it in peace, and orderliness, and understanding? *Yes!*

As I mentioned at the Feast, and some people came up afterwards and said, 'Never heard words like that.' I said, 'Why don't we just trust the brethren? *God does!*' Cannot the brethren be trusted? *Oh they can't be trusted, they're not going to be in the Kingdom of God.*

John Morgan down in Australia checked out 140 churches. Down in Australia you're so far away that you're going to spend the time getting the true facts—right? *He checked out 140 churches!* He's now our office manager, small as it is, down in Australia. When I talked to him on the phone about setting up the office and everything, I said, 'Look, you just send a report quarterly and let me know what's happening. If you can't be trusted with the money and funds, you won't be in the Kingdom of God so we don't need to worry about that, just take care of it.' Never have the Australians been trusted to do that, in all the years of their experience. I don't need what they have; let them use it down there. Keep it simple. The vine, that's what it needs to be. Let the fruit come forth.

"...The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are

burned. If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you." (vs 5-7).

That's what it has to be, right here: *it's living in you*. Christ is called what? '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*' If you have the Word of Christ in you, and Christ in you and the Father in you, what are you going to think on? What are you going to concentrate on? What are your thoughts going to be on?

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7). God will answer prayers. That's what the answer to unanswered prayers is, right here. There'll be time you will pray, maybe it will be years before God answers that prayer. You ever had that happen? *Yes!* Did God answer it? *Yes!* When? *At the best time!*

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me... [here we're getting down into the kind of love that we need to have] ...I also have loved you..." (vs 8-9). Did He not give His life for us? *Yes, indeed!* {see sermon: *The Three Covenants of Abraham*.} Profound what He did for us.

"...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.... [everything that He did was pleasing to the Father] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you" (vs 9-12). It's the Father and Christ in you *expressing His love*—as if He were here—to each other.

When you give someone a handshake, it's Christ *in* you and the Father expressing that love. You give someone a hug, it is because Christ *in* you and the Father is hugging you. You think on that and you try that with your fellowship and you're going to see a *vast* transformation—right? *Yes!*

Remember the first time we had someone from back east come out to keep our Feast with us, the Feast of Tabernacles in Twain-Harte. It was just a small group, we were only twelve at that time. Here come ten people from Michigan with the children and everything. They're just kind of looking at us. I think this was about 1988, somewhere around there. Here comes our little congregation of twelve, we're hugging each other and all this sort of thing and so one of the men was standing there and he asked a woman, 'When was the last time you saw him.' *Oh last Sabbath*. He was amazed because it

was like long-lost friends just seen for the first time. That's how it is, and I think that Last Great Day at Gulf Shores God blessed us phenomenally. That's the way the Feast should be. It's an outpouring of God's Spirit and an outpouring of God's love to us.

Verse 12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 12-14). Think on that! **Jesus Christ is your friend!** That is powerful stuff, brethren. We need to let it sink in.

Sometimes you go along and you think: has that been in the Bible all this time? *Yes, it's been there all this time!* Let's see what love can do for us. Let's see how this will change us.

1-Corinthians 13:4 (*Int*): "Love has patience..." That means not only patience, but patiently endures. Love will endure. Love never fails

"...is kind..." (v 4). That comes from the word *gracious*. That's how the behavior is going to be: gracious, kind, fitting and nice.

"...love is not envious..." (v 4). Not jealous. If someone receives a blessing, rejoice with them. You will receive a blessing, sure it's not envious.

"...not is vain-glorious..." (v 4). How many times has the ministry been run that way?

"...is not puffed up..." (v 4). The greatest this and that and the other thing. Isn't it interesting, puffed up? What is all of this self-help stuff? It's just the foolishness of pumping your own mind up into thinking you're something great. *Not so!*

"...is not puffed up, acts not unseemly..." (vs 4-5). It uses discretion, good conversation.

"...seeks not the things of its own..." (vs 4-5). And we might put in there for a minister, does not have a hidden agenda. *No!*

"...is not easily provoked, reckons not evil" (vs 4-5). Doesn't sit there and keep a scorecard, a scoreboard. 'Ah ha! He did this. Ah ha! He did that. Ah ha! He did the other thing.'

What is this telling us? This is telling us that the relationship that God wants us to grow in this love, is that the love between God, which is unconditional on His part, becomes unconditional on our part back to Him, and out to others especially in the family in the brethren.

You can solve a lot of problems in your marriage if you get rid of the scorecard. And regardless good, bad, or ugly however the situation is, you've got to know that you're loved. Then there's hope. And when you know that, what is that

going to do in the first place? *That's going to solve a lot of problems from coming up—right? Yes, it will!* That's what God wants you to know, *that He loves you under all circumstances!*

"Rejoices not at unrighteousness, but rejoices with the Truth... [that's what it has to be] ...all things covers... (vs 6-7). That means that it is able to, with the Truth and with the love, to cover whatever difficulty may come along. That's what we need to do *with the brethren*. We need to reach out to them, every one of us, with the love of God and help them cover their sins and their sorrows with the love of God. That's why if someone has left God temporarily because of men, and they come back to God and we have a part in that, we **welcome** them with open arms, and we welcome them and say, '**God loves you.**' That's what they need.

They don't need this: 'Well, I haven't seen you in church for a long time. Where have you been?' You won't see them in church again for a long time—is that not right? *Yes!* That takes a lot of love on our part—does it not? Do they know they've sinned? *Yes!* Are they ashamed that they have sinned? *Yes!* Have they confessed to God that they have? *Well they're probably in the process of doing so!* Do they need love, joy and peace? *Yes!* Read the story of the prodigal son.

Verse 7: "All things covers, all things believes... [not lies, that's of the Truth] ...all things hopes... [because love really then gives you the true hope.] ...all things endures... [whatever it is.] ...Love never fails... [Never, *never*, *never* fails!] ...but whether prophecies, they shall be done away..." (vs 7-8).

Not the prophecies of God. The heaven and earth is based on the prophecies and the Word of God. This does not mean any of the prophecies of God, this means all the stupid prophecies *we*, in our puffed up vanity, used to say would happen. Can I recall a couple of dates: 1972, 1975, etc, etc.

"...whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease..." (v 8). It's going to be something, what are we going to speak when we are the sons and daughters of God and we talk to God? I guarantee you it's not going to be English, and I guarantee you it's not going to be Hebrew. Hebrew is just as pagan as any other language is pagan. So, this whole thing that Hebrew is a pure language is nonsense. It's going to be done away.

"...they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge it shall be done away. For in part we know, and in part we prophesy..." (vs 8-9). Let's be honest like Paul, we don't know everything in the world, we don't understand all prophecies. We're

going to talk a little bit about some prophecies. But it's going to be in part.

"...but when may come that which is perfect, then that in part shall be done away. When I was an infant [or a child], as an infant I spoke, as an infant I thought, as an infant I reasoned..." (vs 10-11). Brethren, Christ wants us to grow up, put away those childish things because all of those are the enemies of love.

We grow up and I tell you what, by the time we're teenagers we think were big, and strong, and tough, or beautiful, and all this sort of thing. Then when we're 20 we are ready to conquer the world, and we're motivated by 'eros.' A little later in life we understand there's more to it. Then God begins to call us, so we need to put away all those childish things because those are the enemies of love, whatever it maybe. Maybe we've never grown up knowing the love of God at all, and maybe we want to be loved but every time someone tries to express that love we kind of put up this barrier, because we're afraid.

Let God's Spirit help you overcome that so you understand the love of God. Sometimes that's even within a marriage; sometimes people can live their whole lives in a married life and never really know the love of God. That's a shame, but sometimes it is, that's why there's the second resurrection, God is going to take care of all of those things.

Verse 12: "For we see now through a glass obscurely [darkly], but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall be know according as also I have been known. And now abides faith, [and] hope, [and] love; these three things; but the greater [or greatest] of these [is] love" (vs 12-13).

Let's just understand how great, how tremendous and how fantastic that the love of God is, and what it is to do for us. That's why I sometimes begin, and sometimes end, a lot of sermons here in Ephesians 3:16. This is what Paul, when he was in prison, wrote to the brethren so that they would know:

Ephesians 3:16: "That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man... [inner person] ...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love..." (vs 16-18). That's what we need to be rooted and grounded in. Not in an organization, not in a corporation, not in a man, but in the love of God.

"...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [This is what God wants to give us. This is fantastic, this is mind expanding, this is

the whole goal of life.] ...may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, **and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses human knowledge...**" (vs 18-19)

There is nothing in this world that is going to be any greater than your coming to know and understand the love of Christ. That's something! Nothing greater at all.

"...which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (v 19). That is a **profound** statement! What is it going to be like to be filled with the fullness of God? That's what the love of God will produce.

In case that you doubt that it will happen, he says, v 20: "Now to Him Who is able [that means has the power and capacity] to do exceeding abundantly..." While I'm talking about this I want you to think of your greatest thought that God is going to do to you, or to give you, or to provide for you. You're going to have to multiply that over, and over again.

"...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us" (v 20). That's what the love of God is to do. That's why it is so important, brethren. We're going to be hearing a lot of this. I'm learning as I'm going, brethren, I'm learning. By nature I am not a loving person. And just like with the Apostle John, he and his brother James were called *the sons of thunder*, and he didn't write about love until later in his life—did he? It doesn't tell us all what he went through and what he suffered, but he learned the love of God—didn't he? *Yes, he did!* So can we! I'm learning as we go along. The Apostle Paul wrote, 'You, then, who teach another, don't you also teach yourself?' (Rom. 2:21).

That's great that we can do it. Just think how fantastic that the Word of God is that He would put in here and then add His Spirit so we can understand His love. That's why love never fails, and love is the greatest thing of all.

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 24:11-12
- 2) 2 Peter 3:3-6
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- 4) Luke 11:42
- 5) 1 John 4:8-9, 8, 10-21
- 6) 1 Corinthians 13:8, 13
- 7) 1 Corinthians 12:31
- 8) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
- 9) Galatians 5:22

- 10) Revelation 3:14-19
- 11) Galatians 5:22-26
- 12) John 15:1-14
- 13) 1 Corinthians 13:4-13
- 14) Ephesians 3:16-20

Scriptures referenced, but not quoted:

- John 3:16
- 1 Corinthians 15
- Romans 2:21

Also referenced: Sermons:

- *Invisible Idol/Visible Man*
- *The Three Covenants of Abraham*

Love in the Church

Fred R. Coulter

I've been studying some rather technical things, and I got to thinking that you can have all the technical knowledge in the world that you want, but if you don't have the love of God, you really don't have anything. It's fine to understand the technical things, and that needs to be. But if you don't understand the love of God, and if it doesn't come from the heart, then all the technical things in the world are not going to save you. It may be interesting information, it may be fine to try and understand the Bible more, but God wants us to be able to have His love and His Spirit as the primary and most important thing.

Let me just show you an example. Let's look at the Church that is called Thyatira. This Church had an awful lot of problems, and He even says that they have a prophetess, some of them have known the depths of Satan. But notice what He commends them for, Revelation 2:19: "I know your works, and love... [works and love go hand in hand] ...and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works; and the last *are* more than the first."

In spite of all of these problems God commends them for their love, and their works, and their patience, and their faith, and they got into trouble—I am sure just like so many do—by getting into the technicalities of philosophy and being taken down with the inner things of Satan the devil. God is interested in love, and *love is really the most important thing that we can do*.

We're going to review a few things because it's been quite a while. 1-John 4:6: "We are of God... [God wants us to know that we are *of God*.] ...the one who knows... [the one who is knowing] ...God listens to us..." How do we understand that we *know* God? *John tells us!*

1-John 2:3^[transcriber's correction]: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments." Anyone who knows God is going to keep His commandments. You will find that the Epistles of John fit together almost like a sphere; everything interrelates one with another.

Verse 3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him... [a double affirmation] ...if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word..." (vs 3-5). Again, this has an awful lot to do with our relationship with God. It's not just commandment-keeping, but it is even the words of Christ.

- Which Word of Christ would you be willing to reject?
- Which Word of God would you be willing to reject?

That why it's this way, so that we understand.

Whosoever is keeping His Word: "...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we **are in Him**" (v 5). So, everything that we do in growing in love and grace and knowledge is a *perfecting*. Isn't that what Jesus said? He said, 'Be you perfect as My Father in heaven is perfect.' And the first time you read that you think: My, how can you possibly do that? *Well, you can do that with the Spirit of God, and the love of God!*

Brethren, one thing that we need to understand and realize is this: ***If God is perfecting His love in you, it is pleasing to Him!*** Can you do the things that please Him? *Yes!* Should that not be taught in the Church? What you do is to build the love of God and to do the things which please Him, which John talks about! It's very important.

"...By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (vs 5-6). That's the whole reason for the very love of God in our lives. We are to *know* God.

1-John 4:6 "We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us..." Isn't that what we get with so many of the letters that the brethren write, that 'we're thankful for hearing the Word of God'? They hear us!

"...the one who is not of God does not listen to us.... [that's a good thing to be able to know and understand] ...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6).

- We're to *know* that.
- We're to *understand* the wiles of the devil.
- We're to *prove* whether these things are so or not.

God commended the Ephesians 'for trying them that say they are apostles, and you found that they weren't, and you found them to be liars.' Which means that God is expecting us not only with the love of God and His Spirit, but He's expecting us, then, to have the kind of thinking and the kind of mind that God has, so we can understand the Truth from the error, which means that you need to be spiritually mature enough to be able read anything as

it were and be able to discern the Truth from the error. I think just about everyone here is able to do that because you are exercising your senses. God has given us a mind very akin to His. The only problem is, most people put it to evil. God wants us to put it to good.

In Hebrews 5 we find something very, very interesting. It shows what happens when you don't exercise your mind spiritually. The other night I was watching Discovery Channel. That's one of my favorites because they have things on there that are at least reasonably true. Do you know what the most watched channel is today? Just to show you the intelligentsia of people, the most watched channel today is Nickelodeon, the cartoon channel! I don't think it's all children watching it.

If you don't exercise your mind then you're mind becomes stagnant. What they were doing is showing a special as to what happened when they had to have an operation and take out part of this person's brain. That how they were able to re-instruct other parts of the mind to make up for the missing part of the physical brain. They had to do it with training, they had to do with physical therapy and exercise so that the brain would readjust. But what happens is the brain actually changes and can permanently retain these things in another area. So, if you have the problem of lack of memory because of age, don't worry it's still there. It's the recall that's the problem.

Now let's understand this in relationship to what God wants us to do in growing in grace and knowledge, in growing in love, in growing in the Word of God; letting the Word of God rule in our mind. It becomes a part of us and actually becomes a part of our mind, coupled with the Holy Spirit of God. Here's what happens when that is not done:

Hebrews 5:11—speaking of Christ: “Concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of in hearing.” They weren't exercising their minds as God expected them to—to know good from evil, to understand righteousness from sin, to be able to understand the more technical aspects of God's Word.

Verse 12: “For truly, by this time **you ought to be teachers**, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God...” Just like anything else, **if you don't use it, you lose it!** If part of your mind is gone, taken out, then you have to re-educate the rest of your mind. Beginning from the very basics. They actually found—they ran a test on this one Japanese boy who had to have a whole half of his brain removed. Everything shifted to the other side of the brain, because the left side of your brain

controls the right side of your body, and the right side of your brain controls the left side of your body. In order for the brain to, on one side control both the right and left side, he had to start right back from the very beginning: to move the arm, to move the fingers, to move the eyes, to pronounce the words. But after about two years, this boy was hardly detectable from any other child his age—just a wee bit slower.

Now, *spiritually* the same thing can happen, if spiritually we let ourselves go brain dead, then we have to do the same thing here: “...*but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* word of righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown...” (vs 12-14)—mature Christians

- so that we can *discern right from wrong*; Truth from deception
- so that we are able to *think properly* with the Spirit and the Word of God

When you have that in your mind, and you study and you grow, and you let God's Spirit and God's grace work with you and you exercise it, then you are able to understand.

“...who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern [understand] between good and evil” (v 14). That's what the Love God will do for you. I know some of this is review, but this is so profound that we need to really repeat it, and know it, and understand it.

1-John 4:6: “...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.” That's so important for us to know today, because Satan's deception is really going to sweep this whole world. If we don't know it, if we don't understand what's happening, we won't be able to realize.

Verse 7: “Beloved, we should love one another because **love is from God**... [love is coming from God to us] ...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God.” We're going to see that everything, just like in the Epistles of John, is in the present tense. It is helping us in doing what we are doing **now**.

Verse 8: “The one who does not love does not know God... [or you could in the more practical English say, ‘is not knowing God’] ...because God is love.” This is the test for all of those who are religious and profess religiosity, that if they don't preach and teach the love of God—which is the greatest thing of the Gospel—are they not missing the boat? **Yes!** Are they not falling short of what God wants them to learn? **Yes! Because everything else is**

going to fall! Love never fails! The reason is **God is love**.

How can you possibly have a religion that does not have love and say it's from God, and claim you know God when you don't have love, because God *is* love? That's the very characteristic that comes from God. And I'll also tell you this: I've taken my own advice and asked God to help me grow in love. I've had some difficult times; so will you. Why? *So that you will learn it!* If you get discouraged in growing in love and understanding it, don't worry about it. Christ came and had to love God the Father and love the world while it was an enemy of His, while it was plotting against Him, while it was seeking to kill Him and finally did.

Verse 9: "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. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God..." (vs 9-10). God *is* love—isn't He? How can we then as human beings go to God and give something to God, which we don't have by nature? *We can't!* God has to give it to us, so it comes back to God. That's why God is not a glob! You try this sometime: get a balloon and fill it with water. You don't have to put much in there. But you can bounce it around, and you have a glob. Now if God is like a glob, how can you love that? How can you have a relationship with that? I mean, you may be able to do some interesting childish things with it, like have a water balloon fight. But how can you love a glob?

- That's why God is a person.
- That why we are to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.
- That's why John said in 1-John 1:3: "...for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ."

You can love a thing to a certain degree, but real love is between persons. That's why God created us the way that He did, so that we can understand His love is a greater expression beyond that. He wants us to have the relationship with Him—because He loved us first:

1-John 4:9: "...so that we might *live* through Him. In this *act* is **the love**—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation... [a continual atoning] ...for our sins" (vs 9-10).

- Does God know you have a sinful nature? *Yes!*
- Did He give it to you by inheritance? *Yes!*
- Does it surprise Him if you sin? *No!*

What He wants you to **not do** is to intentionally, determinedly, with will and forethought and malice, go sin. But it doesn't surprise God. That's why it's a propitiation—**continual atonement**. And part of overcoming is realizing how wicked the human mind really is, and how much you need that propitiation.

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another." That's the whole basis. **We ought to love one another**.

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time.... [He has that in there because I'm sure there were those saying, 'Well, I've seen God.'] ...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." God is dwelling in us. Christ is dwelling us. That's what's so profound and important in the whole aspect of love.

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." So, we can check that. We know that we have the Spirit of God, and having the Spirit of God, we also realize the depths of the evil of human nature. You can't understand your own mind unless God reveals it to you. People in the world do not try and overcome a thought of temptation that comes in their mind. They may think it's a really good idea and go right along with it. But with God's Spirit we're able to understand. **That's how we know**, and we **know** that we **know** with the Spirit of God. He wants us to grow in that love, and grow in His Spirit, and grow in His grace in a continual, expanding and deepening relationship with Him.

Verse 14: "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... [truly, truly confess that] ...God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. **God is love...**" (11-16).

That's the only thing that's going to straighten out the Church of God, brethren. All the reorganization in the world, if there's not repentance and the love of God it isn't going to straighten anything out, because of what the whole church and the whole world is going through, is to realize that unless they love God, life really is miserable. Life is rotten.

"...God is love, and the one who dwells in love..." (v 16). Living His way of life is living in love. That's hard to do. That is really hard to do! But you can do it with the Spirit of God, and that's why he's telling us. **That if you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, you can do it**. It's going to take some effort, because everything we do, spiritually, is going to take some effort. God hasn't done it for us

that we do nothing; otherwise, He would've just made robots. You could have happy little robots all programmed, running around. *NO!*

But to come to the understand love, and Truth, and have God's Spirit in you is really a profound and fantastic thing. Especially living in an evil world. That is a great accomplishment, brethren. What God is doing is marvelous. You consider all the odds against it. That's why it takes the Spirit of God.

"...one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us..." (vs 16-17). It's a whole life long process that finally, in the end, God has—with what He has already created with your mind and the way it functions, as we described just a little teeny bit of it—with God's Spirit in us to come to that perfect love. And then that perfect love is, as much as we can have it perfected in this life, **at the resurrection**, and we have a spirit mind, and we have a spirit body; and we have the true seeing of God, face-to-face, and seeing Christ exactly as He is.

Can you imagine the profound love that that is going to give us? That's something! And I think that's why God has us live in this life the way that it is, and why the evil is there; **so that we really come to desire the love of God**; and when all the chips are down and when every episode of life has been lived we know that the love of God, never, *never, never* fails. It's perfected! What is this going to do for us?

"...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world" (v 17).

Because of this love, God does something so profound for you that it still takes an awful lot of understanding to realize. God says, 'All right, because you love Me with all your heart and mind and soul and being, and because I sent My Son to be the propitiation for your sins, because I love you and loved you first, and you responded to My love; and I know that you're physical, and I know that you have human nature. Therefore, I'm going to give you a gift that is going to be profound: My love and the righteousness of Christ.'

So then, in the 'day of judgment' it's not going to be: 'Let's look at the record. Our qualification was that if you have one thousand good works, you may enter into eternal life. Now let's look at your record. My, my, my, you missed it. You only have 999—and it requires a thousand.' That's why you have to have the righteousness of Christ, that, in the 'day of judgment,' the judgment of God for you will be the same as Christ—eternal life.

There are **no** sins against you; your name is written in the book of Life. God is not doing an

accounting system. Yes, our reward is going to be based upon our works, that is true—*absolutely true!* But only God can give love, and only God can give life, and we are in this world as Christ was.

Therefore, now you understand v 18: "There is no fear in the love of God..." That was one of the hardest verses for me to understand. Very hard for me to understand when I first read it because I didn't know a thing about the love of God. Are we not to fear God? *Yes!* Well, how can you have no fear in love then? Because your love becomes so strong, and with the Spirit of God in you, that **there is no fear and torment**. While you fear God in reverential awe—and that's what that means—and in worship, and love, and adoration, this kind of fear is the fear, which is torment.

Verse 18: "There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love... [the love which is being perfected, which is that love which comes from God] ...casts out fear... [That's why we need the love of God. It's casting out fear.] ...because fear has torment..." Oh yes, it does! And every time you go through an experience where you're fearful, or you're upset, or you're angry, you're just miserable and you are tormented—aren't you? *Yes!* Mentally! Spiritually! Maybe even sometimes physically. Maybe you even are tormented so much you get sick.

"...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (v 18). We can work this around the other way. If you are not preaching the love of God, and teaching the love of God, and teaching the brethren that, then you have a church which is *run on fear* and you don't have a clue as to what the Truth of the Gospel is.

Verse 19: "We love Him because He loved us first.... [That's what it has to be, always.] ...If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar.... [We've already gone through that. You can put any name you want there.] ...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 a challenge. This is a lifelong—these vs 16-21—Christian lifelong goals, because God has made us to have challenges—correct? When there is no challenge there is nothing to work for—right? God has set before us the greatest challenge of all: **perfect love**—that we grow into in our whole lives. Sometimes we just have to start by getting on our knees and say: 'O God, I just don't have a clue as to what love is. I want it; I desire it. My heart says, *yes*, but my life says, *no!*'

- Teach me how to love!
- Teach me how to understand the love!

- Teach me how to express the love!

And the answer may come back, ‘Well, ok, let’s start you out with some of your enemies.’ Now you’ve got it, because that’s perfect love—correct? *Yes!* Or what if it’s just a hateful situation that you can’t get out of? Just look at the politics going on today with all the conspiracies and counter-conspiracies, and all that sort of thing that’s going on. Are they solving any problems? *No!* God is just going to let it just heap up until it collapses under its own.

...how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?... [God is saying, ‘Let’s prove your love here.’] ...And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs. 20-21). And that’s the way a congregation needs to be.

We are going to see that this is an active thing of loving, of doing, of bringing forth the fruit that God wants us to bring forth. And again, this is a *lifelong* challenge. You’re not all of a sudden one day going to go from being totally evil to being totally righteous; to being totally hateful, from being totally hateful to being totally loving—it isn’t going to happen. It is a process! It is a growth! It is the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit!

God wants us to understand what love will really do. The first part, he talks about what a minister should do. So we’ll review that, 1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love...” It says ‘charity’ in the *King James*. I don’t know why they translated it that way. Sometimes in the *King James Version* they translate some of these words just a little bit awkwardly, because it’s not charity, it is *love*.

Charity is doing something out the kindness of your heart to someone who needs help. That’s why there are what are called ‘charitable organizations.’ That’s why there are charities to help, but all of those charities, then, should be based upon love. So, I assume that’s why they translated it ‘charity.’

“...I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal...” (v 1). Just so much noise that it isn’t even worth listening to. Every minister needs to read these things and understand, that if he doesn’t have love, as 1-Cor. 13 is showing us here, then what kind of a ministry does he have?

Verse 2: “If I have *the gift of prophecy*...” I tell you, isn’t that something? I would like to understand every prophecy—wouldn’t you? But you know what would happen if we understood every prophecy. We would be so vain! We would be so puffed up! Wouldn’t we?

Maybe you can understand why God hasn’t let very many prophecies of too many ministers really come to fruition, because they would get all lifted up in their vanity. There was a man who said that this year in Los Angeles that there would be a drought; California was going to be drought-stricken, and literally burn off the face of the earth. Well, God and Christ probably said, ‘Well now, let’s show this little man down here a thing or two. Let’s send some rain.’ What did we have? We had floods and floods, and rain and rain. And they have more snow pack up in the Sierra’s than they haven’t a clue as to know what to do. When it all starts melting and running down, there are going to be problems with it. His prophecy failed. That’s the kind of prophecies that fail.

And then he goes on to say, “...and understand all mysteries... [Be the greatest brain in the world] ...and all knowledge...” (v 2). Wouldn’t that be something? You could take all the technical things that there were, and you could just understand them. Snap! Bam! Boom! You could understand everything scientifically; you could understand everything that there was. And *if you don’t have love, you’re nothing*.

“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (v 2). I think about that a lot. Jesus said, ‘If you ask in faith, if you have the faith, the grain of a mustard seed.’ I said that one time, and Marilyn Gremlich came the next week and brought me a little bag of mustard seed. And every time I get to thinking about real faith, ‘If you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed...’

I probably have, if you would count them, 2-300 mustard seeds here. Christ said, ‘You could say to this sycamore tree, *be removed and go into the ocean*, and it would.’ Jesus also said, ‘Ask whatsoever you will, and I will do it for you.’ Then Paul says, ‘We know not how to pray for the things as we ought to.’ It makes me wonder:

- How much *faith* do we really have?
- How much *love* do we really have?
- How much do we really *know*?

That’s why the love of God is so important. That’s why He said that, so you could look a little teeny seed and realize: Get off your stinking high horse; you’re not so great. That’s what God wants us to understand: *I’m nothing!*

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods [to feed the poor]...” There are a lot of people who give everything. There’s one person who left a mammoth amount to take care of cats. Not even people—*cats!* Finally, they all died off and they didn’t know what to do with the remaining money.

“...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing” (v 3). Love gives us the ability to do some things positively, and it also gives us the ability to restrain ourselves from doing things negatively or sinfully. It has a twofold effect

1. to do what is right and good and positive
2. to restrain from doing evil

Verse 4: “Love is patient... [forbearing, patiently enduring, suffers long, as well as being able to endure suffering] ...*and* is kind...” This gives us those qualities, and *kind* comes from the word, ‘chrestos (chresis)’—which means *gracious*—that then you will do the things which are gracious, regardless of what is happening in your suffering, regardless of what it may be.

“...love envies not...” (v 4)—which means, it’s not affected by covetousness, by wanting what other people have.

(go to the next track)

We are going to see everything that love is, and everything that love stands for is everything that the world does not want. The world wants to lust. If in your heart with the Spirit of God, you’re loving God, then the love of God is going to be able to put down the lusts. You cannot overcome a carnal mind with carnal things. As I said before, *you can’t do spiritual things with physical means*. You can’t overcome sin by just merely trying to put it down, but you can conquer it greater when you have the love of God to give you the outgoing, the outreaching to God, to have Him give you the strength to overcome it.

When your mind is focusing in on loving God and with God’s Spirit, then you’re not going to be doing these things; you’re not going to be having jealousy and envy.

Ephesians 2:2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world...” We’ve already studied that in 1-John: ‘Love not the world, neither the things of the world. The lust of the world, and the pride of life, and these things are not from the Father, but of the world; and it’s passing away.’

“...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [a lot of them think that this is light] ...among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath*, even as the rest of the world” (vs 2-3). Why? *Because we were filling all the works of the flesh*—correct? You cannot overcome the works of the flesh with the works of

the flesh. You can only overcome the works of the flesh *with the power of God’s Spirit, and the love of God*. When you see how great God is, and how great His love is, then your desire to do these things will be completely overcome.

Love is not envying (1-Cor. 13:4). God’s Spirit and His love give you the ability to not envy, to not be jealous. If someone has something, is blessed with something or receives something or does something or accomplishes something, we can rejoice with them. And we don’t have to say, ‘I wish I had that. I wonder how he did that. I wonder why they got it and I didn’t get it. God, why did You give it to this person and not to me?’ Don’t worry about it. God has made vessels to honor and to dishonor. The ones to dishonor are sometimes, as we look at it as human beings, the ones as Paul said: we bestow the most honor upon.

“...[love] does not **brag** about itself...” (v 4)—‘vaunting’ (KJV) is this: *does not show oneself as a boaster, the big I: ‘I have done this; I have done that; I am this; I am that.’* I think the epitome of that was, you could say, in the person of Mohammad Ali: ‘I’m the greatest; I am the greatest.’ But I think right now he may be a pretty humble person. Remember what happened him? *He literally got his brains beaten out*, and has Parkinson’s disease. I’m not going to say that it is God’s judgment upon him, but nevertheless, with that he has become a very humble person. He used to *vaunt* himself.

We have someone who vaunts himself today—don’t we? Who says, ‘I am the only apostle; I am God’s vicar on earth; I am the leader of the church...’ and at 75, ‘I will not step down.’ You can put it in all kind of supposedly humble terms, but he *vaunts* himself. Love will give you the understanding that you don’t vaunt yourself up.

Then the next one that comes along with it. Vaunting is a boaster or a braggadocio, or being rash. The next one goes right along with it: “...is not puffed up...” (v 4). What does ‘puffing up’ do? *It exaggerates!* That’s why it comes right after being a braggadocio, then it exaggerates, and how great this accomplishment is, how great that accomplishment is.

Listen, when we start comparing ourselves with God and His love, what accomplishments do we truly have that really amount to anything? Think about it! In our own mind they may be fine. That’s why whatever you have done, wonderful. But don’t bank on it. Count on God’s Holy Spirit! Count on God’s love! Whatever you can do, wonderful, but remember, God has given you the ability to do everything—has He not? *Yes!* Do you remember one who bragged an awful lot? Remember one who puffed himself up? *Good ole Job!* God took care of

him—didn't He? And when Job repented then he was blessed tremendously.

What it helps you not to do, 5: "*Love* does not behave disgracefully... [void of proper deportment, foolishness, moral depravity; it doesn't behave itself that way] ...does not seek its own things... [v 4]: ...Love is patient... [present tense] ...and is kind; love envies not... [present tense, notice—all the way through] ...does not brag about itself, is not puffed up. Love does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things..." (vs 4-5).

Why don't you do this some Sunday watch some of these infomercials which have to do with self-improvement, with puffing yourself up to make yourself good. You can do a certain amount with that. Just remember these things in 1-Cor. 13 while you're watching that program. I did that one time with his fellow who has Fran Tarkenton with him? That man used to be a minister in Worldwide Church of God, believe it or not. It's amazing what they can do with that. "...does not seek its own things..."

Philippians is telling us how a congregation needs to be run. Again, just like in that letter I read where this fellowship group gets together—small group—they have love, they have unity, they have peace, they have harmony. Just like with us here. That does not mean there may not be troubles; that doesn't mean that we haven't had them. But it means that with God's Spirit we can overcome them—correct? We can find a right solution—true? *Yes!*

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions." That means clear down in the deep inner recesses of your being. What happens when you're really upset? When you're really angry? *Your whole insides and your whole digestive system just is cranked up in crash mode—right? Yes!* So, he's saying, *let it be true from the innermost part of your being!*

Verse 2: "Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love... [which comes from whom? *God the Father and Jesus Christ*] ...being joined together in soul, minding the one thing." How is that done? *If we're all seeking and loving God, we will be more of one accord and one mind than anything else—won't we? Yes we will, and it will happen.*

Verse 3: "*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory... [being puffed up, braggadociousness, and how great you are, what you can do, and all this sort of thing] ...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each

one look not *only* after his own things..." (vs 3-4). Not seeking his own. No hidden agenda. No things for the self as it were, but to serve the people of God and do what is right, and love one another.

"...but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 4-5)—***Who loved God!***

In this what we are finding is a step-by-step way on how to apply love on a daily basis. That's what this is really telling us.

1-Corinthians 13:5 "...is not easily provoked..." That is hard. That's a hard one for every one of us. Many times we say, 'Well, I'm just that way.' What is that? *I've had to see that is my excuse for not changing— isn't it?* If you are that way:

- Does God expect you to stay that way? *No!*
- Can you change? *Yes!*
- Will it be easy? *No!*
- But can it be done? *Yes!*
- Will it bring the peaceable fruits of righteousness later? *Yes!*

"...thinks no evil... [Is not imputing motives, not rejoicing in evil. Of course, the world has that. They have pleasure in evil—don't they?] ...Does not rejoice in iniquity..." (vs 5-6). No, but there are people who do.

Of all the things that are listed there, Romans 1:32 says: "Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them*." Have pleasure in sin. The world is filled with that.

God wants us to come to the point of thinking no evil. There is! You have to have your guard up, though, because Jesus also said, 'Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove' Because if you are not alert to some of the evil—this doesn't mean you're not discerning good from evil—this means you are not thinking and planning evil that ***you*** commit and execute. But you have got to understand the evil of the world. Doesn't it say, 'hereby we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error [deception]'—by using our minds to understand? *That's correct!* But we ourselves are not thinking evil to initiate it on our own as part of our life.

1-Corinthians 13:6 follows right along with that: "Does not rejoice in iniquity... [that's what the whole movie and television industry is based upon] ...but rejoices... [now we come back to positive things] ...in the Truth." What happens when you know the Truth of God and you really begin to

understand it, and it really begins to sink down deep into your heart and mind? *You rejoice in it—don't you? You're happy because of it—aren't you? Yes!*

“...rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things...” (vs 6-7). Is able to bear up under it, *sustain; support; to fend off*. Why would it mean that? *Because that has to do with our overcoming!* We are to use the power of God and the love of God *to fend off the evil* that's around us. We bear up under fending off all that evil.

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.... [fend off all of these things; endure up under it] ...Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*” (vs 10-12).

Brethren, we are living in an age when we are going to see the fullness of this take place, with such spectacular, inglorious insanity that this world is going to go through. I truly believe that the only way they're going to get this one world system in, is like they have done everything else they have ever done: collapse the economy and put people in desperate straits, to where they must embrace the solution. If they do that worldwide, I think that's the only way they're going to do it. They're getting too much resistance now. You can bring people low very quickly. That's one of the most wicked things you can do is to just put that upon people.

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand” ***To bear up under.***

- Don't let it get you down!
- Don't let it be discouraging to you!
- *Go to God!*
 - ✓ Let Him give you His love.
 - ✓ Let Him give you His Truth.
 - ✓ Let Him give you His power and strength.

Verse 14: “Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [so that you ***protect that love of God***] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (vs 14-17). All of this ties in with then bearing up, ***bearing all things.***

Now let's come back to 1-Corinthians 13:7:

“...believes all things...” Is believing all things, in particularly the Word of God—right? *Yes!* In particularly the Word of God. Who are we to believe in? What did Jesus Christ say was the most important thing to believe in? ***Believe in Him Who has sent Me—the Father!*** ...hopes all things...” Why is that so important? *Because even in the most tragic situation*, maybe somewhere down the road *God is going to turn it around!* You *hope* for the best; you *pray* for the best.

“...endures all things...” Regardless of what comes along. And ‘endure’ means *to have courage, to be brave; to be able to buck up under, as it were, bearing up all things.*

Verse 8: “Love never fails.... [You want a sure thing into the Kingdom of God? You got it right there. *Never fails!*] ...But whether *there be* prophecies... [What did we start out with at the first of this chapter? The gift of prophecy?] ...they shall cease...” That is, all of *man's* prophecies. This does not have to do with the prophecies of God. Christ said every one of those *will* happen.

“...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come...” (vs 8-10). That's what we're looking for, brethren. Perfect love is going to lead us to a perfect eternal existence.

“...then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child” (vs 10-11). All these childish things of jealousy, and thinking of evil, rejoicing in iniquity, of vaunting the self, of being boastful and proud, all those things are little childish things that go against love.

Verse 12: “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face... [Isn't that interesting? ***Face-to-face***, because God wants us to have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the **greatest of these is love**” (vs 12-13).

That's what God wants us to focus on. That's what God wants us to grow in. And there are so many, many, things that we could add to it, bring to it. But let's understand how great that God is, that He went through what He went through to make it possible for us to have the love of God, the Spirit of God, to grow in the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Look at all the areas in 1-John that tell us— and 2nd and 3rd John—about the love of God, and how that is in expressing love to each other. That's

how God the Father is loving us with His Spirit. Then when we love each other and we are fellowshipping with God the Father and Jesus Christ, then truly, truly, brethren, we can have a congregation and a Church that is going to be pleasing to God.

We can do those things that please God, if it's all based on the love of God. So that's why love is so important, never fails, and it is the greatest of all!

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References

- 1) Revelation 2:19
- 2) 1 John 4:6
- 3) 1 John 2:3-6
- 4) 1 John 4:6
- 5) Hebrews 5:11-14
- 6) 1 John 4:6-10
- 7) 1 John 1:3
- 8) 1 John 4:9-21
- 9) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- 10) Ephesians 2:2-3
- 11) 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, 4
- 12) Philippians 2:1-5
- 13) 1 Corinthians 13:5-6
- 14) Romans 1:32
- 15) 1 Corinthians 13:6-7
- 16) Ephesians 6:10-17
- 17) 1 Corinthians 13:7-13

Love of God—Second Calling

Fred R. Coulter

Many have asked, is there such a thing as a *second* calling? The reason that they ask is because many people—especially the letters I get and talking to all of you—one of the themes that comes through—feel like they are now converted, feel like that they're beginning to understand the Word of God as never before.

Here's a letter sent from Australia that I think is a very touching letter, and I'm very happy to have it.

As you know, I'm a member of the CBCG here in Melbourne. We have spoken several times over the phone. John Morgan... [who is the office manager there] ...passed on your letter of May 3rd to me last night along with the three new booklets [or books]. I would like to pass on my personal heartfelt thanks to you. I became a baptized member of the Church in 1970.

So, he's been in 23 years. Talking to different ones here, we're 23, 25, 27, 30 years; so a similar situation.

Then towards the end of 1993 I disassociated myself from the Worldwide Church of God and began fellowshipping with a Global video group.

This is also something that has happened to a lot of people. That's why we nickname ourselves the *No-hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God*, and while it maybe a little humorous, it is nevertheless very true. I think God is doing something with all of the church members, and all of the brethren, and all of the ministers.

During that time you sent me a care package.

I think this month we've sent out pretty close to 50 or 60 of them. We've been sending them out just as fast as we can get them made up.

Then in November of last year, 1994, I became a member of the Christian Biblical Church of God. In studying your material, both tapes and booklets, my eyes have been truly opened. I want to thank you and your wife for allowing yourselves to be used by God in this way. Having been in God's Church for 25 years, I would have to say that I've learned and understood more in the past two years than in all the previous 23 years combined...."

I've heard that over and over and over again. Sometimes it makes me wonder what has happened to the Church? And in particular, what has happened to the ministry that they're not teaching them?

I was asleep at the switch, as they say, and now I'm beginning to see the enormity of Satan's con, and it is truly diabolical in the full sense of the word. I'm beginning to understand what real repentance is all about.

We're going to see the more you love God, the more you're going to understand what real repentance is all about, because you see the greatness of God.

I'm beginning to understand what a relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father is all about...

That's why They are persons, so we can have a relationship with Them.

...and it is a deeply humbling experience. Any understanding of my calling in the past was at best vague, and at worst misunderstood. It's like coming out of the fog into brilliant sunlight, if I can use that analogy. In a sense, it is a renewing or reawakening of that first love....

Well, I'm going to tell you, it is greater than a reawakening of the first love, it is a mature full-blown love coming to perfection.

and I'm deeply grateful to God for it, and to you for your help that you have given. When we meet on the Sabbath, six of us... [so just a few here and there] ...and more when my children come with me, there's a sense of unity and peace, which I haven't experienced for a long, long time. What a singular pleasure it is to sit and to listen to the Word of God, real meat, without the politics, ignorance, and downright lies. Then to sit around later over a cup-a...As we say down under, and actually talk freely about God.

Heaven forbid that was the last thing you would talk about in Worldwide. Talk about God and they thought you were nuts. It was much more interesting to talking in generalities about your job, and the trials of daily life. And oh, how I realize how spiritually malnourished I had become.

Quite frightening, actually.

Anyway, having read your letter to the brethren, I just wanted to put some of my thoughts on paper to send to you, to thank you for all you are doing. You know, it is so frustrating to see people in the WCG, and indeed Global as well, who you know and care for, for so many years, that they are so totally oblivious to what's happening around them. Or if they see anything at all, and some do, they seem to feel powerless to act. It's as if they are in a spiritual stupor or coma. May God be merciful to them as He has been to us. I hope you don't mind putting my thoughts on paper to you like this.

I hope you don't mind me sharing it with the rest of the brethren because I think it's most important. I have letters like this over and over again. It gives us an idea of perhaps what God is doing; He is doing something. We don't understand it yet, but we all have to walk by faith. I think that what we are going to see that God truly is helping us, not just in recapturing our first love, but going beyond, because there is a *second calling*.

Let's see about this second calling. I was talking to a lady the other night and she was telling me about her church experience. 'She said, *Well, I just seem as though I wasted all those years.* I said, 'It's time to get out of the sandbox.' *I'm sorry I was in the sandbox for so long.* 'Yeah, but at least you're out.'

Here's what God wants. This is what He's doing now. There comes a time when God is preparing us for the future. We're going to see that the way that God prepares us for the future is that He wants us *to grow up in Christ*, and this is the *second calling*. That's why you see so many people who are with us that have been in the Church for years and years, and they aren't going to settle for fiddle-faddle and sandbox any longer.

- they want to know the Truth
- they want to know the love of God
- they want to know the depths of the Scriptures

God is doing something with the brethren that's going to surprise all of these ministers that think they have them all cornered in their little pocket—because God is moving in *their mind*, because *they belong to Him*. He's going to do something, and here's what it is. Here's what God wants. Here is the goal.

Ephesians 4:1, Paul says: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the Lord*, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called...

[Here is the whole process that we are going to come to. This is what everyone who's been the Church for years and years is longing for.] ...with all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 1-3).

That peace comes from God. That's why every epistle opens up: the apostle's name, like the Apostle Paul; 'Grace and peace be multiplied to you from God the Father and Jesus Christ.' We just read over that; 'that's just the introduction; I'm going to get on to important things.' ***You just left the important thing!***

Verse 4: "*There is one body...* [which we're all finding out] ...and one Spirit... [I just might mention here, if you leave a church, ***you're not leaving the Truth.***] ...even as you were also called... [God the Father does the calling] ...in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (vs 4-7). ***Christ is giving a gift*** through His grace to every one of us, and God wants us to know that. God wants us to exercise that, and we'll see what it is.

Then he shows the reason why, v 11: "And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints..." (vs 11-12). This is what God wants: ***that the saints be perfected.***

How are they to be perfected? *You are to become as perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect* (Matt. 5:48)—that is

- through Jesus Christ
- through the righteousness of Christ
- Christ *in* you with the Holy Spirit

"...for *the work of the ministry*... [for the work of serving the brethren] ...for *the edifying*... [up-building; the putting together with love] ...of the body of Christ; until we all..." (vs 12-13)—***all of us!*** Paul included himself; I include myself the more I learn, and the more I teach. Here's a principle that is true: we all receive from the fullness of Christ, *grace upon grace*, which means *Christ is never going to run dry*, and we just have to drink in of it and learn of it. So, the more I learn and teach, the more you learn, which means the more I learn—because as I teach it God will give me more. That's how this happens. It doesn't happen any other way.

"...for *the edifying of the body of Christ*; until we all come into the unity of the faith... [with God's Spirit] ...and of the knowledge of the Son of God..." (v 13). We're going to see that part of loving God is ***knowing*** God; you are to ***know*** Him.

He wants you to *know* Him. He's revealed Himself through His Spirit and His Word.

"...unto a perfect man, **unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...** [That's what God wants. That is your *second calling*, right there.] ...so that we no longer be children... [we get out of the sandbox] ...tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine..." (vs 13-14).

Isn't that what has happened? Just like the wind—*whoosh*—here comes another change—*whoosh*—here comes another change—*whoosh*—here comes another change. 'What do I believe?' *I don't know!* 'How does that come?' *By the sleight of men!* 'Who says I'm doing away with the Sabbath?' *Ten days later it's all right to work on the Sabbath!* 'Who says I'm doing away with the Holy Days?' *Ten days later it's not required!* 'Who says I'm doing away with clean and unclean meats?' *It's all right to eat them!*

"...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error..." (v 14). It's almost as if they can't wait to hatch up another diabolical lie. That's why you have to get away from them.

- Do you want to stay where there are lies?
- Do you want to stay where they're preaching the doctrine of Balaam?
- That it's okay to sin in the name of God?
- Do you want to go in the way of Cain, to force God to accept your sin as truth? *No!*

Verse 15: "But holding the Truth in love... [*second calling*] ...may in all things grow... [everything in your life] ...up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ." This is how Christ looks at the Church, not how we do. Most men don't even see Christ. Most men only see an organization. You've got to see Christ, not the organization.

Verse 16: "From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies... [Every one of us! We all have something we can supply and give, because God has given gifts to us—hasn't He? *Yes!*] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love." That's a brief description of the *second calling*.

Let's review, because this becomes very important; this is why we need to understand the love of God even more. I don't think that we can preach long enough, or loud enough, or understand enough about the love of God, because we know that the love of God is greatest, and we know the love of God never fails. If we preach that, we know we're not going to fail—right? We know we are preaching

the greatest thing we can preach—correct?

The love of God does not come because we all get together and we generate our own love for each other, and then say, 'Hey, world, look at us! We're loving each other. Therefore, we love God.' NO! The love of God doesn't come that way. The love God comes from the fruit of God's Holy Spirit. The love of God comes *from God to you*, because you fellowship with Him. The love of God comes because you go to God and ask Him for His love. When you do, you're going to see you need far more of His love than you have ever had. It's going to be an overwhelming experience when you really come to understand that.

1-John 4:6: "We are of God... [v 5]: ...They are of the world... [Who are of the world? *The antichrists who deny Jesus!*] ...they speak of the world, and the world listens to them." 'Oh my, isn't that wonderful? This church is not a cult anymore.' They believe in the trinity; and you can even eat unclean meats; and you can keep Christmas and Easter, and even go to church on Sunday.

...and the world listens to them.... [because they are of the world] ...We are of God; the one who knows God... [You have to be knowing; a present tense, on-going relationship with 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" (vs 5-6).

When we grow up from being children we put away the childish things. Isn't that what Paul said concerning love? *When I became a man and put away childish things*. When we grow up into Christ and we put away childish things, then we know. God expects us to use our mind! He gave us a mind very much like His. He expects us to exercise judgment, discernment and understanding. ***We are to know the difference between Truth and error.***

Verse 6: "By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception."

- we are to understand it
- we are to see it
- we are to examine it
- we are to prove it

That's what we're all going through; and that's what every minister is going to find out. No more little fairy tales from the pulpit, and no more little lies for control, because they're going to come up and confront you with the Truth, and you'll be able to understand the spirit of error.

Verse 7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is **from** God..." The Greek word is 'ek'—*out from* and *into; comes from God*. That's the greatest characteristic that God has: His

love. He wants us to have it. He doesn't want us to be anything less than He is. That's how we're going to exist in the Family of God, *by love*. That's why the Church is not to be like a corporate organization of the world. Is there any love in a corporate organization of the world? *No!* What happens? *Corruption, lies, cheating, bankruptcy!* Do we see the same thing spiritually with the churches we've been associated with? *Absolutely!* It's based on love, because *love comes from God*.

"...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God... [because you have the seed of the begetting of God the Father and is loving] ...and knows God" (v 7). There are several ways we know God. God doesn't want us to just say, 'I know; I think I know; I hope I know.' He wants it to be far different.

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him..." We *know* that *we know*. And that's all a part of growing up in the maturity of Christ that you *know that you know*. A lot of Churches of God like to condemn other churches of God and say that they're Laodiceans, and they're going into the Tribulation. Well, we don't know whether they are or not, but I know one thing, you're going to go into Tribulation if you don't know God and if you don't love Him.

We have to know "...that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is **being perfected**..." (vs 3-5).

That's what we need to be doing, brethren. That is the reason for our second calling—that *the love of God is being perfected in each one of us*. We don't have time for power struggles; we don't have time for fairy tales; we don't have time for carnality and vanity. We've all been through that—haven't we?

- now is the time to *grow up in love*
- now is the time to *grow up in Christ*
- now is the time to *be perfected in the love of God*
- now is the time to *grab hold of the second calling*

"...By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (vs 5-6). That is the high standard—isn't it? That is the second calling!

I'm accused of minister-bashing. Well, I tell you what, every minister, I am tired of **brethren-bashing**; that every time something's wrong with *you*, the brethren are at fault.

1-John 4:8: "The one who does not love **does not know God** because God is love." If you're not teaching it—I don't care if you use the Bible, I don't care if you use the name of Jesus Christ—*you don't know God!* Do you know the love of God? Have you gone on your knees and just said, 'O God, I just don't really have a clue as to what love is. Please help me. Please teach me. Please give me Your Spirit. Please grant me understanding.'

You stay there, and you keep at it, and there's going to come a time when, in praying, understanding about the love of God the Father and Jesus Christ, that God's Spirit is going to convict you in heart and mind and emotion, that you are going to experience the love of God. And when you do it will be an overwhelming experience of real Truth and cleansing that you have never, ever, ever experienced in your life! About the only thing you can do is just sort of bawl and blubber and run through the Kleenex box about as fast as you can go, thanking God and just praising Him for the love that He's given you. Now that's not something that you do in public. That's between you and God, because Christ is in you through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The reason they don't know God is: "...because God is love. In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us..." (vs 8-9). This is the whole thing that's so important; we need to understand. Even in the Old Testament, or the covenant with Israel, in Deut. 6 it says: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being.' Isn't that in the Old Testament too? *Yes!*

It's also in the New Testament and Jesus quoted it. But the New Testament love of God, *God wants us to know something greater than that*. He wants us to know that **He loved us first**. Think on that!

Verse 9: "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. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God..." (vs 9-10). Not that we can go around and play silly emotional games, and then tell the world, 'Look, we love God, aren't we great? Aren't we marvelous? Aren't we just wonderful? Come and join us.' *NO!*

He loved us first. Christ came when no one on earth loved Him—*no one*. So, the next time you go through a trial or you think that things are bad for you, remember: outside of Mary loving Him, motherly love, no one truly loved Him except God the Father. That's why He said, 'I always do the things that please Him; I love the Father and the Father loves Me.' We are to grow up into Christ and in that relationship.

“...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (v 10). Tremendous thing, brethren. **Ongoing source of mercy and forgiveness**—that’s what a propitiation is.

- God knows you’re weak
- God knows you’re sinful
- God knows that you have ‘the law of sin and death’ in you
- God knows that you have carnal nature

Even the Apostle Paul said, ‘Oh, who is going to deliver me from this body of death? I do the things I don’t want to, and the things I want to I don’t do. When I find out that I haven’t done what I want to—what I really want to do is do the things that please God—I find that I’m just battling and warring and that it’s just such a horrible thing. Oh, wretched man! Who’s going to save me from the body of this death?’

And he said the next breath, ‘I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is going to save me from the body of this death. So, **with my mind I serve the Law of God**, but **with the flesh the law of sin and death.**’ Because you still have it in you. God’s perfection is going to be in love with you. God’s perfection is not going to make you perfect in the flesh. That is not God’s desire. That’s why He gave you the flesh, so you understand you are not perfect. But you can be perfect in love. You can be perfect in serving God in faithfulness. Yes, you can!

Verse 11: “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another.... [Now you see why we love each other, *because of the love of God first.*] ...No one has seen God at any time....” (vs 11-12). That we could even say, ‘I saw God. I got the inside track on love here.’ I know what that’s all about—*no way*.

“...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us...” (v 12). That’s what it is—**Christ is living in us**. That’s what’s so profound and important. That’s what the perfection is that He wants.

“...and His own love is perfected in us” (v 12). That’s what God wants. **That is the second calling!** That’s why we’re doing what we are doing, brethren. That’s something!

- God wants you to *feel* it
- God wants you to *experience* it
- God wants it *to be an emotion*
- God wants it so that it is *in your mind*

Not only is it an emotion, but you understand it intellectually and powerfully with His Spirit. **It’s perfected in us!**

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.” This is what is so important: **God has given us of His Spirit**. It’s not just membership in a corporate body. **You belong to God the Father; you belong to Christ!** We have His Spirit.

1-John 3:19: “And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth...” We **know!**

- you have to **know** the Truth
- you have to **know** the error
- you have to **know** you are *of* the Truth *with God’s love*
- you can have that with **conviction**
- you can have that with **strength**
- you can have that with **hope**

“...and shall assure our hearts before Him, that if our hearts condemn us...” (vs 19-20)—because we’ve sinned or done something we shouldn’t. Doesn’t that happen when you sin? *Your heart condemns you!* You feel, ‘Oh my, oh I hate to go to God and pray.’ Well, go to God and pray, and when you say, ‘Oh my, I’ve done this and I shouldn’t’—and *you know you shouldn’t*. When you don’t feel like going to God to pray, *that’s when to go pray*, right there! Why?

Because: “...God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things” (v 20). If you know you’ve sinned, with God’s Spirit *in* you does He know you’ve sinned? **Sure He does!** He’s provided Christ for you.

Verse 21: “Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us... [When there are times when we know we haven’t sinned, we have been doing what is right] ...*then* we have confidence toward God”—don’t we? **Much more at that time!** I’ve experienced it; you’ve experienced it. That’s all part of growing up into Christ.

Verse 22: “And whatsoever we ask... [It won’t be in the time that we think, necessarily, but *it will happen.*] ...we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight.” [That’s what God wants; that’s what you want. That’s what your second calling is all about: *that you are doing the things that please God!* You’re out of the sandbox. You’re out of third grade, and hopefully you’re way beyond; you’re in college.

Verse 24: “And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us. And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him...” We have been *loving* God and you’re dwelling *in* Him. You’re keeping His commandments and you are

dwelling in Him and Christ.

“...and He in him... [the one who’s keeping the commandments]. ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us **by the Spirit which He has given to us**” (v 24). That’s what’s missing, brethren! *They haven’t been shown the love of God to let the Spirit of God dwell in them:*

- in strength
- in power
- in them in love
- in faith

But God is going to draw them so they will. I think there’s going to be a lot of surprises for a lot of people, because God is going to do what He’s going to do, and it ‘ain’t’ going to be according to any of *their* plans. You can guarantee that. “...**by the Spirit which He has given to us.**”

1-John 4:13: “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 [apostles] and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world” (vs 13-14). He’s including us in that, in saving the world. Did you know that? That’s why we’re the firstfruits. He’s including us in that salvation for the world. We’ve got to be first. You can’t feed the world, you can’t save the world, unless you have a means of doing it. Christ is the One Who’s going to provide the way.

You look out there at that sin-sick world. Yes, we can all get mad, and yes, we can point fingers, and yes, we can say this, that and the other thing and understand all the corruption that’s going on. Yes, we can do that, that’s fine. We understand that. But don’t just dwell on that, because there’s another reason for it all. God is going to turn it all around. Can you imagine what’s going to happen when God opens the minds of the Jews? Think on that! Just as they’ve tried to force their way down everyone else, guess what’s going to happen? *They’re going to let it be known about Jesus Christ in a way that is going to be pretty powerful—the whole world will hear!*

Romans 8:14—this is important, because we’re talking about the Spirit of God: “For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God... [God’s Spirit has to lead you. It’s not going force you, *it will lead you!*] ...these are *the* sons of God. Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship... [sonship—not adoption—because we have the Spirit of God in us] ...whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we* are children, *we* are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...” (vs 14-17). That will

come when we are born from the dead at the resurrection.

“...if indeed we suffer together with Him...” (v 17). People want to try and go through this Christian life without suffering. Jesus suffered! Paul suffered! Paul even came to the point that he suffered so much he said, ‘Oh if I can just be partakers of the suffering of Christ to obtain the resurrection!’ Now, I haven’t come to that point yet. That’s a hard point to come to. But he understood the suffering of Christ.

Verse 18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” There is no comparison. Think of this the next time you get down, miserable and depressed and just feeling bad: *just take and turn it all the other way around, and just think what God is going to do when we’re in His Kingdom—completely the other way around.*

Verse 19: “For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God... [We’re going to help save the world; that’s what he’s saying. Christ is the Savior, but we’re going to help Him.] ...Because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly... [That’s why they don’t know what they’re doing. That’s why God has to call them.] ...but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope, In order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now” (vs 19-22). That is waiting for the manifestation of it.

God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. He came and everyone hated Him. He came and no one wanted Him, even His brothers mocked Him and said, ‘Well you know, no man does these things in the corner. Why don’t You go up to Jerusalem and show off a little bit?’ So, He stayed back and waited till they were gone, then He went up.

1-John 4:15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.... [This is a true confession of the Truth with the Spirit of God.] ...And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love... [this is what we are to grow up into] ...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (vs 15-16). We are going to see how we’re going to have that love grow, because there are some ways we can.

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God **is perfected** within us... [It is a process. Love is a growth. Love is what you grow up into to be perfected.] ...That we may have boldness in the

day of judgment...” We don’t have to worry. Our names are written in the book of Life. Christ has paid for our sins. He is the propitiation to cover for us. He is the One Who imputes to us His righteousness to overcome our mistakes.

If we’re having the love of God perfected in us we have boldness in the ‘day of judgment.’ We don’t have to worry, because when we come up before the judgment seat of God the Father and Jesus Christ, your name is going to be there, and Christ is going to say, ‘Father, I covered that.’ You think on that! Next time you think you’ve sinned that you can’t repent, remember Manasseh. You go back and read 2-Chron. 33 ^[transcriber’s correction] about Manasseh. God forgave him. He can forgive you.

Here’s why: “...because even as He is, so also are we in this world... [That’s really a tall order to grow up to—isn’t it?] ...as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love of God... [That’s why it’s so damnable to try and run a church on fear. There is no fear.] ...rather, perfect love casts out fear... [It is a process—*casting out*. You have fears? Cast all your fears upon Christ, for He cares for you. It’s casting out fear] ...because fear has torment....” (vs 17-18). You know and I know when we’ve been fearful we’ve had nothing but torment and grief and wonder and sleepless nights and upset stomachs and migraine headaches—right? *Yes!*

“...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.... [That’s what God wants us to be, *perfected in love*. We need to work at that. When we grow in faith, when we grow in hope, when we grow in love, that is *being perfected* and it’s *casting out fear*.] ...We love Him because He loved us first” (vs 18-19).

Now here the test, v 20: “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?” That’s why Jesus said, ‘You’ve heard it said in the past, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecutes you.’ And when you do there will be a blessing, you can be guaranteed. That is hard to do. But when you do there is a blessing, and you will understand this.

Now, if you pray and ask God to help you overcome and grow in love, don’t be surprised if a little trial comes tooling down the road. That is an answer to prayer. An answer to prayer is not a removal of a trial. An answer to prayer is overcoming a trial. You can’t accomplish spiritual things by physical means. It has to be by spiritual things, by spiritual love, by spiritual faith, by spiritual hope.

Verse 21: “And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother.”

If you have an Interlinear you can read the first part of 1-John 5. I will read it the way that it is in the Greek. 1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him Who begat... [you’re loving the Father] ...also loves him who has been begotten by Him.”

(go to the next track)

Verse 2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God... [now notice how this comes] ...**when we love God**... [that’s always first] ...**and keep His commandments**. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (vs 2-3). They’re not grievous. They’re not hard to do. Did God ever give us a commandment we could not keep? He gave us mighty, powerful, spiritual goals to attain—didn’t He? Did He not give us His Spirit to attain it? If God says we’re going to be perfected in love, is not God going to give us His Spirit to do so? *Yes, He is!* Absolutely, without a doubt, because God loves us and Christ loves us.

We’re going to see what love can do for us. This is going to be a *can-do, how-to*. Now let’s understand something: *If you kind of fail at it at first, don’t worry, keep at it, it has to be perfected!* Let’s look at it another way. If you have to grow and overcome, are you perfect? *No!* So therefore, in order to grow and overcome and be perfected in love, you have to have experiences to do it—don’t you? *Yes, you do!* Some of the experiences are very, very tough. It would be nice if they were all easy. It would be really nice if it will be just like taking a hot knife and cutting through butter. Man, we would think, ‘Wow! We’re really doing it.’ But I want you to know something that’s very important.

1-Corinthians 13:8: “**Love never fails...**” Can God fail? *No!* Is God love? *Yes! Love never fails.* So what you are doing, then, is doing something that will not fail. You may not get the reaction you want, that you think you should have at first, but it’s still never going to fail. God has given the promise. **It will not fail!** Now, if in this life it’s not totally achieved, it will be accomplished when you have a chance as a spirit being. Just think how our love is going to be perfected when we’re resurrected. Just think what that’s going to be like. Love never fails.

Verse 13: “And now, these three remain... [lives—these are living things] ...**faith**... [which I think is like the precious stones (1-Cor. 3^[transcriber’s correction])] ...**hope**... [which I think is like the silver]

...and *love*... [which I think is like gold] ...but the greatest of these *is* love.” That’s what God wants.

It is absolutely amazing how that when you really practice it, when you really understand it, and begin to understand it, the more you realize how much more you have to learn; how much more you realize that in order to have your love perfected, you’ve got to really draw close to God, let His Spirit be in you. This gives you motivation to pray. Instead of having a sermon from a minister, ‘Brethren, you haven’t been praying and studying!’ BAM! BAM! BAM!

I remember one time a minister came from Pasadena to Torrance, California, and he got up there, and he gave a bombastic sermon, *14 Reasons Why Your Prayers Aren’t Answered*. We all sat there and, boy, we got...*WHEW!* We knew every one of those sayings kept us from getting answered prayer—right? It got done, I was driving home I said, ‘My, he could have just told us one way to get our prayers answered.’ That would’ve been helpful—right? If you’re preaching the love of God, that you want to drink in of the love of God, then you are going to have every reason in the world *to pray*—isn’t that correct? *Yes!* That’s the way God wants it done.

After he gets done explaining all their vanity in 1-Cor. 12, and the different parts of the way the church is; then in 1-Cor. 14 he discusses it a little bit more about their vanity. 1-Corinthians was written on how a church should *not* be. I imagine the Apostle Paul was nearly pulling out his hair and his beard trying to figure out this renegade church over in Corinth. I even remember a minister saying one time, ‘I wonder why it’s in the Bible?’ Today we know, because of every heresy that we have had.

Notice how Paul does it in 1-Corinthians 12:31: “But earnestly desire [covet] the more *edifying* gifts; and yet I show you a way far surpassing *all these*.” I’m going to show you something that is better than any other gift that can be.

1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.... [just so much noise and dissidence] ...If I have ... [Applying it to himself. This is for every minister to read and study, so that he knows how to conduct his ministry.] ...*the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge...” (vs 1-2).

It really doesn’t matter how much you know, really doesn’t matter how much you *can* know, how much *I* can know. When we get all done, and we pull ourselves up to our greatest height and

stand before God, we’re going to feel like the smallest little midgets that have ever been around, if we try all that vanity to think how important we are. That’s what happened to Job—wasn’t it? *Yes, it was!*

“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, **I am nothing**” (v 2). *I’m nothing!* Would be a lot of people who would like to have faith like that. I would love to have faith that I could just, help people the way that God would want to have them helped. But we have to grow in love first, *then God will!* Who knows? *God wants to know!* Are you going to grow in love? After this thing is done or you pray for the person, are you going to continue to love them? Are you going to continue pray for them? Are you going to continue to think about them? *or* Is this sort of like an assembly line—next—and on down the line? Not so! *You’re nothing!* If you don’t have love it doesn’t matter.

Let’s put it this way: though you have all knowledge to reorganize your church in any way you want to, *if you don’t have love, it is nothing! It is going to fail, guaranteed!* God is going to make sure that you understand that if you don’t love Him it really, really doesn’t matter what you do.

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods (to feed the poor)... [and have notoriety in the newspaper and on television] ...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained **nothing**.”

That’s why when you go to Matt. 7 all those coming up and saying, ‘Lord, look what I did in Your name! Boy, I did this, I cast out demons.’ He said, ‘I don’t know you. You get away from Me, you that work iniquity.’ If you don’t love God and keep His commandments, it doesn’t matter what you can do. You can use the name of Jesus Christ day and night forever, but if you don’t love Him, it’s futile; it’s vain; it’s taking His name in vain. And besides, there are going to be a lot of things that were done, that people have done, that Christ is going to come along and say, ‘I didn’t ask you to put My name on that.’

Now here’s what love is going to do, v 4: “Love is patient...” In all of this ‘love is suffering long (KJV)’. So, the more love you get, maybe the more suffering you’re going to endure. I don’t know. But love will help you bear it.

I know one of the founding members of our congregation out there in California was a diabetic, she was nearly blind, she had cramps in her legs, and couldn’t get her muscles straitened out. She had a cane, she had to walk, she had to be moved around in a wheelchair. And yet, people would call her and she would cheer them up. People would be

depressed—and she had every reason to be—yet, she gave them hope. Then her husband all of a sudden had a stroke. He was rejected out of Worldwide because He smoked—he was a ‘*bad man*.’ So, when he was told to leave, he never went back again. She asked me about it and I said, ‘Just pray that God will work it out.’

Well God worked it out in the way that she never expected. Here she was, crippled, in a wheelchair, couldn’t see, had to fix for her husband. BANG! He comes down with a massive stroke and almost dies, and is in the hospital for two months. He comes home, had to have all the nursing and everything there. Well what happened, he quit smoking; and his mind came back; he asked to be baptized and I had the pleasure of doing it. See, ‘all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to *His* purpose.’ Not the way we think. But that was good. We all learned. We all prayed. And then, lo and behold, his test was, she died first. I remember at the funeral he said, ‘O God, why did You take her?’ And I told him, ‘Because she was ready’—and he understood that.

Verse 4: “Love is patient... [suffers long] ...and is kind... [*patiently enduring*] ...love envies not... [Not looking at what someone else does and then think, ‘Oh, boy, I got to have that.’ No jealousy, not affected by covetousness.] ...does not brag about itself... [Haven’t we heard that? *I am the greatest! I am the only! God called me!* Well, **God called all the brethren, my friend!**] ...is not puffed up.” *To puff up or to inflate*. We all have to remember **we have nothing we didn’t receive**.

Verse 5: “Love does not behave disgracefully...” Which means it’s going to have proper understanding. It’s going to be gracious. It’s not going to be crude or rash, telling dirty jokes. Do you think God was pleased that down at the college where they had the handball court up in ministers’ lounge that they had up there, after they got done playing racquetball, they all sat around and told dirty jokes? Do you think God was pleased with that? *No!* That’s rash behavior. That’s unseemly. That’s improper conduct.

“...does not seek its own things... [No hidden agenda, no preaching for self-serving. Helping, loving, outgoing.] ...is not easily provoked... [Doesn’t say you can’t be, but not easily. If you are, you can overcome. God’s love will do it.] ...thinks no evil” (v 5). It’s not thinking and practicing living in evil; doesn’t do that.

This is how the world is. This is how most of television is. Here’s what most of the world is doing, the way it’s living, the way it’s conducting its life. “...thinks no evil.”

- not planning it
- not plotting it
- not scheming it
- not trying to undercut the boss
- not trying to take
- not trying to get ahead by putting down

not thinking: How I can become a tattletale and run off to the minister and get this person in trouble so I can get their job?

Here’s what happens when you have that kind of behavior, Romans 1:28: “And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge...” Not even God! We’re to have the laws and commandments of God written in our heart and our mind, not only to retain God in our knowledge, but let God *dwell* in us.

“...God abandoned them to a reprobate mind... [which means void of judgment] ...to practice *those* things that are immoral; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness...” (vs 28-29). Sounds like I’m reading tonight’s television program—right?

“...malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whisperers... [sounds like Washington, D.C.—doesn’t it?] ...slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things *and practices*; disobedient to parents, Void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful... [you can’t move them] ...who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them*” (vs 29-32). Brethren, our day is coming when Christ returns. We’re going to be able to undo every one of these things. What we’re going to have to do is show them the love of God.

1-Corinthians 13:6: “Does not rejoice in iniquity... [Doesn’t find that that’s happiness and joy; it’s sorrowful.] ...but rejoices in the Truth.” Always in the Truth. When you study the Bible and you come across something and learn it for the first time, don’t you rejoice? Aren’t you happy? Doesn’t it lift you up? Doesn’t it give you an exhilaration? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 7: “Love bears all things... [regardless of what it is] ...believes all things... [That are right, good, true, and believe everything that Jesus Christ said? *Yes!*] ...hopes all things...” Even the worst sinner can be brought to repentance—can he not? Did not God call Saul, who was called Paul, who wrote what we are reading? Do you not think that he understood the love of God, coming from where he did? *Yes, indeed!* So, there’s hope. I pray that every one of the ministers repent. I pray that all the brethren repent. I pray that God reaches out into

each one of their lives, so they can grow up in Christ. They ought to. **There's hope!**

"...endures all things" (v 7). Regardless of what happens, *you endure it*. Sometimes it's tough to take. Sometimes you have to grit your teeth. Sometimes you don't understand. But it "...endures all things."

Verse 8: "Love never fails. But whether *there be* prophecies... [Oh, and we've had so many—haven't we? *Yes!*] ...they shall cease..." None of God's will. These are prophecies of men, in the name of Christ. Jesus said, 'Heaven and earth will pass away but My words won't.' You can be guaranteed every prophecy of God is going to be fulfilled right to the jot and tittle, because that's what Jesus said—right? *Yes!* These are prophecies of men.

"...whether *there be* languages... [People get all excited and so uplifted that they can speak.] ...they shall cease..." (v 8). I guarantee you one thing, we're not going to speak Hebrew in the Kingdom of God. We're going to speak whatever language God puts in our new spirit brain when we're resurrected. Just like He put language in Adam's and Eve's minds when He created them. We're gone to communicate with God, whatever language it's going to be. Please understand this—speaking of sacred names—there is no such thing as a *sacred language*. God is Holy, God is true, God is pure. But do Hebrews or Jews have pagan worship and pagan names within their language? *Yes, they do!* Just as pagan as anything else. So, tongues [languages] will fail.

"...whether *there be* knowledge... [as we know it now] ...it shall vanish away For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside" (vs 8-10). It's going to be replaced with the perfect thing. That's why God wants us perfected in His love. With all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, all our being, and everything that is within us.

Verse 11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child... [That's why I said there is the second calling. We need to grow up.] ...I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child." That's why with everything we do, we need to grow up in Christ, be mature in Him. Isn't that something? And for a lot of us we don't have too many years left to do that. That's why God wants it now. He's not going to wait around for all these politicians to try and figure out what they're going to do. God is going to sweep it right away from them.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face... [That shows God is a person. You're going to see God

face-to-face, Christ face-to-face. We'll see Him as He is, because we'll be like Him.] ...but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 12-13). That's what God wants us to grow up into and be perfected, brethren. **That's what God wants.** That's how He wants it done. Because God is creating His family, and God has a place for every one of us, that is so profound, that is so great, that is so marvelous.

This is absolutely stunning! You will experience this, too, everyone who loves God will. There will come a time when you can't sleep at night, and you're going to lie there and think about God, and you're going to lie there and think about His love. It's like David said, 'You try me in the night seasons; You try my reins.' He talked a lot with God while he was lying in bed. I tell you one thing, God's love and the understanding of His plan will come at times so overwhelmingly that all you can do is lie there and thank God and cry.

That will happen—I don't care how tough you are; I don't care what your intelligence is; I don't care what it may be—when God gives you, with His Spirit, the grasp of what He's giving you, it is overwhelming! It will increase your love, and will increase your ability to love God, and will make your salvation greater, and your joy greater. You will grow up in Christ!

1-Corinthians 2:9: "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.'" Remember, Jesus said, 'If I go, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I go I will come again.' He's preparing the whole universe for us, brethren.

Verse 10: "But God has revealed *them* to us..." The only way we have understanding is by His Spirit. **It must be revealed!** You can't go to the world and get it, because *they don't know!* You can't go to the rulers of the world and say, 'Tell me what life is all about.' *They don't know!* You can't go to the religious leaders of the world and say, 'Tell me what life is all about'—*they don't know!* **God has to reveal it!**

"...by His Spirit, 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). God wants us to grow up into it.

Here we've got the whole Bible, brethren. **All of God's Word!** Yet, the Church of God is *asleep at the switch* and *throwing away knowledge*

when we ought to be literally delving into the Bible and just gaining as much as we can out of it. When we've done that, we realize there so much more because the reality is going to come. This is the foretaste; the reality is going to be the resurrection.

Even the deep things of God "...no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God. Now, we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so **that we might know**... [God wants us to know to the very most of our utmost being] ...the things graciously given to us by God; which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit..." (vs 11-13). Remember, we were promised that the Spirit of Truth **will lead us into all Truth**; and the greatest Truth is going to come at the resurrection. That is going to be powerful. And I tell you, there's one man I want to meet, it's Paul.

Verse 13: "Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*."

That's how we understand it. That's what Paul was trying to teach this renegade, carnal church. 'You're wasting your whole time out there, people; you're carnal. Build on Christ. Get rid of the sin out of your lives. Don't go court with each other; don't fornicate; don't brag that you eat things before idols, and that you can speak in tongues.'

He ends up, 1-Cor. 13 saying that the love of God is the way it is, then he finishes with 1-Cor. 15 on the resurrection. What a marvelous piece of writing that God inspired. This is tremendous, that **God loves us so much, that He gave this**, so we can find our way out of the trouble. He put Paul through misery to write this epistle so that today *we know*. That's absolutely powerful!

Here's what the love of God will do for you—Psa. 63. This is written by David, a man after God's heart. Brethren, what's wrong with being after God's heart? *That's what God wants!* He doesn't want our hand, He doesn't want our legs, He doesn't want our body; **He wants our heart**—wholly, completely, devoted to Him. He, with His heart, wholly—completely devoted to you—and all of the brethren **He can perfect the love** of all the brethren in the world! That, God can do! Here's how we need to respond back to God. It's how David did it.

Psalm 63:1: "O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You! My soul thirsts for You..." What did Jesus say? '*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*'—right? *Yes!* God wants to fill you.

"...My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see Your power

and Your glory—... [That's going to be a magnificent thing to see the power and glory of God.] ...as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your loving kindness..." (vs 1-3). The very love of God, the very grace of God

"...is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness... [think of that spiritually] ...and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips when I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life to destroy it shall go into the depths of the earth" (vs 3-9). God will take care of all the enemies!

Verse 10: "They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a serving for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone who swears by Him shall glory, but the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped" (vs 10-11). It almost sounds like the end of the book of Revelation—doesn't it?

Now let's let God inspire us, and uplift us. You want to know what we're going to do on the Sea of Glass? Psalms 149:1: "O praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.... [That's us, resurrected on the Sea of Glass—right?] ...Let Israel rejoice in his Maker... [yes, we are created in Christ Jesus] ...let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the drum and lyre, for the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He crowns the meek with salvation" (vs 1-4)—in a way that we cannot see, or comprehend, or understand.

I tell you what, whenever I get discouraged and down this is where I turn, because these are the words of God that can help you. If there's any part of the Bible to wear out this is it:

Ephesians 3:14: "For this cause... [for the very love of God] ...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory... [coming from the very radiant being of God Himself] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man" (vs 14-16).

- to give you the strength
- to give you the love
- to give you the hope
- to give you the faith
- to give you the conviction
- to give you the desire

Verse 17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [living in you, Christ in you *the hope of glory*] ...*And* that being rooted and grounded in love... [That’s what you’re to be rooted and grounded in. That’s what you’re to be never move from, the very love of God.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [***God want you to know***] ...what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [the ***magnificent plan of God***] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge... [No knowledge in the world will give it to you but His love.] ...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.... [And brethren, that is your ***first and second calling***. He gives this promise to make sure you know it is guaranteed]: ...Now, to Him Who is able... [that means has the power] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think... [above that] ...according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 17-21).

Brethren, in the Family of God, ***we are going to love each other, it’s going to be such a marvelous existence being with God the Father and Jesus Christ***, and to be able to show the love of God to this whole sin-sick world. ***That is your calling!***

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scripture References:

- 1) Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16
- 2) 1 John 4:6, 5-7
- 3) 1 John 2:3-6
- 4) 1 John 4:8-13
- 5) 1 John 3:19-24
- 6) 1 John 4:13-14
- 7) Romans 8:14-22
- 8) 1 John 4:15-21
- 9) 1 John 5:1-3
- 10) 1 Corinthians 13:8, 13
- 11) 1 Corinthians 12:31
- 12) 1 Corinthians 13:1-5
- 13) Romans 1:28-32
- 14) 1 Corinthians 13:6-13
- 15) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13
- 16) Psalm 63:1-11
- 17) Psalm 149:1-4
- 18) Ephesians 3:14-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted

- Matthew 5:48
- Deuteronomy 6
- 2 Chronicles 33
- 1 Corinthians 3; 14
- Matthew 7
- 1 Corinthians 15

Love of God in The Law and Psalms

Fred R. Coulter

We're going to learn in this that the love of God in the Old Testament is not as powerful—though the foundation is there—and as direct as with the New Covenant.

Let's begin by going to Matthew 22; the reason I'm starting here is because this is quoted from the book of Deuteronomy, but it also tells us something very important concerning the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 22:37: "And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and greatest commandment'" (vs 37-38). This is what we see that God desires from every one of us. But in the covenant with Israel, they did not have the heart spiritually, not having the Holy Spirit, to follow through as they should. Nor had Christ come in the flesh that they could relate to God Who had become a human being.

There's a vast difference in that kind of relationship when you understand what Christ has done. We can relate to Jesus Christ as God Who became a human being and suffered everything that we did. In the covenant with Israel we are on the earth as people and God is in heaven up here and He's unreachable. That was the attitude that they had toward God. But nevertheless, God desired their wholeheartedness in it.

Verse 39: "And *the* second *one* is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'" (vs 39-40). Everything that God did was based upon His love.

Now let's go back to the book of Deuteronomy, and I think it's very interesting that there is more about the love of God in the book of Deuteronomy than any other book in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy means *the second giving of the Law*—'deutero' is *two*; 'nomos' or 'nomi' is *law*—second giving of the Law. This was a reiteration of the Law by Moses to all the children of Israel before they went into the "promised land."

We're also going to see a pattern that is through the entire Bible. Here God gave them the warning and then He said—if you're out there in captivity:

Deuteronomy 4:29: "But if you shall seek the LORD your God from there... [***you have to seek God.*** That's the important thing!] ...you shall find Him... [Can anybody think of a New Testament

Scripture, which ties into that? '*Knock and it shall be opened, seek and you shall find, ask and it shall be given!*' All of it's right here, the same thing.] ...if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

This is another history of what the children of Israel did in the wilderness. After God had to correct them very severely, Psalm 78:32: "For all this they still sinned and did not believe in His wonderful works. Therefore, He ended their days in vanity and their years in terror" (vs 32-33). Thirty-eight and a half years wandering in the desert. I can't think of anything more vain and anything more troublesome—can you?

Verse 34: "When He slew them, then they sought Him... [it's a whole different kind of situation here]...and they turned back and sought after God earnestly. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the Most High God was their Redeemer. Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouths, and they lied to Him with their tongues, for their heart was not steadfast with Him; neither were they faithful in His covenant" (vs 34-37). So, they dealt in an insincere human way.

Verse 38: "But He, *being* full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; yea, many times He turned His anger away and did not stir up all His wrath, for He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes away and does not come again. How often did they provoke Him in the wilderness and grieve Him in the desert? And still again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (vs 38-41).

That's what happens when people really do not take God to their heart.

- if they take Him because He's going fight for them
- if they take Him because they're going to be blessed from Him
- if they take Him because we're the descendents and He's got to give it to us

—well then there's no heart involved in it, and that was the difficulty with the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 4:30: "When you are in trouble and when all these things have come upon you in the latter days..." This is also a prophecy for our time today. You can apply this to modern Israel just as well. You can apply that to our nation here in the past year with all of the tragedies, the different bombings, the different storms, the different floods

and everything that has gone on. And they returned to God *with flatteries!* They lied to God *with their lips!* And they said, ‘Oh God, save us, spare us.’ So, God removed it, saved them, spared them, but they didn’t learn.

I think this is the first time in the history that two hurricanes have hit one right after another in the same place down there in the Gulf. And the rain afterwards was just almost unmerciful. One place in southern Florida had 20-inches of rain in one day, and alligators floating around and water moccasins and other snakes. You wake up in the morning on your air mattress and here’s a alligator looking at you—‘hello, there’s breakfast.’ The way you get out of that is stuff a pillow quickly down his throat and then you can escape. So, we’re having our trouble and difficulties here now.

“...then you shall return to the LORD your God and shall be **obedient to His voice**” (v 30). {Rev. 7, the 144,000 from Israel fits in there} “...be obedient to His voice” is the *first* and the *primary requirement from God: Obey My voice, indeed!*. That’s what has gotten everyone in trouble through the history of the Bible. They didn’t believe God, they didn’t obey His voice. What we have here is the written Word of God, which was once spoken so these are the Words of God. If He were here He would tell us the same thing.

Verse 31: for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God. He will not forsake you, nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them; for ask now of the days past which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens, where there has been any thing as great as this, or has been heard any thing like it. Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard and live?” (vs 31-33).

As we’re going through here I want you to contrast that with: Has there ever been such a thing heard that God became flesh and dwelt among His own and wasn’t received of them? Just kind of draw these parallels in your mind as we’re reading along here. I think you’ll find it very important.

Verse 34: “Or has any god attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great *awe-inspiring* terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?... [never such a thing in all history] ...It was shown to you so that you might know that the LORD *is* God, *and there is* none other beside Him. He made you hear His voice out of heaven so that He might teach you... [Read in the New Testament how Jesus came and was in the flesh

and sat down and taught them.] ...And He showed you His great fire upon the earth. And you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. And because He loved your fathers, therefore, He chose their seed after them, and brought you out in His sight with His great power out of Egypt... (vs 34-37)—all because of the love of God! It’s interesting to note that in the Old Testament there is not the phrase: *God is love*; only in the New Testament. That’s to show us that the relationship that we have with God in the New Testament is far more profound than we could have under the covenant with Israel.

After the giving of the Ten Commandments, concerning the first and second commandment, I want you to make *special note* of this: There are people who say that God did not have love in the Old Testament, and God does not extend His love. *Yes, He does!*

Deuteronomy 5:7: “You shall have no *other* gods before Me.” Brethren, that is the very first commandment that everyone breaks. Everyone breaks that because that’s tied back to the 10th commandment: *you shall not covet*. When you get coveting and you get doing right in your own eyes then you’re going to break the first commandment because you’re going to see that the way that these other religions are, are just really very lovely; pleasant to the sight; desirous; tastes good.

Verse 8: “You shall not make a graven image for yourself of any likeness *of anything* that is in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generation* of those who **hate Me**” (vs 8-9). What does it mean to hate God?

Verse 10: “But showing steadfast love to thousands of **those who love Me** and keep My commandments.” Intrinsically, in keeping the commandments there is a love toward God. But if you would calculate how long is a thousand generations: if it’s 25 years—that’s 2500 years. If it’s 42 years—that’s 4200 years. If it’s 65 years—that’s 6500 years. Either way we pretty well cover our time—don’t we? Why are we here? *Because of Abraham*—is that not true? *Yes!* Is God’s love still extending to all of us, those who are in the Church, those who are in the world around us because of one man who kept God’s commandments, obeyed His voice, kept His charge, His statutes and judgments? *Yes!* It’s true! God’s Word is true!

After they got all afraid and heard the noise and everything they told Moses, v 27: “You go near and hear all that the LORD our God shall say. And you speak to us all that the LORD our God shall

speak to you, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*. ‘And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, “I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken”’ (vs 27-28).

They are well intentioned, but the carnal mind must have a little space. This is what we are dealing with. They had to have a space, and they also had to have someone else they could accuse so they said, ‘Moses, you go do it.’

Verse 29: “**Oh, that there were such a heart in them...** [The carnal mind is enmity against God and not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be, even standing in His very presence hearing, His very voice. In the New Testament our hearts are to be different.] ...that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever! Go say to them, ‘Go into your tents again”’ (vs 29-30).

Verse 32: “And you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.” That’s both Old Testament and New Testament doctrine.

What did Jesus say when He came? ‘*Think not that I’ve come to destroy the Law or the prophets. I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. Verily I say to you, not one jot or tittle shall pass from the Law until all be fulfilled.*’ We have the same thing today. We’re not to turn to the right hand or to the left hand. Anything that Christ has made so that we can do it in a spiritual way has not obliterated the principle for which He made the original commandment to Israel in the first place. It has only enhanced it.

Verse 33: You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you so that you may live...” God wants us to live. You know this is the same thing with our own children— isn’t it? We try and tell them, ‘Look, you do this or you do that, you do the other thing. We want you to live.’ Well, most kids think, ‘Why are you telling me to do this?’ Then we have a school which says, that your parents have no rights over you. You exercise your own and do just as you ought.

Of course, the month of October is the NEA—National Education Association; teachers, teachers union—have declared this Gay and Lesbian Month. They are having special lectures given by the unsavory of the community in the classrooms about their filthy lifestyles. When you have that, that’s why this is here. How many times did God say, ‘Don’t go to the right, don’t go to the left, don’t go after other gods?’

Verse 33: You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you so that you may live and that *it may be* well with you, and you may prolong *your* days...” Yet, in all of this they want to live—don’t they? But God is greater than they are, and He’s going to cut them off in the midst of their days. Has that been done? *Yes, it has!*

Deuteronomy 6:3: “Hear therefore, O Israel... [That would be quite a study. I know Jesus said in one place, ‘Let these words sink deep into your ears.’ That’s all the way down into your brain cells.] ...and be diligent to *observe* it, **so that it may be well with you** and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD” (vs 3-4). That means *one in essence* not *one* singularly in number.

Verse 5: “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.... [Even though they didn’t have the heart to do it, he still says you should.] ...And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart” (vs 5-6).

When we come to the New Testament we find in Heb. 10 that God says that He’s going to ‘*write* them on the tablets of our heart and *inscribe* them upon our minds,’ that not only are we aware of them when we go to bed, when we get up and so forth, that we think on them, we live by them. This is how we make our judgments. This is how our lives are operated. We don’t say, ‘God is over here on the seventh day, but boy all the six are mine.’ If we belong to God we are wholly His. That doesn’t make every day Holy.

Verse 7: “And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (vs 7-8).

The Jews have one way of doing this. They have actually a little leather thing that they put on their right hand and they strap it up their arm. If you see any documentaries of the Wailing Wall with the Jews praying there, you will see this. They roll up whatever it is in a little scroll and put it here. And then they have a little hat that they wear and they put it right up on their forehead. They are literally fulfilling this.

Now then, what is far more important is that the true worshippers of God will worship God *in Spirit and in Truth*; and the words which Jesus spoke, they are Spirit and they are Life. So, with the

Spirit of God, if you have them here in your mind and here in your heart then you are going to be more right with God than if you have them on your right hand here on the outside and in a little leather scroll on the outside of your forehead; but God is not in your mind and your heart.

Nevertheless, He was telling them what they should do. I remember when I was visiting in west Los Angeles, I'd go into the Jewish section and there was a section that was half Jewish/half Catholic. Well at the Jewish households they had the little thing with the Ten Commandments written on it right on the side of their house. On the Catholic households they had a cross and a statue of Mary. I guess they were trying to let everyone know who they were.

Verse 10: "And it shall be when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you did not build, and houses full of every good *thing* which you did not fill, and wells which are dug, which you did not dig; vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be full; *then* beware lest you forget the LORD Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage" (vs 10-12).

Of course, we're going to see several parallels of that in the New Testament about being where that is when we get full—what happened to one church we remember: 'You are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing and know not that you are naked and miserable and poor and blind.' So, it happens spiritually, too.

As we go through here I want you to see the parallels in relationship to the Church, because some of these are also not only instructions to them but they are also prophetic types of the Church. Especially right in this section, we will see that the Apostle Peter drew quite heavily on this (1-Pet. 2).

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a special people to Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth." What would the world have been like if Israel had not sinned? Can you imagine that? *It would be a far, far different place*—wouldn't it?

Verse 7: "The LORD did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for **you were the fewest of all people.**" Same way with our calling. 1-Cor. 1:26 [transcriber's correction], 'You see your calling, brethren, not many wise, not many noble,' etc., etc.—fewest in number.

Verse 8: "But because the LORD loved

you... [Again, God's love must be activated first in our lives to deal with us—same way that He did with Israel.] ...and because He would keep the oath, which He had sworn to your fathers..." I want you to notice how much this is based upon the fathers. All the way through: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the fathers. Everything here is a fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham. That's what it is.

"...the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations.... [and God will, and God does] ...And he repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them... [That's still active today. Yes, He does.] ...He will not be slow to repay him who hates Him. He will repay him to his face. You shall therefore keep the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which I command you today to do them. And it shall come to pass, **if**..." (vs 8-12).

There's this conditional word again. The *if* is always contingent upon us. Why is that? *Because God never varies!* There is no shadow, no variableness, nor turning. We are the *if*.

"...**if** you hearken to these judgments to keep and practice them, *then* the LORD your God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all people. There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. And the LORD will take away from you all sickness and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you know, upon you. But He will lay them upon all who hate you" (vs 12-15).

What is one of the biggest all-consuming costs that they have today? *Health costs!* Just think, how much money we waste on crime, on sin, keeping the prisons going, on medicine, on medical care, on taxes to support all this. If any of you are economists, see if you can do this: What is the real expendable amount of money that people have today after you deduct everything for the military, for crime, for corrupt government and so forth, for medical costs; just deduct out of all of that, I think we would be down to maybe 15%, closer to 10%? *Just think of that, only 10%! That would be something! Just think how it's going to be in the*

Kingdom of God when everything is multiplied with blessings and it goes the other way. That's going to be something!

Here's an important lesson for us. This is something that we need to learn, Deuteronomy 8:1 "All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to do* that you may live and multiply... [This is almost like a broken record—isn't it? My, that's something!] ...and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness... [What follows next is what's going to happen to everyone of us]: ...in order to humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart... [That's what God wants: *to know what's really in your heart down deep inside.*] ...whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it...*" (vs 1-3).

Even though they ate it everyday they didn't understand it. Think how merciful God was: six days of the week He would send manna. They would go out and get it day-by-day. Doesn't that sound like something we are to pray about? 'Give us this day our daily bread'? *Yes!* They'd go out on the sixth day; they would gather twice as much. But even through all their rebellion and everything that they went through there was manna *every single day*.

They didn't know what it was like even though later they were told it was like angel's food cake with coriander seed oil in it. I don't know what that tastes like. But they ate it plain, they boiled it, they kneaded it. One place says they deep-fried it, so come and have a manna donut and all that sort of thing. After a while the people weren't thankful. They didn't understand. If they would have gotten on their knees and said, 'Oh God, we're here in the middle of this desert and we know you can provide anything. We love this manna, we thank You for it, but it would be really nice if we could just have just a little bit of meat with it.'

God would say, 'Oh that's wonderful, I'm going to send you some quail.' *No!* They had to rebel. So God sent the quail, and they ran out there in their lust to get it, and while it was yet in their mouths *raw* they came down with a plague. He says, 'You want flesh to eat, I'll give you flesh to eat.' Drops a whole great host of quail upon them and they run out there in their lust. Bad news!

Here's the reason He did it: "...so that He might make you know... [quoted in Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4] ...that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of

the LORD does man live" (v 3). Tie that together with what Jesus said. 'If you love Me keep My commandments. If you love Me keep My words.'

They had an extra special blessing that would be something, v 4: "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.... [Can you imagine that? Forty years in the wilderness: the clothes didn't get old, the shoes didn't get old. You know, pass on a new pair of shoes for forty years. That's something!] ...And you shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you. And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God **to walk in His ways and to fear Him**" (vs 4-6). Over and over again.

Deuteronomy 9 talks about how rebellious they were. Over and over again He says, 'You're a rebellious and stiff-necked people.'

Deuteronomy 10 is really a command, but it is also a prophecy. It's a command that they should do, if they could, but is also a prophecy of the New Covenant because it gives a requirement that only God can do.

Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today for your good?... [that's why God gave them] ...Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today. Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked" (vs 12-16).

Colossians 2 is talking about something that can only occur when you are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God. This is why God looks upon someone who is tenderhearted to Him with very special favor and grace. That's the whole point of what we're doing brethren. I hope you understand that. The whole point of why God has called us is so that we can be loving to Him and tenderhearted to Him. That's what God wants.

In order to do that then, we have to have also the right kind of relationship with God, the right kind of relationship with elders and teachers and brethren and so forth, because in the past if you've had a tender heart toward God and you run smack into the authority, it's leveraged to their own benefit and that should not be. I want you to notice the parallels: God's Spirit for inspiring is 'the same

yesterday, today, and forever.’

Paul says that those who hadn’t seen him, Colossians 2:2: “That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love... [We don’t find any kind of language like that in the covenant with Israel. This is in the New Covenant.] ...unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (vs 2-3). Here’s a tremendous blessing that is given out by the Apostle Paul, giving us hope and pointing us toward Christ.

Verse 4: “Now this I say so that no one may deceive you by persuasive speech.... [to get you to go to the right hand or to the left hand. We have the same principle here—don’t we?] ...For though I am indeed absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him” (vs 4-6)—which also implies neither to the right hand or to the left hand—doesn’t it? If you’re going to walk the straight and narrow way.

Verse 7: “Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ” (vs 7-8). There again is the warning—terrific warning for us today.

Verse 9: “For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead... [the *full understanding of the deity of God*—that’s what it really means] ...bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism...” (vs 9-12). That’s how you are *circumcised spiritually* in the mind: by baptism, receiving of the Holy Spirit of God, and that’s to take away the hardness of the heart.

I want us also to understand something that is very important: Anyone who is a physical Israelite or Jew has *no special* standing with God in the Church until they’re baptized; because

- all have to repent
- all have to be baptized
- all have to receive the Holy Spirit

and become part of *spiritual* Israel. While it’s important for understanding certain prophecies of physical Israel, that does not give anyone an inside track to God; because look what God did to Israel

when they sinned. That’s not the inside track. Well it is going to the outside. When Paul is talking to the Jews here he’s hitting them pretty hard.

Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the Law” (vs 17-20). What we are given back here in the Law is just the form, just the basis, just the beginning on which the Gospel is built and amplified.

Verse 21: “You, then, who are teaching another, **do you not teach yourself also?**...” Understand something that’s very important: As I’ve mentioned before, Christ says ‘it’s sufficient that the disciple become as a teacher,’ which is absolutely true. But as we teach we should also teach ourselves. As we teach others—hopefully with the right kind of attitude and spirit—and lift them up to know more of God’s way, then God will teach us more that we in turn can teach more. It is kind of a real, ever fulfilling, uplifting thing that God wants us to have. The Jews weren’t doing that. They weren’t teaching themselves. Paul says:

“...You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law... [through breaking the Law] ...are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written. For on the one hand, circumcision [of the flesh] profits if you are observing *the Law*; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the Law*, your circumcision has become uncircumcision” (vs 21–25).

I don’t think we really grasp the fighting words that those really are when Paul, a Jew talking to other Jews, that they are uncircumcised if they break the Law. That’s what God is saying back here in Deut. 10.

Verse 26: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the Law, **judge you...**” (vs 26-27). Think on that! That is a *powerful* statement. If you would go up to a Jew and say, ‘The Gentile is going to judge you,’ you’ve got a fight on your hands! Paul really was making a point.

“...who, with *the* letter and circumcision,

are a transgressor of *the Law*? For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit *and* not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 27-29). This is what God is actually prophesying, yet, pleading about here in Deut. 10.

Let’s go back there and read that again—Deuteronomy 10:17: “the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords... [that’s a prophecy of Rev. 19:20—is it not? *Yes!*] ...a great God, the mighty and awesome God Who does not respect persons nor take a bribe.... [You’re not going to bribe God. He is no respecter of persons.] ...He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger in giving him food and clothing. Therefore, love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (vs 17-19).

(go to the next track)

We started out with ‘You love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. The second is like unto it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Lev. 19, I think is really quite interesting. If you go back and study the whole chapter you’re going to see a lot of New Testament doctrine in there

Leviticus 19:18: “You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I *am* the LORD.” Based upon God’s existence. That’s something!

You can see this is a foundation of love. When we get to the New Testament we will see that it is based upon a *personal relationship* with God, and God loving you and you loving God on an ongoing basis, because God, in the form of Jesus Christ, came to the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:1: “Therefore, you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge... [Gen. 26:5 talks about Abraham ‘who obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My laws, statutes and judgments.’] ...and His statutes and His judgments and His commandments always..”

Verse 8: “Therefore, you shall keep all the commandments which I command you this day, so **that you may be strong** and go in and possess the land where you go to possess it.” Remember what happened? *They went in and the whole city of Jericho fell flat just at the shout!* I mean, they didn’t even have to raise a bow or arrow or spear. They said, ‘Hurray! the Lord is with us. Hurray! the Lord is with us.’ Then they went to the city of Ai and one man there—Achan—said, ‘Well now, look at all of

this little gold that I can get just for the picking up.’

So, they went in there and lost the battle and came back crying, ‘Boo-hoo, boo-hoo. Why did we lose the battle?’ Then they had to go through the high priest and the Urim and Thummim and it finally came out that it was Achan who took the things that he shouldn’t have taken. That’s why He’s saying here “...that you may be strong...” If you don’t keep the commandments of God with all your heart then you become weak.

Verse 13: “And it will be, if you will hearken diligently to My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give the rain of your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock so that you may eat and be full” (vs 13-15).

Again, here comes a warning. Notice He goes along and says all these good positive things and then He says, ‘Warning’! Verse 16: “Take heed to yourselves that your heart may not be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them.” How do you prevent that?

Verse 18: “Therefore, you shall lay up these My words in your hearts and in your souls, and bind them for a sign upon your hands so that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (vs 18-19). There he goes.

Verse 22: “For if you shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him.” Over and over again!

The rest of chapter 11 sets the tone for all of the rest of the chapters beginning with chapter 12 on up through to chapter 30. All of those chapters fit in under the subtitle of what we’re going to read here:

Verse 26: “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: A blessing, **if** you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day; and a curse, **if**... [so it’s our choice to make] ...if you will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but will turn aside out of the way which I command you this day to go after other gods which you have not known” (vs 26-28).

Let’s make our way over to chapter 30. This is the same thing that we find in the way that God inspired all Scripture to be written. He’s going to tell you in summary what He’s going to tell you. Then

He will tell you what He's going to tell you, and then He will tell you what He's told you in summary of what He did tell you. We find that here:

Deuteronomy 30:11: "For this commandment which I command you today *is* not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It *is* not in heaven *that you should* say, 'Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?'" (vs 11-12). It's not in Tibet either; no, it isn't. What is happening here is, God is giving a promise to His descendents of Israel that they would always have the Word of God available in a language that they understood. Has God fulfilled that promise? *Yes, He has!*

Verse 13: "Neither *is* it beyond the sea *that you should* say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us to bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?' But the Word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it" (vs 13-14). In other words, in a language you can understand. I don't think there's anything I've read today that any of us misunderstand—is there? *No!*

"Verse 15: "Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil... [That goes right back to the thing that was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden—correct? *Yes!*] ...in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply. And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But **if** your heart turn away so that you will not hear..." (vs 15-17).

It's interesting—isn't it? The heart turns away and then you refuse to hear. Why? *Because 'every way of a man is right in his own eyes,'* and the only way he can tolerate rejecting the commandments of God—if his heart turn away—is to not listen. Then he refuses to hear, closes the ear and shuts the heart and goes on his way. If your heart turn away and you will not hear that's a decision you make and it's a long term protracted decision.

"...but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them... [I mean we have a living example today.] ...I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish... [Have we not had a recent example of that? *Yes!*] ...you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you... [Same thing that Jesus said—right? *Yes!*] ...**that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.** Therefore, **choose life**, so that both you and your seed may live, that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life

and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them" (vs 17-20).

Now then, Moses had one parting thing to say, and it's the Song of Moses. The Song of Moses is all of Deut. 32. He knew this. I tell you, if there's anyone who is going to rejoice when the Kingdom of God comes it's got to be Moses. Can you imagine leading this people around the desert for 40 years? He only did one little thing not right, and he did that out of frustration. All the people came and said, 'Give us to drink.' Moses got mad and talked back to the people and came to God and said, 'What am I going to give them?'

God says, 'Go over and speak to the rock and it will bring forth water.' The people came chiding him, 'Give us drink, give us drink,' almost like a riot—pressing. So, he went over and he **hit** the rock, which he did before. Before God told him to strike the rock. He went and did the same thing and then God said, 'Now, because you did that you're not going into the 'promised land.' When the Kingdom of God comes and Moses is going to be there, I imagine he's going to be so happy. I imagine he's going to be so thrilled having all this burden lifted from him and now able to be in the true Kingdom of God. My, my, just think on that! Though, sometime if you think 'maybe I can get away with something.'

Deuteronomy 31:24: "And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a book until they were finished, *then* Moses commanded the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, saying, 'Take this book of the Law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, so that it may be there for a witness against you, for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. Behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD. And how much more after my death?'" (vs 24-27).

Think of it. If they did all of these things seeing the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night and the manna everyday and they still did all of these things, my, my, my, what's it going to take to get through to them?

Verse 28: "Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, so that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them, for I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt... [after all the repeating of it they still will] ...and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands" (vs

28-29).

Now, you take that as a prophecy for the latter days and just look at what we are doing. That's something. If you ask: How far is God going to go in fulfilling prophecies? *I don't think we really fully understand or comprehend how far God is going to allow it to go!*

Verse 30: "And Moses spoke in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song until they were finished." That's actually the introductory verse for Deut. 32.

Moses starts out the same way that God does, Deuteronomy 32:1: "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." All of the witnessing that God does is by Himself: 'I am the LORD' or 'by heaven and earth.' Those are something to base the veracity of your word on.

The book of Psalms is very important, very intriguing, and actually in studying through it has a whole lot less about the love of God than you would suspect at first hand. It has a lot about the mercy of God, the compassion of God, the loving kindness of God, but directly the love of God with the exception of David who had a special and particular relationship with God, it doesn't teach us all that much about it.

Psalms 91:14: "Because he hath set his love upon Me... [this was perhaps a psalm of David] ...therefore, I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation" (vs 14-16). All based upon the love of God because "...he set his love upon Me..."

When you understand that, that is still New Testament—isn't it? What is it about God that we are told in the New Testament that's the very basis and foundation for the covenant? *For God so loved the world—again, setting His love upon us—that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* We don't find anything like that in the Old Testament.

The love that is exemplified in the Old Testament is a love because of what has been done to the individual, namely David, in this particular case. Even in spite of that did he not, in a way, sin and turn his back on God temporarily with the affair with Bathsheba? *Yes, he did!*

Psalms 18:1: "I love You, O LORD, my strength.... [This is after God had done a miraculous and fantastic intervention on behalf of David.] ...The LORD is my Rock, and my fortress, and my

deliverer; my God, my Rock in Whom I take refuge; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower. I will call on the LORD, Who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies" (vs 1-3). You can take this and put a spiritual application on it today, asking Christ to intervene for you. Many of the Psalms are good examples for us in prayer, but when we pray let's go ahead and put it in today's terminology so we can understand it a little bit more.

Psalms 116:1: "I love the LORD because He hears my voice and my prayers. Because He has bowed down His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.... [This he said after he was healed from being sick.] (He said): ...The sorrows of death hemmed me in, and the pains of the grave took hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the LORD: 'O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul.' Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me" (vs 1-6). That's a tremendous Psalm for us to go by.

Here's another example for us. This is a little bit different than when you are reading the Epistles of John, especially 1-John 4 where it talks so much about God and the love of God and so forth.

Psalms 17:1: "Hear the right, O LORD; attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, for it is not from lips of deceit. Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes behold things that are upright. **You have tried my heart...**" (vs 1-3). If you want to know one thing that God is doing with everyone—*right there that's it.* God is going to test and prove our hearts.

"...You have visited me in the night; You have tested me, and You shall find nothing; I have purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the words of Your lips, I have kept *myself* from the paths of the violent. My steps have held fast to your paths, my feet have not slipped. I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; incline Your ear to me; hear my speech. Show Your marvelous loving kindness..." (vs 3-7). Through the Old Testament and the Psalms in particular, 'loving kindness' is more of *an expression of God's love.*

"...O Savior of those seeking refuge in You; by Your right hand *save them* from those who rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings" (vs 7-8). That ties in with Psalms 91 about the protection of power and hiding under the wings of God.

Psalm 119 gives what I say is a converted attitude to all the commandments of God. The carnal mind is hostile and enmity against the laws of God, not subject to them. But here in Psa. 119 is just the opposite.

Psalm 119:47—notice the attitude here: “And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I have loved.” You will see in all of this there’s not quite that personal relationship that we have in the New Testament. Unfortunately, if you try and run a church on the basis of Old Testament love it will *never* be satisfied or fulfilling. And I think that’s one of the mistakes that we’ve made.

Verse 48: “And I will lift up my hands unto Your commandments, which I have loved, and I will meditate on Your statutes.”

Verse 97—we even have a song in the hymnal listed after this, *How Love I Thy Law*: “Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.” Quite something!

Verse 113: “I hate those who are double-minded, but Your law do I love.” Continuous!

Verse 119: “You destroy all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love Your testimonies.” Testimonies are important things. You have a testimony, you have one kind which you relate what God has done for you,

Psalm 18:2 [transcriber correction]: “The LORD is my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my Rock in Him I take refuge; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower”—because You have fought the battle for me.’ Another testimony is a testimony from God or from someone else that says, ‘If you do this which is wrong you shall surely die,’ or whatever it is. So, there are two kinds: One of adulation and one of warning.

Psalm 119:127: “Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold.” This would be an interesting test—wouldn’t it? If you had enough gold to do this: Put a big stack of gold, and then another stack of fine gold, really fine, purified gold, put it on the table and right along side it place a Bible. Make sure it said *Holy Bible—Word of God* and then bring people in and say, ‘Which would you rather have?’

You know the gold is going to be gone nine times out of ten. I would dare say any of us who have lots of bills and debts, if we looked at it we might be tempted—wouldn’t we? You would have to preface it this way: The gold will not bring you eternal life. *The Bible can!* But I think there’s a lot of people that I know of who would choose the gold today; I’m sure of that. Hopefully we’ve progressed beyond that that we would choose the *way of God*

and the *Word of God*. This is a deeply converted attitude here to understand this.

Notice what else it says here. He gives a concluding statement, v 128: “Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right... [everything that God has said, thought of, done, created, made: ‘all Your precepts’] ...and I hate every false way.” That’s something—isn’t it?

Verse 132: “Look upon me, and be gracious unto me, as You are known to do for those who love Your name.”

Verse 159: “Consider how I love Your precepts... [We’re talking about loving the commandments, loving the Laws, loving the precepts, loving the testimonies, loving His Word.] ...O LORD, according to Your loving kindness give me life. Your Word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever” (vs 159-160). Pretty profound statement!

Verse 163: “I hate and despise lying, but I love Your law.”

Verse 165: “Great peace have those who love Your law, and there is no stumbling block for them.”

Verse 167: “My soul has kept Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.”

Verse 174: “I have longed for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise You; and let Your ordinances help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments” (vs 174-176). There it shows graciousness and hope and everything like that all the way through.

Psalm 62-63 shows what God really desires out of it, and shows more of the type of love, which now is reaching up into more of a New Testament fulfillment of the love of God.

Psalm 62:1: “Only for God does my soul wait in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved” (vs 1-2)

Verse 5: “My soul, wait in silence for God alone; for from Him comes my hope. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; I shall not be moved” (vs 5-6). What you might want to do there is put Mat. 7:23: building upon a rock and the winds come, the rains come, beat upon it, didn’t fall because it’s on a rock.

Verse 7: “In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out

your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.... [That's what we need to have as something that we do. Pour out your heart to God.] ...Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie... [Oh, have we seen that—haven't we? *Yes!*] ...when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them.... [I think we've seen lessons upon that too—haven't we?] ...God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God... [that is the power to receive riches.] ...Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work" (vs 7-12). That sounds a little bit New Testament—doesn't it? Rev. 2 and 3: 'He that has an ear, let him hear.'

Now, Psalm 63 is quite a unique Psalm, especially when you understand that when David brought the Ark of the Covenant back from Kirjath-Jearim after it was sent back to Israel from the Philistines, he put it in a tent right where his house was. When he played the psaltery, and when he wrote a lot of the Psalms he was right there in front of the tent where the Ark was, because the Ark did not go back into the tabernacle until the setting up of the temple by Solomon and then they brought the tabernacle from Gibeon and they brought the Ark from the house of David and it was united back together again. So, David could sit in front of his tent, and I imagine he could pull back the drapes and look into the Holy of Holies there, as it were, and this Psalm is based on it. It couldn't be based on anything else, especially when we come to verse two.

Here's the whole purpose and whole attitude of what we need to have, Psalm 63:1: "O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You! My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see Your power and Your glory—as I have seen You in the sanctuary" (vs 1-2). David was able to see God. That's why he had such tremendous Psalms and was a man after God's heart. That's why his sin with Bathsheba was so dastardly and why God said that's the only thing that he held against him.

Verse 3: "Because Your loving kindness is better than life... [greater than just living in the flesh] ...my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips when I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You..." (vs 3-8).

That's what God wants all of us to do. We're going to have plenty of troubles right and left on every side of us as we go down in this society toward the end of the age but if we're following *hard* after Christ, *He'll bless us*.

"...Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life to destroy it shall go into the depths of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a serving for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone who swears by Him shall glory, but the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped" (vs 8-11).

And so this is the love of God in the Law and in the Psalms. And I think when we get into the New Testament as you go through the studies that we do, in particular in John 14, 15, 16, and 17 where the Apostle John brings us the very words of Christ to magnify the love of God for us, we're going to see it's really fantastic and wonderful indeed, brethren.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 22:37-40
- 2) Deuteronomy 4:29-37
- 3) Psalm 78:32-41
- 4) Deuteronomy 4:30-37
- 5) Deuteronomy 5:7-10, 27-30, 32-33
- 6) Deuteronomy 6:3-8, 10-12
- 7) Deuteronomy 7:6-15
- 8) Deuteronomy 8:1-6
- 9) Deuteronomy 10:12-16
- 10) Colossians 2:2-12
- 11) Romans 2:17-29
- 12) Deuteronomy 10:17-19
- 13) Leviticus 19:18
- 14) Deuteronomy 11:1, 8, 13-16, 18-19, 22, 26-28
- 15) Deuteronomy 30:11-20
- 16) Deuteronomy 31:24-30
- 17) Deuteronomy 32:1
- 18) Psalm 91:14-16
- 19) Psalm 18:1-3
- 20) Psalm 116:1-6
- 21) Psalm 17:1-8
- 22) Psalm 119:47-48, 97-98, 113,119
- 23) Psalm 18:2
- 24) Psalm 110:127-128, 132, 159-160, 163, 165, 167, 174-176
- 25) Psalm 62:1-2, 5-12
- 26) Psalm 63:1-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 7
- Hebrews 10
- 1-Peter 2
- 1-Corinthians 1:26

- Matthew 4:4
- Luke 4:4
- Deuteronomy 9
- Revelation 19:20
- Genesis 26:5
- 1-John 4
- Matthew 7:23
- Revelation 2 & 3

Love of God in the Prophets

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings everyone! We have to preface some things that we find as recorded in the Law because everything that is done in the Prophets then is prefaced by what God gave in the Law.

Let's see what God desired and has always desired, and what God wants, Deuteronomy 6:5: "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." This is what God has always wanted. This is what God really started to do with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Then we come down to the time of Jesus, and one of the things that He said was this exact quote right here of loving God in this way. This is what God has desired, and this is what God wants us to do. This is what God wanted Israel to do.

Verse 6: And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart." That's what God wants with the New Testament, too. He wants all of these words to be in our heart.

The First Commandment:

Let's see exactly, right in the Law, the giving of the Law, Deuteronomy 5:7: "You shall have no *other* gods before Me." That's the first commandment. Let's understand something that is absolutely true today: ***When you change the nature and understanding of God and accept a teaching and doctrine contrary to the teachings in the Bible, you have the wrong god!***

That's why. if you have the wrong god, then everything else from there is askew or wrong, or as we have learned, once you change the nature of God you change all the doctrines, and that's what we have seen.

The Second Commandment:

Verse 8: You shall not make a graven image for yourself of any likeness *of anything* that is in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generation* of those who hate Me" (vs 8-9).

In the Old Testament and in the Prophets we are going to see that there is love and hate. Those things are important that we understand. If you don't love God you hate God. Now I'm sure there are degrees in-between, but we don't want to be on the middle road. We want to be on the road, which is loving God the way that God has said, with all our heart, mind, and soul and being.

Verse 10: "But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Now we're going to see that this is also New Testament doctrine. We find that New Testament doctrine is based upon these very words of love that God gave clear back contained in the Law. So, when we discuss things with people, or you hear people say, 'It is either love or law.' *No!* It is both. ***You cannot have law without love, and you cannot have love without law***—they both go together, hand-in-glove.

1-John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments."

Compare that with Deuteronomy 5:10: "But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments." Are those not identically the same? We can also see with this another principle that is true: 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.' The Lord God Who became Jesus Christ in the New Testament was the one Who spoke the Ten Commandments here as recorded in Deut. 5, and He's the one that says, "Showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

1-John 5:3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." This is profound! All the way through the Scriptures we find that God is the same. However, under the covenant with Israel they did not have the Holy Spirit given to them so they were not able to enter into the complete personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and fellowship with Them as we are able to do today, because that is a *spiritual* relationship.

Let's see some promises that God gave, because everything in the Prophets is based upon the Law and the Covenants. Now we covered this part of it in the *Love of God in the Law and Psalms* {#8 this series}

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you *are* a Holy people..." I want you to think of the New Testament implications in this, because all the way through this study of the love of God, in the Prophets we are going to see the projection forward to the New Testament time and time again.

"For you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you... [same thing in the New Testament—we *must be*

chosen] ...to be a special people to Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love upon you..." (vs 6-7). We're going to see that Israel time and time again rejected that love.

- we will see that God pleaded with them
- we will see that God desired to love them
- we will see that God desired to be loved by them

Verse 7: "The LORD did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you *were* the fewest of all people. But because the LORD loved you and because He would keep the oath, which He had sworn to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (vs 7-8).

Based upon these foregoing statements we just read, He says, v 9: "Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him..."

This is exactly the same principle that Jesus said in John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep My commandments..." That's what Jesus said.

So, we have it right here, Deuteronomy 7:9: "Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations." I wonder how many blessings that we are recipients of because of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David, and those faithful ones listed in the Old Testament? Just makes you wonder.

Now then, He gives a warning that He repays. Here we have love on the one hand, hate on the other hand, v 10^[transcriber's correction]: "And he repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them.... [God works exactly the same way today] ...He will not be slow to repay him who hates Him. He will repay him to his face."

So, we see in the Old Testament, we see in the Law, and we are going to see also in the Prophets, this love/hate kind of thing that goes on. We're also going to see another kind of love that is more prevalent in the Prophets because

- the prophets were sent when the people sinned
- The prophets were sent to warn the people that they were leaving God

—that they were not loving God; and because of that then God would have to repay them to their face.

In Proverbs 3 is some very important instruction for us, plus it also tells us more about the kind of love that the Prophets are talking about.

Proverbs 3:1: "My son, do not forget my law..." I want you to think in terms of New Testament doctrine also, because these things He says, 'My Son, forget not **My** Law.' Are we not the sons and daughters of God? Are we not going to be born into the Kingdom of God when Christ returns? *Yes, we are!*

"...do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments" (v 1). I want you to think as we are going through here about this connection with what we just read in Deut., and this connection with what we also read in 1-John and understand that here again we have God Who is 'the same yesterday, today and forever.'

Verse 2: "For they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you. Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart" (vs 2-3). Isn't that something? "...bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart"! **Make it a part of your living being, the way that you live!** That's why throughout the Bible God's way is called '**the way of the Lord**' because

- it is **a way** to live
- it is **a way** to think
- it is **a way** to love
- it is **a way** to guide our steps day-by-day

That's what we are to do with it.

Here's a promise, v 4: "And so you shall find favor... [grace, law, commandments, heart.] ...and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart... [that's what Israel did not do, and that's why the prophets had to come] ...and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and **He shall direct your paths**" (vs 4-6).

There's a tremendous promise! I never will forget a wonderful sermonette given by Mr. Crane, an Englishman. I remember years ago, no one had ever asked him to speak, but he knew his Bible, and when I visited him I thought he was outstanding. I asked him if he would give a sermonette, and he did. And the sermonette was just what I gave you right here. Wonderful! He said, 'At age 82, I've learned that this is the most important thing in life, right here.'

Brethren, can we also learn that as well? This is the most important thing in life, right here, because this is the foundational building block of building love.

Here's a warning; notice all the way through

that there are warnings, v 7: Do not be wise in your own eyes..." It's absolutely true: ***We have nothing that we didn't receive!*** So, we don't need to be all lifted up and conceited about how good we are, or what we are, or how great we are, how much we know, or anything like this because there is the Scripture which says even though we know certain things we don't know things yet as we ought to know them. So it is with the Word of God, so it is with the love of God.

"...fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones" (vs 7-8). That means right down into your innermost being, because if you have never realized it, I'm sure most of us do today, the life is in the blood and the blood is manufactured in the marrow of the bones. So, this is getting right down into the very depths of your being

Verse 9: "Honor the LORD with your substance and with the firstfruits of all your increase; and your barns shall be filled *with* plenty, and your presses shall burst *with* new wine (vs 9-10).

Here is part of the love of God, which is more prevalent in the Prophets than in any other place in the Bible, but this is also part of the love of God. We need to understand that maybe that's what God is doing this very day. Maybe we need to understand that in the Churches of God, God is exercising this love to get our attention so that we can truly come to God and then have a full-fledged relationship with Him in the way that He wants us to by loving Him with all our heart and all our mind and all our soul and all our being.

Verse 11: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be weary of His correction... [there's going to be correction] ...For whom the LORD loves He corrects..." (vs 11-12).

We also find this quote in Heb. 12, and we're also given some instruction there that we are to let the correction have its 'perfect work'; we are to lift up the hands that hang down; we are to look to God and be encouraged and not turn our backs and be bitter and end up as Esau who found no space of repentance because he did not accept that love of God. Esau ended up being the recipient of God's hatred.

Verse 12: "For whom the LORD loves He corrects, even as a father *corrects* the son *in whom* he delights." That is to make us more like Him; that is to bring us into more conformity—especially New Testament Christians—with His Spirit so that we can grow in grace and knowledge, that we can understand more about God.

Let's go to the book of Deut. 18 for just a minute, because here's an important prophecy. We

will see that almost all of the prophets key in on the Law and the things that we just read.

Here's a promise given, Deuteronomy 18:15: "The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, One like me. To Him you shall hearken..." That's a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

In v 18 He repeats it again but adds something else to it: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will put My words in His mouth..." What we are going to see is this: All the words that the prophets have given; all the words that are recorded in all the Prophets are the words which come from God. They also fulfilled this. They came and they spoke the words of the Lord. All the way through the book of Ezekiel: 'The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, saying, *Son of man, say unto the children of Israel...*' over and over again

"...And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him" (v 18). He's going to speak unto them all that He commanded. What did Jesus say? Jesus said, 'I speak nothing of Myself, I do nothing of My own. But what I hear the Father say, that's what I speak; what I see the Father do, that's what I do.'

Verse 19: "And it shall come to pass, whatever man will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him."

Let's see something that's very important concerning the love of God, and the way that God is, and the way that God wanted to treat Israel. Psalm 103:1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name." We're going to see one of the reasons why—even in the Prophets—that David is mentioned over and over again is because of this very attitude: ***David was truly loving God with all his heart, mind, soul and being.*** Yes, he had his faults and mistakes, and yes, he had his sins, and yes, they were forgiven, but this was the attitude that he had.

Verse 2: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies" (vs 2-4). This is what God has always wanted to do with Israel. But Israel would not, therefore, God had to bring about the other warnings that He gave.

Verse 8: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (vs

8-10). No, God does not do that. One of the most profound messages that we will find in the book of Ezekiel is to *turn to God/return to God*, all the way through.

Verse 11: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him.” Not only that, but just think about how His mercy is toward you when you love Him. There are really very few people in the whole history of the world that have truly loved God. I want you to think on that, and I want you to let that sink in, and I want you to understand what a great and a profound opportunity that we have that we can do that, brethren, with the Spirit of God. Then we can do those things that are pleasing to Him, just like it says there in Proverbs, the third chapter.

Verse 12: “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, for He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children’s children, to those who keep His covenant... [because He said those who love Him and keep His covenant He would be with] ...and to those who remember His precepts to do them” (vs 12-18). **Tremendous blessing!**

Psalms 107:41: “But He raises up the poor from affliction and sets their families like a flock... [that’s a prophecy of us] ...The righteous shall see it and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop its mouth. Whoever is wise, let him give heed to these things, and let them consider the mercies of the LORD” (vs 41-43). And that’s what we want to do, brethren, is to understand the loving kindness of the Lord—**to know His love, to know Him**. Part of that is understanding how God operated in the Old Testament and showed His love.

Here’s a profound section of Scripture. One of the reasons that God hated Esau was because he sold his birthright and turned his back on the commandments of God and he **refused** to repent. That’s what God hates so He makes this statement:

Malachi 1:1: “The burden of the Word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. ‘I have loved you,’ says the LORD. ‘But you say, “In what way do You love us?”...’” (vs 1-2). Most people don’t understand that even in the world they’re still operating because of the love of God.

Remember, Jesus Christ is the author of

physical life and spiritual life, so all of those people in the world who are enjoying all of these blessings that they have, it’s because of the love of God. But they do the same thing that Israel has done. ‘Where has God loved us?’

So God says: “...*Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?*” says the LORD. ‘Yet I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau and made his mountains a desolation, and his inheritance *to be* for the jackals of the wilderness.’ If Edom says, “We are beaten down...”” (vs 2-4). Esau didn’t accept the correction of God; he turned around and rebelled against God; he turned around to go take again that which God had taken from him and he was going to recapture that which he sold.

“...but we will return and build the waste places,”—thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall be called the border of wickedness, and the people *with* whom the LORD *is* indignant forever’” (vs 1-4). We don’t want to be on that side of the fence, brethren.

“And your eyes shall see, and you shall say, “The LORD will be magnified beyond the border of Israel.” A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I *am* a father, where is My honor? And if I *am* a master, where is My fear?”—says the LORD of hosts to you, ‘O priests who despise My name. And you say, “In what way do we despise Your name?”’” (vs 5-6).

We find the same thing today: there are many ministers and teachers out there who despise the name of God. They don’t want to teach what is right. They don’t want to teach what the Word of God has. They don’t want to teach what God is saying. No, they want to teach their own thing in the name of God, and they turn around and they say this:

Verse 7: “You offer defiled bread upon My altar...”” The Word of God is the bread of life—is it not? So, if they offer polluted bread upon His altar, spiritually speaking, what are they doing? *They’re offering their own ideas, and their own philosophies, and their own ways, and their own thoughts* all the way through.

“...And you say, “In what way do we defile You?” In your saying, “The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.”” (v 7). Are we all not called to the table of the Lord? *Yes, we are*—the wedding supper of the Lamb—correct? *Yes!* They’re saying, ‘Well, God doesn’t mean this, and God doesn’t mean that, and God doesn’t mean the other thing.’

Verse 8: “And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil?... [That’s the same as offering the Word of God and not having a clue as to what it’s all about.] ...And if you offer the lame and

the sick, *is it* not evil? Offer it now to your governor. Will he be pleased with you, or accept your person?’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And now entreat the favor of God, that He will be gracious unto you. This has been by your *own hand—and now* will He show regard for you?’ says the LORD of hosts” (vs 8-9).

The whole sum of the chapter is that they have profaned God’s way by saying, ‘Yea, God has not said’—*when God has said*.

“...I have no pleasure in you,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘I will not accept an offering from your hand’” (v 10). No! We’re finding that too much in the Church of God with the ministers and with the brethren, that God is not having pleasure in them. As I wrote in a recent letter, could this be the year of visitation for the Churches of God? I mean, we need to think upon that.

Verse 12: “‘But you are profaning it... [that is the *way of God* and the *table of God*] ...when you say, ‘The table of the LORD, it *is* polluted; and its fruit, His food, *is* contemptible.’.... [Then he says, ‘Oh my, it’s going to be bad.’] ...You also said, ‘Behold, what a weariness *it is!*’....” (vs 12-13). They’re wearied with God’s way. ‘Oh we need to get rid of these burdensome sacrifices. It’s way too much for us. We are a *New* Testament church,’ is the way that they would put it.

“...And you have snuffed at it *in contempt*,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And you bring that which was taken by violence, and the lame, and the sick, and thus you brought an offering. Should I accept it from your hand?’ says the LORD” (v 13).

Now think of this *spiritually!* This is what Israel did. This is why they had to be corrected so severely, because they were doing this at the temple; they were doing this with the priesthood; they were doing this with the offerings of God and the worship of God through the Old Covenant, and He says, ‘Will this be accepted?’ *No*,

Verse 14: “‘But cursed *be* a deceiver who has in his flock an *acceptable* male—yet he vows and sacrifices to the LORD a blemished *one*... [In other words they are there and they know they are doing wrong, *and they know better*.] ...for I *am* a great King,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and My name *is* feared among the nations.’”

Malachi 2:1: “‘And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.’” Then He goes on showing, because they have been partial in the Law, that He’s going to spread the dung upon their faces, even their solemn feasts. So, God had some pretty strong and stout words to say because they didn’t love God.

Now we’re going to see some very important things here in the book of Ezekiel, and

this is something that is absolutely true today, and this is part of the love of God, which is the correction of God. If we can do as the Apostle Paul said; if we can take all these things that happened to them in the Old Testament as examples for us that we don’t do the same thing. The grace of God does not give us license to go sin. No, Paul says we establish law; we establish love because of the grace of God.

So, God gave this warning. Here was Ezekiel, he had to go and preach a very dire and terrible warning message. I tell you, if there’s one man I would not want to be, and if there’s one ministry I would not want to have that would be the ministry of Ezekiel. You read it. He had the toughest ‘row to hoe’ of any of the prophets of God. And here’s what God said:

Ezekiel 3:17: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore hear the word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.” As I said, all the way through all the prophets, all the prophets gave the Word of God, they spoke the Word of God.

Verse 18: “When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’; and you do not give him warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked one shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at your hand.” That lays the responsibility upon the prophet. This also lays the responsibility upon any of the teachers of God today.

Verse 19: “Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness...”—which is part of the love of God. God wants them to experience this love. God wants them to receive this correction that He can give His tender mercies and loving kindness to them.

“...nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. And when the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness, which he has done, shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous so that the righteous does not sin, and if he does not sin, he shall surely live because he is warned; also you have delivered your soul” (vs 19-21).

This is true in everything throughout the Scriptures, brethren. This is something most important that we need to realize and understand.

Ezekiel 16 has to do with God’s love for Israel, has to do with God calling Israel. He rehearses all the history of calling her out of Egypt;

rehearses all of the history of the good things that He did for her. You know, God also shows His love by His creation. God also shows His love by the good things that He gives to people. That's why He wants them to love Him in return. But too many people don't love God; they don't care for God. They want all these things in their covetousness, just like Esau, but they don't want to give themselves to God. God gave that history.

Ezekiel 16:8: “‘And I passed by you and looked on you, and, behold, your time *was* the time of love. And I spread my skirt over you and covered your nakedness. And I swore to you and entered into a covenant with you,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘And you became Mine.’” In other words this was the marriage ceremony of the covenant with Israel that He made with them (Exo. 20-24).

Verse 9: “‘And I washed you with water... [I want you to think about how God has done this with us. Are we not washed with water? *Yes, we are—baptism!*] ...I washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I also clothed you *with* embroidered work, and I shod you *with* leather *sandals*. And I wrapped you in fine linen, and I covered you *with* silk. And I adorned you *with* ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands and a chain on your neck. And I put a ring on your nose, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head” (vs 9-12). That's how God treated Israel: gave her the best of everything that there was. And God was with them.

Verse 13: “‘And you were adorned with gold and silver; and your clothing *was of* fine linen and silk and embroidered work. You ate fine flour and honey and oil; and you were exceedingly beautiful. And you advanced into a kingdom. And your name went out among the nations because of your beauty; for it *was* perfect My splendor, which I had put on you,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘But you trusted in your beauty...’” (vs 13-15). Looked to her own self, looked to her own devices, looked just the same thing as Satan did. A take off of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, ‘Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all.’ And Israel said, ‘Why, I am.’

“‘...and played the harlot because of your name, and poured out your fornications on all who passed by—on any who *would have it*’” (v 15). And furthermore He says, ‘you were worse than whores. You paid your lovers.’ Is that not what we are doing today? *You wait and see!* The latest fornication is Bosnia, and we are going to pay through the nose. Then God said that He had to judge her. God said He had to just completely waste her because she did all these horrible and miserable things.

Verse 43: “‘Because you have not remembered ... [we need to remember] ...the days

of your youth, but have troubled Me in all these *things...*’” Just like in a marriage when a marriage goes sour then the one who is the victim of it—in this case being God—is fettered with all of those problems and difficulties and has to live with the emptiness and the loneliness and the anger. But God has the power to correct. They didn't remember those things.

“‘...so, behold, I will also repay your *own* way upon *your* head,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘And you shall no longer commit this wickedness above all your abominations. Behold, all who use proverbs shall use *this* proverb against you, saying, “As is the mother, *so is* her daughter.”’” That's exactly what the United States has become, just as old mother Israel.

Verse 45: “‘You *are* your mother's daughter, who despises her husband and her sons. And you *are* the sister of your sisters, who despise their husbands and their sons. Your mother *was* a Hittite, and your father an Amorite. And your older sister *is* Samaria, she and her daughters who dwell at your left hand. And your younger sister, who dwells at your right hand, *is* Sodom and her daughters. Yet you have not *only* walked according to their ways, nor have *only* done according to their hateful deeds; but, as *if it were* a very little *thing*, you were *even* corrupted more than they were in all your ways” (vs 45-47). In other words He's talking to Judah now.

Verse 48: “‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘neither Sodom your sister, nor her daughters, have done as you have done, you and your daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom; pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters. Nor did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy’” (vs 48-49). But then He goes on to say ‘you, Judah, have done worse.’ As we know from the New Testament they entered into league and alliance with Satan the devil and made Satan their god and rejected God.

In spite of all of this, the love of God still is pleading with the children of Israel. God in His mercy, God in His love, God in His graciousness still understands this. Now He gave the warning; repeated the warning, that He gave in Ezek. 3, that we read in the first part of Ezek. 33.

Then He says, Ezekiel 33:11: “‘Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD...” This is based upon the very existence of God. God wants you to know because of His very existence, living eternally, as He lives.

“‘...I have no delight in the death of the wicked... [God has no pleasure at all in it. Sometimes they must die. But He still has no pleasure in it.] ...except that the wicked turn from

his way, and live...” (v 11). This is the whole pleading of the prophets. If you could say there’s anything in all of the Prophets, which expressed the love and grace of God, this is it right here in Ezekiel—‘that you would turn and live.’

“...Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?” (v 11).

- God wanted them to accept His correction.
- God wanted them to receive it.
- God wanted them to understand that He loved them.
- God wanted them to know that He wanted them to come back to Him.

Just like He said, ‘Those that love Me and keep My commandments, I will honor unto a thousand generations.’ Now they’re kind of a religious people. They’re doing their way.

Verse 30: “‘And you, son of man, the children of your people are still talking about you by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speaking to one another, each man to his brother, saying, ‘I pray you, come and hear what is the word which comes forth from the LORD.’ And they come to you as the people come, and they sit before you *as* My people, and they hear your words....” (vs 30-31).

I would say this is a perfect description of almost nearly all Sunday services that you would have anywhere; perfect description of many Sabbath services that you would have in many places. They come and sit before God, because are we not coming to God? Are we not coming and saying, ‘God, we’re asking You to bless this meeting. God, we’re asking You to be here in presence’? *Yes!*

So they come “...and they sit before you *as* My people, and they hear your words. But they will not do them. For with their mouth they show much love, *but* their heart goes after their covetousness” (v 31) Their love is feigned. Their love is not real. Oh yes, they have sweet words. They have nice sayings, but they go after their covetousness.

(go to the next track)

Verse 32: “And lo, you *are* to them as a singer of love songs *with* a beautiful voice, and able to play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them. And when this comes to pass; (behold, it will come) then they shall know that a prophet has been among them” (vs 32-33).

We don’t know exactly how this is going to fulfill in the end-time, but we do know that we see these principles involved right now. There are many people who are turning their back on God because of

the things that they see and perceive. They don’t have the love, they don’t have the zeal that Jesus Christ did. They don’t love righteousness and hate iniquity, which we need to do. Oh no, they would rather have it their own way.

Amos 3 is so profound for us. We need to understand some very basic things here, which then will help give us the understanding on how we need to come back to God, but also how that Israel refused the love of God time and time again, and turned her love toward all of the harlots. So, God says, here:

Amos is pleading with them again, Amos 3:1 “Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, ‘You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you *for* all your iniquities” (vs 1-2). This is part of the love of God, part of the chastisement that comes.

Verse 3: “‘Can two walk together unless they be agreed?’” This is what it really gets down to. When we realize and understand that God has created us, God has made us, God has brought forth everything that there is, we have to agree with God. With human beings you can work out different compromises because no human being is perfect. But God is perfect so our agreement must be with Him. If we are to walk in the way of the Lord, if we’re to walk with God then we must agree with Him in everything.

Because of their sins, let’s come to Amos 4:11^[transcriber’s correction]: “‘I have overthrown some among you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet you have not returned to Me,’ says the LORD.” God is saying, ‘Look, I gave some punishment to some of you, and I plucked some of you out of the fire as you pluck a firebrand out of the fire and yet you still didn’t return. I gave you an opportunity but you didn’t take it.’

Verse 12: “‘Therefore, I will do this to you, O Israel; and because I will do this to you, **prepare to meet your God, O Israel!**” Brethren, we need to be prepared to meet our God. There are many things coming down right now, which are coming right to the end of the age. And some of these things are going to come so fast that if we’re not prepared to meet God with the love of God, then we’re going to be in grave difficulty with Him.

Verse 13: “‘For lo, He forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what his thought *is*. He who makes the morning darkness, and treads upon the high places of the earth—the LORD, the God of hosts, *is* His name.”

Amos 5:1-2: “Hear this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Israel. The virgin of Israel has fallen; she shall rise no more; she lies forsaken on her land. There is none to raise her up” (vs 1-2). Now this is going to come upon this land. We can see the seeds of this destruction already sown.

God also gives this in the way of returning. Amos 5:10: “They hate him who rebukes... [they won’t listen] ...in the gate, and they despise him who speaks uprightly.... [It’s going to be turned upside down and backward.] ...Therefore—because of your trampling upon the poor, and because you take tribute of grain from him—though you have built houses of carved stone, you shall not dwell in them; though you have planted desirable vineyards, you shall not drink wine from them, for I know your many transgressions and your many sins. They afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate. Therefore, the prudent shall keep silent in that time; for it *is* an evil time” (vs 10-13).

- What are we to do when the times are evil?
- How are we to come to God?

Verse 14: “Seek good and not evil... [but today most people are seeking evil] ...that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as you have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious *to* the remnant of Joseph” (vs 14-15). That’s what it needs to be with the remnant of the Church.

Let’s go to the book of Micah, chapter 6, and here God pleads with Israel; God pleads with His people. After all the correction and after all the things are done God says, ‘Let’s make it right. Let’s make things good.’

He says in Micah 6:3: “O My people, what have I done to you? And in what way have I made you weary? Testify against Me!... [God says to bring your cause to Me.] ...For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of slaves; and I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before you. O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab planned... [v 6]: ...With what shall I come before the LORD...” (vs 3-6). How is a person going to come before the Lord? That’s what He’s saying here.

... *to* bow myself before God the Most High? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?...” (vs 6-7). No! God said that to love God—Who is more than all sacrifice—to obey was greater than all burnt offerings. *Yes, indeed!*

“...Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life? He has shown you, O man, what *is* good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?” (vs 7-8). This has been the plea of God all the way through.

Let’s look at it again in the book of Jeremiah. God has always wanted to love Israel and Judah, but they did not want to respond to love God. Let’s think of that today in our own circumstances. We want the love of God, we want the blessings of God, but we are also to respond and love God in the way that He wants us to with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul and all our being.

Jeremiah 2:1: “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothals, when you went after Me in the wilderness...’”’” (vs 1-2)—and said, ‘Yes Lord, all that You say we will do.’

““...in a land not sown. Israel *was* Holiness to the LORD, and the firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him shall be held guilty; evil shall come on them,’ says the LORD.”’ Hear the Word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the LORD, ‘What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me and have walked after vanity, and have become vain? Nor did they say, “Where *is* the LORD Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits...”’” (vs 2-6)—and brought us to this land (v 7)

Verse 8: “The priests did not say, ‘Where *is* the LORD?’ And they who handle the law did not know Me; the rulers also rebelled against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after things that do not profit.” Then you go through all the book of Jeremiah and it is just one plea with the people: *turn from your ways, turn from your sins, turn back to Me.*

Jeremiah 4:1: “‘If you will return, O Israel,’ says the LORD... [Is this not the same thing we read in Ezekiel?] ...‘Return to Me. And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be removed... [‘I’ll repent of the evil I thought of to do to you,’ said God. ‘You won’t be removed.’] ...and will swear, “As the LORD lives,” in Truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; then the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him they shall glory”’ (vs 1-2). But no, they didn’t want to do it. It got so bad that God told Jeremiah, ‘Look, I want you to do this...’

Let's turn to Jeremiah 5:1: "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in her open places, if you can find a man... [**just one man** in sincerity and in Truth—just one man!] ...if there is one who does justice, who **seeks the Truth**; and **I will pardon her.**" For the sake of one man God was going to say, and He did, 'I will forgive all the sins of Jerusalem.' That's a tremendous amount of love to be able to even say that.

Verse 2: "And though they say, 'As the LORD lives'; surely they swear falsely." He couldn't even find one. He said, "Yea, even the prophets and priests and all the people are profane. Every one runs after his own thing."

Let's come to the book of Isaiah now and let's see how God continually pleaded with Israel out of His deep love for them. God says, "I loved you." And when we finish this we will see how much **God really has loved Israel.**

Isaiah 43:1: "But now thus says the LORD Who created you, O Jacob, and He Who formed you, O Israel; 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; you *are* Mine.'" Think of that for us today. Think of the promise that Jesus said, 'To the one that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne as I overcame and am sat down in My Father's throne. To him that overcomes will be a pillar in the temple of My God, and I will write upon him My new name and the name of new Jerusalem, and the name of My Father and My new name, and he shall go out no more.' Think of that—we are called by His name!

Verse 2: "When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; nor shall the flame kindle on you, for I *am* the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt *for* your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you. Since you are precious in My sight, you have been honored, and **I have loved you...**" (vs 2-4).

God says to Israel, '**I have loved you.**' How many times have the people of Israel turned back the love of God? *Oh yes, they want the pleasant words!*

God says: "...therefore, I will give men for you, and people for your life. Fear not; for I *am* with you..." (vs 4-5). God would be with them anytime they wanted. That's all God wanted them to do, was to love Him back. That's all! Just to come to God and say,

- God, I love You
- God, thank You for what You have given
- God, help me to love You
- Let me walk in Your ways

But oh no, they wouldn't do that. The whole thing is just, you know, one after the other, just turning back from God continually.

We're going to see many of these things now project forward to the Church. God knew in the book of Isaiah that they would not return. He's talking about the things that relate to us. Here's what God said to them:

Isaiah 55:6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found..." I tell you, that is so profound for us today. There are many people that need to seek the Lord while He can be found because this is telling us there's going to be a time *when He won't be found.* We need to do that in the Church today—all of the brethren—**seek God!** Stop the stupidity of playing religion. Stop the stupidity of idolizing a man and an organization. **Seek God!**

"...call upon Him while He is near... [He is near. Jesus said, 'Ask and you will receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened.'] ...Let the wicked forsake his way... [that's what we need to do] ...and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the LORD... [Again, through the love of God **return to the Lord!** That's why all of the correction goes out.] ...and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (vs 6-7).

Here's one thing that is true and we need to know and understand and realize, v 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD.... [God has called us to a way that is so great, and so mighty, and so good, and so profound.] ...'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" (vs 8-9). God wants Israel to return. He wants **us** to return. God is pleading out of His love for Israel and out of His love for us.

Verse 10: "'For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater.'" We are the seed and we are eating the bread of life, which is Christ.

Verse 11: "So shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do."

Can we let that be with us today with God that God's Word can go out and do what He wants it to do in our lives. Listen, God is scattering the Church for very, very good reasons, and we will learn more as to why God is scattering the Church. But while He is scattering, that's part of the correction that God is giving the Church, just like

He gave Israel to exile them and send them off into captivity.

- While we are scattered, *will we learn?*
- While we are scattered, *will we seek God?*
- While we are alone in the quiet moments of our own time and our own lives, *will we seek to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul and all our being?*
- *Will we hear the pleadings of God's love through the prophets for us?*

Isaiah 56:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.... [we’re sitting right at the verge at the end of the age] ...Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it... [not throwing away the Sabbath and saying any day is good enough] ... and keeps his hand from doing any evil’” (vs 1-2). You have to live the way of God by keeping your hand from doing evil, and you have to keep the Sabbath.

Verse 6: “Also the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant.” Brethren, this is a prophecy of the New Covenant.

God gives this promise in His love. He says, Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity... [What is it going to be like, brethren, to live with God in eternity? *A whole different level of existence!* It’s going to be magnificent indeed.] ...Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place... [where God’s throne is] ...even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit...’” God wants to dwell in us and with us and with His Spirit, and to really truly have that relationship that He wants us to have to love Him.

“...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (v 15). Isn’t that something? *That’s what God wants!*

Here’s a tremendous part of the thing that we need to know, part of God’s Word, Isaiah 63:7: “I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD... [That’s what we need to talk about. Brethren, if the love of God is absolutely the greatest then we need to mention it time and time again.] ...the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, and the great good to the house of Israel by which He bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses.... [that leads us to the deep and profound love of God] ...For He

said, ‘Surely they *are* My people, children that will not lie.’ So He was their Savior” (vs 7-8). *That’s talking about us!* That’s why we need to come to this same point here.

Let’s go to Psalm 63 to see the attitude that God has always wanted; that God has desired from Israel; that God through the Psalms and the Law, and now the Prophets; to understand what God wants—this needs to be the model that we need to have in seeking the love of God, because there can’t be any greater. Paul said that love is the greatest of all. Love is the gift of God, ***but we have to respond*** just like David did here. We have to come to this point in our attitude, in our hearts, and in our minds in serving God.

Psalm 63:1: “O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You!.... [we need to put God first in everything] ...My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.” That you can drink in of the Spirit of God, that you can drink in of the Word of God, that you can drink in of the love of God. He says, ‘I will seek You early.’ Jesus gave the promise that if we seek, we will find; if we ask, we will receive; if we knock, it’s going to be opened.

Verse 2: “To see Your power and Your glory—as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because **Your loving kindness is better than life...**” (vs 2-3). The whole ***love of God is better than life***. It is better than anything we could have in this entire world. Think about that! It’s better than life. What is the most important and profound thing that you can do? *To love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being!* That’s the whole lesson of the whole Bible, brethren.

- Can we not grow in that love?
- Can we not grow in that grace?
- Can we not take these lessons—which are examples for us—and apply them to our lives and see what God will do for us?
- *Yes!*

That’s all that God ever wanted of Israel, and *that’s what God wants of us*.

Verse 4: “Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness... [it shall be ‘health to your navel and to your morrow’ (Prov. 3)] ... and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.”

Verse 8: My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me.” Jesus is at the right hand of God, and He’s got His right hand to uphold you if you follow hard after Him. That is tremendous!

Now let's see how this carries through also to the prophets, showing the love of God and this desire that God wants us to have. Here's what God wants to do. Can God do this *for us*? I know this is talking about Israel, but are we not spiritual Israel? Can we not, as the Church of God, come to this point? It's got to come from God.

There are many 'politicians' out there trying to get the people of God together in their own 'political little organizations.' I tell you on the Word of God, it's going to fail! It is not going to work!

Here's what needs to be, v Jeremiah 32:39: "And I will give them **one heart, and one way**, that they may fear Me forever, for their good and for the good of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good. But I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will truly plant them... [Are we not plants before God (Matt. 13, the parable of the sower)?] ... in this land with all My heart and all My whole soul" (vs 39-41). If you're whole hearted to God, will He be whole hearted back to you? *Absolutely, yes*, without a doubt!

Jeremiah 33:14—here's a promise. This also has to do with the Church; it also has to do with David because David sought God: 'Behold, the days come,' says the LORD, 'that I will establish the good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up to David. And He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this *is the name* with which she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' For thus says the LORD, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel' (vs 14-17). **And the chief one to do that is Jesus Christ.** Think of that, brethren. That's what God wants to do for us.

Isaiah 51—here again the love of God is shown, the love of God is given. All through what we call the Old Testament, everything that God did was based upon His love. He just wanted them to respond to Him. We know that God didn't give them the heart to do it the way that we can, but can we respond to God? *Yes!* Can we love God in that way? *Yes!*

Isaiah 51:1: "Hearken to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD... [that's what we need to be doing] ...Look to the rock *from which* you were cut, and to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah *who* bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and made him

many.' For the LORD shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places..." (vs 1-3).

Look brethren, the Church of God is in trouble now, but the Church of God can be comforted by God **IF they return**, just like He says, He will comfort them.

"...and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness shall be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. 'Hearken to Me, My people; and give ear to Me, O My nation; for instruction shall proceed from Me, and I will make My justice as a light to the people. My righteousness *is* near; My salvation has gone out, and My arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on My arm they shall trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall become old like a garment; and its inhabitants shall die in the same way. But My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart *is* My law; do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their revelings; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.' Awake! Awake! Put on strength..." (vs 3-9). That's what He's telling His Church to do today—"Awake, awake, put on the strength."

Zephaniah 3:17: "The LORD your God *is* mighty in your midst; He will save; He will rejoice over you with joy..." There is one thing that is surely true: Since God loves us the way He does, and remember what Jesus did to bring us to the Father, what joy there is when there is that reciprocal of love going back to God and from God to us?

Just remember how lonely God has been because people don't love Him. Have you ever had it where you have desired someone to love you, but they haven't? All you want to hear them do is to say, 'I love you.' That's what God wants to hear from us. That's all God wants to hear from Israel. All of Israel, all the twelve tribes, all God wants to hear from them is, '**I love You! I will fear You! I will keep Your commandments!**' That's something! That's the whole story of the Bible.

"...He will save; He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love; He rejoices over you with singing" (v 17). That's what God wants. He's going to do that.

I tell you, the love of God is really something, and I think there's so much to it that we need to live, that we need to experience, that we would have to say we really just don't know. It's going to be so profound, brethren, when that really

happens. And that's what we're attempting to do here.

Hosea 11:1: "When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him and called My son out of Egypt." But what did they do? *They turned their back on Him!*

Hosea 14:4 is a wonderful verse, and I want you to understand this, and I want you to let this be applied to us as a church. Let it be applied to all the Churches of God. Let it be applied to all of Israel as God reaches down to save them.

Hosea 14:4: "**I will heal their backsliding...**" Yes, all the sins, all the things that were done God will heal, God will bring them back. All they have to do is repent and say, 'God, I love you.' That's all we need to do.

"...I will love them freely... [*Freely, the gift of God coming from God. Marvelous indeed!*] ...for My anger has turned away from him." Right there in the Prophets—this is *the love of God in The Prophets*, pleading with His people. Yes, He had to correct them. Yes, He had to rebuke them. Yes, He had to bring them to nothing.

Let's see what God is going to do. This is wonderful, brethren, what God is going to do.

- Can we not—in understanding *The Love of God in The Prophets*—learn of the things that are there for us in the New Testament?
- Can we not go to God and say, 'God, I know that our forefathers were stiff-necked and rebellious?'
 - ✓ We know that they turned their backs upon You.
 - ✓ We know that they loved Baalim and they went after Ashtaroth
 - ✓ We know that they loved to rely on themselves.
 - ✓ But Oh God, in our great need, in our very smallness that we are, please
 - love us
 - help us to love You with all our heart, mind, soul and being

Jeremiah 30:24: "The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return until He has done *it*...[Yes, there are things that are going to have to happen] ...and until He has fulfilled the purposes of His heart. In the latter days you shall understand it."

- Is it not time for us to consider it?
- Is it not time for us to realize what God is doing to the Churches:
 - ✓ to correct
 - ✓ to change
 - ✓ to plead
 - ✓ to get them to love Him?

Jeremiah 31:1: "'At that time,' says the LORD, 'I will be the God of all the families of Israel... [Is that not true of the Church? *Yes!*] ... and they shall be My people.' Thus says the LORD, 'The people *who were* left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I will go to give him rest.'" (vs 1-2). Can we not find grace in this spiritual wilderness and stupidity that we are all going through? *Yes, we can!*

Verse 3: "The LORD has appeared to me from afar, *saying*, 'Yea, I have loved you with an **everlasting love...**' How many times must God plead with His people? How many times must God plead with His Church that 'I have loved you with an everlasting love'? That's why John wrote, 'God so loved the world that He gave His **only** begotten Son, that whosoever is believing on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' That's why Christ came. *This is the everlasting love!*

Just think of how much love that Christ had to have to come and suffer the things that He did, to go through this so that He could tell you, 'I love you.' And all He wants to know from you is: **do you love Him?**

God says if that's so "...I have loved you with an **everlasting love**; therefore, with loving-kindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin of Israel..." (vs 3-4). That is the Church, brethren, because He is building that right now.

So, the very love of God that we're able to participate in, in the New Testament; the very love of God in having that fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ in loving God with all our hearts and mind and soul and being can be fulfilled in us, brethren. Just remember this: what God wants to know is: **Do you love Me?**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scripture References

- 1) Deuteronomy 6:5-6
- 2) Deuteronomy 5:7-10
- 3) 1 John 5:2
- 4) Deuteronomy 5:10
- 5) 1 John 5:3
- 6) Deuteronomy 7:6-9
- 7) John 14:5
- 8) Deuteronomy 7:9
- 9) Proverbs 3:1-12
- 10) Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19
- 11) Psalm 103:1-4, 8-18
- 12) Psalm 107:41-43
- 13) Malachi 1:1-10, 12-14
- 14) Malachi 2:1

- 15) Ezekiel 3:17-21
- 16) Ezekiel 16:8-15, 43-49
- 17) Ezekiel 33:11, 30-33
- 18) Amos 3:1-3
- 19) Amos 4:11-13
- 20) Amos 5:1-2, 10-15
- 21) Micah 6:3-8
- 22) Jeremiah 2:1-6, 8
- 23) Jeremiah 4:1-2
- 24) Jeremiah 5:1-2
- 25) Isaiah 43:1-5
- 26) Isaiah 55:6-11
- 27) Isaiah 56:1-2, 6
- 28) Isaiah 57:15
- 29) Isaiah 63:7-8
- 30) Psalm 63:1-5, 8
- 31) Jeremiah 32:39-41
- 32) Jeremiah 33:14-17
- 33) Isaiah 51:1-9
- 34) Zephaniah 3:17
- 35) Hosea 11:1
- 36) Hosea 14:4
- 37) Jeremiah 30:24
- 38) Jeremiah 31:1-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 12
- Exodus 20-24
- Jeremiah 2:7
- Matthew 13

Love of God in the Gospels

Fred R. Coulter

The title of this sermon is *The Love of God in the Gospels*—minus John 13 through 17, the reason being is because those five chapters are very, very important in relationship to the Passover and the covenant that we have with God, and those will require special, detailed study to understand the love of God and to understand what we need to know as far as the Passover is concerned.

Let's begin by coming to Matthew 24; here is a warning that is given to us concerning what the world is like. Many times what the world is like is also reflected in the Church. We've seen that this has really been a problem in a lot of the relationships with the congregations, with each other, with the ministers and teachers to the brethren, and the brethren back to the ministers and teachers. And with all the confusion that's going on today we can see that this certainly *has* happened and *is* happening.

Now let's come to Matthew 24:12: "And because [iniquity] lawlessness shall be multiplied... [‘iniquity’ comes from the Greek word ‘anomia’—which means *against law* or *lawlessness with the purpose in mind of knowing that there is law*, but *directly defying the laws and commandments of God.*] ...the love of many shall grow cold." *Sin kills love!* The ‘many’ here means the *majority*. It grows cold. Why?

When people commit themselves to another person—in an attitude of love, friendship and closeness—and *it is ruined by sin*, then the person who has been expressing love withdraws that love and is afraid to really commit in the kind of relationship that is truly loving. Then we have kind of an arms-length, distant, non-loving relationship which develops. This is exactly what we see in the entire world today. This is exactly what we have seen has been happening in the Churches of God.

Luke 11:37 becomes a very important thing for us to understand concerning the love of God in the Gospels. Here is what is happening with the ‘religious’ leaders. This has also happened with the ‘religious’ leaders within the Church of God.

Luke 11:37: "Now, while He was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him; and He went in *and* sat down. But the Pharisee, seeing *this*, wondered why He had not first washed before dinner" (vs 37-38). This was the ‘religious’ ceremony. The Jews were normally in the habit of asking a blessing before they started the hand-washing, then a blessing when they started the meal, and then when they came to certain courses of the

meal they would also ask blessings. They were very ‘religious’ and fastidious in what they did. Notice that Jesus was not interested in winning friends and influencing people for the sake of compromising love. The love of God requires all your effort, and we'll have to conclude that Jesus loved the Father, and that's one of the reasons why He did what He did.

But notice what He said to the Pharisee, Verse 39: "Then the Lord said to him, ‘Now, you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish... [Yes, everyone is interested in the outward appearance, the outward part of the cup and platter.] ...but inside you are full of greediness and wickedness.”

Love must come from the heart, and *if the heart has not been made right there is no love*. You cannot put on a façade out here by having things look good on the outside, even by having sort of a friendliness toward other people. That may not necessarily be true love at all. It may be just friendliness toward another person.

Jesus wanted to make sure that they understood what He was talking about, so He says, v 40: "Fools, *did* not He Who made the outside also make the inside?" *Yes, He did!* He created the outside *and* the inside! So, to clean the outside and not the inside is the big problem that a lot of people have. Remember the Psalm of David when he repented of the affair with Bathsheba? What did he say? ‘*You desire Truth in the inward parts.*’ and ‘*O God, create in me a clean heart.*’ That's what Jesus is telling them here, that they do not have a clean heart.

So, He says now, v 41: "Rather, give alms *from* the things that are within; and behold, all things are clean to you.... [In other words, don't be self-centered; don't be so picky; don't come in with a smile on your face and a battle-axe in your hand.] ...But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God...." (vs 41-42).

Now we're going to see that the love of God—as we have seen all through this series—is *the foundation of our relationship with God*. You cannot have a relationship with God without loving Him; *it's an impossibility!* You cannot have a formal, hands/arms-length relationship with God. He wants a close relationship with you with your heart. What happens when you get a lot of teachers, like the Pharisees, who didn't know the love of God? Didn't teach the love of God? Look what happens: *You end*

up with just all of the self-righteousness that they had and become hypocritical in it.

“...you pass over the judgment... [that is, true judgment, that is true, righteous judgment] ...and the love of God... [it’s important for us to understand that true, righteous judgment comes from the love of God] ...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things, and not to set aside those *lesser things*” (v 42). He’s saying, primarily, that you need to have done the judgment and the love of God, and not leave the other things undone either.

Verse 43: “Woe to you, Pharisees! For you love... [here’s the kind of love that they had]: ...For you love the chief seat in the synagogues and the salutations in the marketplaces.... [They had their hierarchy and they lifted themselves up—didn’t they?] ...Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...” (vs 43-44). Another word or another explanation of the word hypocrite is this: *sanctimonious pretenders*.

They can pretend on the outside, but what is it really like on the inside? That’s what Jesus is teaching here. It doesn’t matter what’s on the outside; God looks at the heart—doesn’t He? *Yes!* So, what is on the inside is the most important thing.

Verse 44: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are as unseen tombs... [Just like walking through a graveyard. In other words, covered over; you can’t see them; you’re walking on them] ...and men who walk over *them* do not know *it*.’ And one of the doctors of the law answered *and* said to Him, ‘Teacher, *by* saying these things You are also insulting us.’ And He said, ‘Woe to you also, doctors of the law!....’” (vs 44-46).

If you’re going to love God, one of the things that is going to happen, you’re going to be like Jesus Christ. You’re going to see things in their true perspective. They didn’t have the love of God, and they were deliberately going against God. Jesus Christ was straightforward toward them, and as we say in today’s parlance, called a spade *a spade*. So, the lawyer said, ‘Now look, You’re offending us.’

Verse 46: “And He said, “Woe to you also, doctors of the law! For you weigh men down *with* burdens heavy to bear... [they make decisions and say you have to carry this out] ...but you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.” You wouldn’t think of doing that to yourselves, but you think of doing it to other people in your judgments.

Verse 47: “Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, whom your fathers killed. Therefore, you are bearing witness and consenting to the **works** of your fathers... [‘*deeds* of your fathers,’

the ones who killed the prophets.] ...for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs” (vs 47–48). ‘My, let’s have a tomb to this wonderful prophet.’ Then what you do, you change the whole thing. Now it becomes a monument that you use, that you control, that you make part of your own manipulation of the people in a status quo for your own hierarchy.

Verse 48: “Therefore, you are bearing witness and consenting to the works of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. Because of this, the wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send prophets and apostles to them; and *some* of them they shall kill, and *others they shall* drive out” (vs 48-49). If you’re truly going to love God, you’re walking into the enemy’s camp, and this is what they’re going to do to you. He says the reason that He was bringing this judgment upon them and being so straightforward and specific about it is because:

Verse 50: ““So that the blood of all the prophets, poured out from *the* foundation of *the* world, may be required of this generation From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the house *of God*.’ Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation” (vs 50-51). Why? Because they said, ‘**We** know.’ Because they said, ‘**We** are doing the will of God,’ and they weren’t doing it.

Verse 52: “ ‘Woe to you, doctors of the law! For you have taken away the key of knowledge...” When you make so many rules and regulations and minutia of things to do and not do, then you lose the key of knowledge. Why did God give the knowledge in the first place? And also, as it says in Matt. 23—which is a similar, parallel account—they also take away the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not only the key of knowledge, but the key of the knowledge of salvation.

“...you yourselves did not enter, and you prevented those who were entering.” (vs 48-52). You won’t let them get away with doing the things that God really wants. You want them to do your thing. You want them to be corralled in your own little fence-work here, and make sure that you have dos and don’ts and this and that so that they are controlled. Understand something very important: ***God does not want anyone to control anyone else’s free moral agency.***

In rearing children, that’s a little bit different case. But when they get older, guess what happens when they see they have their free moral agency? Then what happens? *One of the first things they do to their parents is say*, ‘Don’t tell me what to do anymore.’ The whole thing that God wants, He

wants your free choice, your free moral agency to love Him. Not build up this kind of thing that we see here, where they stop off the free moral agency, where they stop off the love of God. And this has been too big of a problem within the Churches of God.

Verse 53: “And as He was saying these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began vehemently to press and provoke Him to speak about many things... [They wanted Him to keep talking so they could try and catch Him in His words, and then have Him arrested and exterminated. Why? *Because* He wasn't fitting into their little box.] ...while they kept a close watch on Him, seeking to catch something out of His mouth so that they might accuse Him” (vs 53-54).

This flows right into it, Luke 12:1: “During this *time*, an innumerable multitude was gathering... [While all this discussion was going on, many people were coming in and gathering around. They were seeing what was this debate that was going on.] ...*crowding* so *close* together that they were stepping on one another. First of all He began to speak to His disciples, *saying*, “Guard yourselves from the leaven of the Pharisees, **which is hypocrisy.**”

That is the opposite of love. Hypocrisy is not only *sanctimonious pretending*, it is that *you have your own agenda on the inside* that you keep secret to yourself, your own sin. You put a façade out here on the front to make yourself look righteous. We have seen that, but this is, in particular, a great sin among the leaders: the Pharisees, the scribes, and also the ministers in the Churches of God today.

Here is a guarantee that Jesus said: you're not going to mock the love of God; you're not going to get away with these things, v 2: “For there is nothing covered that shall not be uncovered, nor hidden that shall not be known.” God is going to make it known. There are ministers who are great hypocrites, who are trying to hide their own sins and their own sexual immoralities today, and deny it in the face of great evidence, contrary to their denial. ***It's going to be known. That's part of the exposing of the love of God!*** You cannot truly enter into a relationship with someone unless you know what's in their heart. That's why the love of God is so important. That's why He is bringing this out in relationship to their lack of love and how the love of many grows cold.

Verse 3: “Therefore, whatever you have spoken in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what you have spoken in the ear in closed rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.” Now we're

living in an age, a time, when that is so and it's going to be. Just no way around it.

Let's see what Jesus said concerning them. Jesus is talking again to the religious leaders. Jesus is telling them exactly what they need to know. When you're confronted with someone who has hatred toward God as they did, who rejects God as they did, yet, at the same time claiming ‘we are God's representatives’—notice what He says:

John 5:36: “But I have a greater witness than John's...” They didn't go to John that they might be baptized and they might be saved. Remember what John said when the scribes and Pharisees came? He said: ‘You hypocrites and vipers and snakes in the grass! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, repent, and bring forth fruits of repentance.’

He says: “But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me that the Father has sent Me.... [they couldn't miss this message] ...And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me.... [that is, by the works and by the healings and by the miracles which were done.] ...**You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time**” (vs 36-37).

This is talking to the Pharisees. This is very important for us to understand. Mystic Judaism had that if you go through the various layers of the scribes and Pharisees and Essenes and Theraputae, that in this mystic religion you would rise to a certain point and you would see the light of God. You would see God and you would hear His voice. Jesus is going right to the heart of the mystic religion of Judaism by saying:

Verse 37: “You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. And you do not have His Word... [the Word of God] ...dwelling in you...” If you have the Word of God living in you, then you're going to have the love of God because the two go hand-in-hand. God is love, and if you have the Word of God abiding in you, being written in your heart, mind, soul and being, then you're going to have the love of God.

Because of that, He says: “...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent.... [that is, the Father sent Christ] ...You search the Scriptures... [He's telling them, ‘Go look in the Scriptures’] ...for in them you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me.... [All of the Prophets, the Law and the Palms testified of Him—did it not? When He says, ‘Search the Scriptures,’ He means the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.] ...But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you

may have life. I do not receive glory from men; but I have known you. I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.... [it's not within] ...I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; *but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him" (vs 38-43).

Yes, because they come around with all the flattery and backslapping and all of the pseudo-sanctimonious, pretending, exterior love that people have. No, you don't have the love of God in you.

Verse 44: "How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God?" That's what needs to be, brethren. That's why the Apostle Paul did many of the things that he did, and said many of the things that he said, and wrote the things that he wrote. He was not concerned with honor from men. He even said that, 'If I please men, I should not be the servant of God.' When this is carried in relationship to the Church, in relationship to the world, and people go back into the world for their approval and the honor of those in the world, they are not seeking the honor that comes from God.

Verse 45: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is *one* who accuses you, *even* Moses, in whom you have [trust] hope." They really didn't trust in Moses. It's like everything else, they take a name and use it, and keep repeating it and magnifying it.

However, what they were doing is teaching their own doctrines. We've seen that happen—haven't we? Haven't we heard the names of various men touted? I remember one time I was listening to a sermon, and this man was preaching. He mentioned this 'great' evangelist over and over again. He mentioned his name—I forget how many times, but it was well over 60 times that he mentioned the name of the man—and he mentioned Christ eight times. Whose honor was he seeking? *Well that's very self-evident.* The same way here with the scribes and Pharisees.

Verse 46: "But if you believed Moses, you would have believed Me; for he wrote about Me. And if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?" (vs 46-47). It's an impossibility!

Let's see how the Father loved Christ, and Christ loved the Father. If we have Christ in us, what are we going to do? We are going to love Christ and we are going to love God the Father—are we not? *Yes we are!* Then we're going to see that we're going to love each other.

This is John the Baptist who's talking and they wanted to know, 'How come Jesus is doing more baptizing than you?' And he said, John 3:30:

"It is ordained that He increase and that I decrease He Who comes from above is above all... [Christ is above all] ...The one who is of the earth is earthy... [You think of that in relationship to trying to give yourself eternal life. None has done it yet, have they? *No!* You are of the earth.] ...and speaks of the earth... [carnal-minded, thinks of things of the flesh only] ...He Who comes from heaven is above all; And what He has seen and heard, this *is what* He testifies; but no one receives His testimony.... [because He doesn't need it] ...The one who has received His testimony... [that is, the testimony of Jesus Christ] ...has set his seal that God is true" (vs 30-33). That is, you *affirm* and *know* and have *sealed* in your own heart and mind *that God is true.*

Verse 34: "For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God... [That's referring to Jesus Christ. We're going to see that's what He spoke. He didn't speak anything else. He didn't speak His own ideas, He didn't do His own thing; He never did anything that was not pleasing to the Father. Why? *Because He loved the Father and the Father loved Him!*] ...and God gives not the Spirit by measure *unto Him* [Christ]."

Verse 36: "The one who believes in the Son has everlasting life; but the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him."

So, we have this clear-cut: *you either love God or you don't!* You can't have it halfway in between, because that's part of the earth—that's earthy. Earthiness means *you go to God and tell Him that you love Him, but all the while all you want are the blessings,* and you're not willing to suffer the hard times and the difficult times, and you don't want to have any persecution. As a matter of fact, if those things come, then those who don't have the love of God get mad at God, get angry at God: 'God, how could you allow this to happen?' Well that's not the attitude that Christ wants us to have.

Verse 35: "The Father loves the Son... [*an ongoing love,* and it has to be the same way with us. If we're going to receive the ongoing love of the Father just like He is loving the Son.] ...and has given all things into His hand." That's why you have to believe on Him, because He gave Jesus Christ. Everything They did was done in love. There was not one thing that They did not do in love.

John 10:14: "I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine"—*continuous knowing; continuous relationship, continuous ongoing* receiving of God's Spirit.

That's why if you're going to love God you're going to be motivated from the inside. Those religious leaders who do not love God have to

motivate people from the outside, and have to put fences around them, and controls around them, and has to try and restrict the free moral agency of the people because the people are carnal, and the leaders are carnal, and they are not internalizing the love of God.

Verse 15: “Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.... [He did it because He loved them.] ...And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring those also, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock *and* one Shepherd. On account of this, **the Father loves Me**... [Why? *Because Christ was willingly laying down His life!*] ...because I lay down My life, that I may receive it back again (vs 14-17). That’s why the Father loves Him. Tremendous! Absolutely tremendous!

Notice how much we’re in John here to start with, because this gives us a good foundation. Again, we find something very important. Again, we see the great contrast between Christ and the way He is, the way He was when He was in the flesh, and the way those ‘religious’ leaders were then at that point, and the way ‘religious’ leaders are today. Let’s remember a great and profound spiritual lesson: ***you cannot accomplish spiritual things by physical means!*** You never can. That’s why all this fence-building, that’s why all this restricting, that’s why all these things to corral and hold down do not work; it’s all artificial.

John 8:23: “And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above... [He’s saying exactly what John was saying.] ...You are of this world; I am not of this world.’” We cannot be of the world either, brethren, in the same way that the world is with the world. It’s an impossibility! You can’t be double-minded.

Verse 24: “That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM...” They knew what ‘I AM’ means. They knew that that went back to Exo. 3 where Moses said, ‘Who shall I say has sent me?’ And He said, ‘Tell them I AM THAT I AM has sent you.’ So, when He said that, *they knew*.

If you don’t believe that “...you shall die in your sins.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Who are You?’.... [because they knew what ‘I AM’ meant] ...And Jesus said to them, ‘The one that I said to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him...’ (vs 24-26).

Why did Christ only speak the things that He heard of the Father? *Because He loved the Father, and the Father loved Him!* The only way

that God’s plan is really going to come to its fullness is for all of us to grow in this love and to love God, and to fulfill it with the same kind of love that God the Father and Jesus Christ had for each other.

Of course, that can only come from God. You can’t work that up within yourself; you don’t have it. It has to be the gift of God. That’s why the fruit of the Spirit, as Paul says, is first love, and then joy and peace and all the rest of them.

“...these things I speak to the world.’ *But* they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of man... [They knew that was crucifixion. He was telling them ahead of time, ‘When you have crucified Me.’] ...then you yourselves shall know that I AM...” (vs 26-28). All the events that took place at the Passover proved that He was God in the flesh, the Son of God the Father.

“...and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak” (v 28). I think that all teachers better read that and understand that you speak the things of God. To teach the brethren of God is a great responsibility which God the Father has given. So we had better be about preaching and teaching the words of God the Father and Jesus Christ. Those are the only words of love that are going to up-build the brethren. When we do that the brethren will be built up, and God will build us up, and we will build up the brethren, and all of us together will be built up in Christ. That’s how God wants it, speaking the words of the Father.

Verse 29: “And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because **I always do the things that please Him.**” This becomes a very important thing for us to understand concerning the love of God.

Let’s look at it this way: if you ***truly*** love someone with all of your fiber, being and passion, are you not going to do everything that you can to please that person? *Yes you will!* What did God the Father say when they were on the Mount of Transfiguration and the cloud came, and they saw Jesus transfigured and glorified, with Moses on one hand and Elijah on the other hand? What was it that the voice said? *He said, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.’* So likewise, brethren, if we have the love of God we’re going to do the things that are well-pleasing to Him, without a doubt. There can be no doubt.

It doesn’t matter what your circumstances are around you, because love is not bounded by circumstances. Love is not restricted by circumstances. Love is spiritual and comes from the Father to you and back to the Father, from Christ to you, and back to Christ, in an ongoing relationship.

Again, we're going to see this love that the Father had for Jesus Christ, and the love that Christ had for the Father. That's another reason why Christ did not sin, even though He had the capacity to sin, because **He did it through love**. That's a great key for us to understand in overcoming. Your overcoming is going to be a whole lot lighter load if you're loving God, because then you're going to understand, and He will lift these things from you.

After they came after Jesus to accuse Him of doing the things on the Sabbath of healing this man and telling the man to 'take up your bed roll and walk,' and they said, 'He broke the Sabbath.' No such thing. Anyone who turns here and says, 'This shows that Jesus broke the Sabbath; therefore, the Sabbath is no longer binding,' is completely screwy in the head and does not understand the Truth of the Scriptures, and that is a satanic, carnal-minded argument against the Sabbath.

John 5:16: "And for this cause, the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him... [If you seek to kill someone, you don't have the love of God—do you? Just like Jesus said, 'I know you. You don't have the love of God in your heart.'] ...because He had done these things on a Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I work'" (vs 16-17).

What do we do on the Sabbath? *We do spiritual work!* We do those things which uplift, teach, help, and release from bondage, from sin. That's why Christ came in the first place, and they didn't understand it.

Verse 18: "So then, on account of this *saying*, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, not only because He had loosed the Sabbath..." No, He didn't break the Sabbath. This word in the Greek comes from the word 'luo'—which means *to loose*. He loosed the Sabbath from their silly, restrictive requirements. He didn't destroy the Sabbath. He didn't break the Sabbath because He didn't sin; and Jesus would command no man to sin.

Not only did they think He had broken the Sabbath "...but also *because* He had called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself...' (vs 18-19). That means He didn't originate out anything from within His own human nature, which He had.

"...but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner.... [Why did He have this kind of behavior? Why could He say that that's what He did?] ...For the Father loves the Son... [We've seen that the Son is loving the Father, and the Father is

loving the Son. That's why They had this relationship.] ...and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder" (vs 19-20).

This was a tremendous thing, this love that God the Father and Jesus Christ had for each other. Therefore, even though Christ came to the world and He was utterly alone—which He truly was when you understand it, because even the disciples didn't believe on Him, and some didn't even believe after the resurrection—that's how He was able to function alone, because He loved the Father, and He knew the Father loved Him. With the fullness of the Spirit of God *in* Him it was continuously an ongoing thing between Them.

Now let's go to Luke 4, and let's see how love, in action with Christ, worked even under the temptation of Satan the devil—because this is so important. How do you react when things come upon you? If you're loving God you're going to be able to, but I'm going to tell you something that's very true:

- if you are not praying to God and if you are not studying His Word
- if you are not drinking in of His Holy Spirit
- if you're not going to the Father and Jesus Christ and asking Them to give you Their love that you may love back to Them
- that you may also love the brethren

you're going to be very penurious indeed in your love. You may even end up just like the Pharisees, as Jesus said, 'I know you, that you don't have the love of God in you.' I have met those in the Church of God that way. I have met those ministers and those brethren who are that way. If you truly have the love of God in you, here's how you're going to act in circumstances when tribulation and trial come upon you.

Luke 4:1: "And Jesus, filled with *the* Holy Spirit..." If He's full of the Holy Spirit, He's full of the power of God, He's full of the love of God, He's full the faith of God, He has the determination of God—does He not? *Yes!*

"...and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (v 1). In the wilderness, that's where, if you recall, on the day of Atonement *Azazel* is sent—correct? He represents Satan the devil. That's why it's no strange thing that He went out in the desert to meet Satan the devil.

Verse 2: "*For* forty days to be tempted by the devil.... [**Every day, tempted!**] ...And He ate nothing in those days..." Apparently He didn't drink

anything either, because if He was going to be greater than Moses, Moses stood before God and received the Law and the statutes and the judgments, and he didn't eat or he didn't drink. I don't believe that Jesus did.

There was a time when I thought maybe Jesus even drank some water. But I would have to say, knowing the Scriptures a little more than I did back then, I would have to conclude that Jesus didn't drink any water.

"...and after they had come to an end, He hungered... [here's part of the trial that He went through during the 40 days] ...Then the devil said to Him, 'If You... [this is a challenge to God] ...are *the* Son of God, command that this stone become bread.' But Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written...'" (vs 2-4).

We're going to see all the way through it's very profound. Even *Jesus lived by the words which He inspired* in the Old Testament, as well as living by the words and the teachings that God the Father was giving Him for the New Covenant. So, we have both of them together—don't we?

"... 'It is written... [going right to the Scriptures of God. If you love God you're going to go to the Scriptures to know and find out what you need to do—correct? *Yes!*] ... 'Man... [because Christ was in the flesh, so He's talking of those who are in the flesh] ...shall not live by bread alone... [not by food alone] ...but by every Word of God'" (v 4)—and Matthew adds: 'that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' Because what you have here in the Scriptures is the very words that came out of the mouth of God, which are written down for us, which Jesus said, 'These are spirit, and these are life.'

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Jesus had this love for God the Father and the Father loving Him, He was able to overcome the intense temptations that Satan the devil brought against Jesus Christ. That's the same way with us, brethren. We are going to come to some of the most intense times that this world has ever seen. And the only way we're going to be able to survive and go through them and be faithful to God is to love Him.

Verse 5: "Then the devil led Him up into a high mountain *and* showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this authority, and the glory of them *all*; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I desire'" (vs 5-6).

There's always a catch. Whenever you do the devil's bidding you must worship him. Just remember that is what has happened with the apostasy within the Churches of God. How many

years ago did we say when you start compromising with the devil just a little bit he's going to come back and you're going to compromise a little bit more. He is not going to be through with you until you worship him and deny God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 7: "Therefore, if You will worship me in *my* presence... [Just a simple little thing! Save all the pain. But it's not a simple little thing. It's life or death—eternal life or eternal death.] ...all things shall be Yours.' But Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Get behind Me, Satan; for it is written, "You... [that is as a human being] ...shall worship *the* Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'" (vs 7-8). Now keep this in mind. Even the Apostle Paul said, 'You cannot serve God and your belly.' Didn't He say that? *Yes!*

Verse 9: "Then he led Him to Jerusalem and set Him upon the edge of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here; For it is written... [so even Satan can come back with Scripture] ... "He shall give His angels charge concerning You to keep You'" (vs 9-10). This is something that is true. There can be people come in and ministers come in and quote Scripture correctly but misapply it because they are applying it to circumstances which do not apply. Yes, the angels will keep you, but not if you deliberately leap because you're tempting God.

Verse 11: "..."And in *their* hands they shall bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" But Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'It is *clearly* stated, "You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God.'" Now when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from Him for a time" (vs 11-13). Left Him alone for a little while.

Now let's look and see that Jesus Christ requires the same thing of us. Jesus requires the same response from us to Him and God the Father in relationship to everything else that there is in this world: to Satan the devil, to the principalities, to the powers that operate in high places, the wickedness of this world, in relationship to our own flesh and blood.

Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother..." This means to love God far more in comparison to, but your love for God is so great, that if your mother and father come to you and say, 'If you love me you will do this' and if this that they are asking is sin to do you will have to say, 'I can't do it.' And they say, 'If you don't do it, you don't love me.' So be it. That's the way it has to be.

"...and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also... [that

you're not going to give in to temptation and sin just to save your own skin] ...he cannot be My disciple.... [there's no power to make you His disciple] ...And whoever does not carry his cross... [You're going to have a cross to bear, I'm going to have a cross to bear, whatever it may be. It can be family. It can be health. It can be other people. It can be a job. It can be whatever the cross is you have to bear] ...and come after Me..." (vs 26-27).

Christ is not going to keep coming after you. The sheep follow the shepherd. Yes, the shepherd will go after the one that is lost. But you're not going to be lost if you're always following the Shepherd—right? If you're coming after Christ then you will make it. You have to bear your cross and come after Him.

If not, you "...cannot be My disciple; For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for its completion" (vs 27-28). Then He gives examples concerning that, the building of a house, the going to war.

Verse 33: "In the same way also... [exactly in the same manner] ...each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple." In other words, He's saying, 'If you want salvation there is **nothing** in this world"—be it a person, be it a thing, be it a spirit, be it an idea, whatever. If you are loving God, these things you will do just as Jesus Christ did. That's why love is so powerful. That's why it's so important. That's what Jesus is teaching here through all of this.

Now we're going to see just a little bit different rendition of the same thing that He talked about, only this time couched in just a little bit different terms.

Matthew 10:37: "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me..." Why? *Because Christ came in loving this world with the love of the Father*, and when He was here He was loving the Father and the Father was loving Him, and He bore in His flesh our sins, and He was the perfect sacrifice, and so you have to love Him **more** than anything else. Here's something else you need to consider: if you love father or mother more than Christ you're loving the created more than the Creator—is that not true? *Yes it is!*

"...And the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it... [This is happening to one of the largest Churches of God we know of. And it's also happening to another Church of God because the leader did not love God. He loved his own carnal

ways.] ...The one who has found his life... [in this world] ...shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it" (vs 37-39). That's what you have to do. You have to lose your life in love for God the Father and Jesus Christ and you will find life; yes, and you will find eternal life.

How important is this love of God back toward Jesus Christ in relationship to salvation? *It is the whole key important thing of salvation!* Notice what Paul says here:

1-Corinthians 16:22 "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ... [Think on this, because this is a pretty strong saying] ...let him be accursed."—"anathema maran-atha"—that is, *double-cursed*. How important is the love of God? You can't receive salvation without it. That's how important it is.

Now let's come back to Matthew 5 and let's see what love is also going to motivate you to do. In Matthew 5, 6, and 7 we have the Sermon on the Mount where He's giving all of the beatitudes, all the blessings that come. These beatitudes only can come about because you love God. These are some of the experiences that you are going to go through if you're loving God.

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Why? *Because you love God!*

Verse 4: "Blessed *are* they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Why? *Because you love God*, and you mourn and sigh and cry for all the sins and terrible things in the world around about you.

Verse 5: "Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Why are they meek? *Because you love God!* When you love God you understand that ***you have nothing you didn't receive!*** You don't have some great big image to portray; you don't have something you have to live up to. If you love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, that's what you have to live up to. God will bless you.

Verse 6: "Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Do you not know that if you truly love God the Father and Jesus Christ, what are you going to be doing? *Hungering and thirsting after righteousness—Their righteousness!*

You're going to hunger and thirst to know the Word of God; to know even the great and the deep and marvelous things of God. And Jesus said, 'you shall be filled.' Tremendous promise—isn't it? So it's not by might, it's not by power, but *it's by the love of God* through the Spirit of God. It's not because you're smart; it's not because you're intellectual; it's not because you've been educated to know this, that and the other thing. You have to

totally lose your life in Christ in order to love Him. Then He will fill you with righteousness.

Verse 7: “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy.” if you love God and know the mercy you receive, then you will be merciful to others.

Verse 8: “Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” You could have a pure heart if you love God. All of these beatitudes are based upon the love of God. *Every single one of them.*

Verse 9-10: “Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God. Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Why? *Because the love of God resides upon you if you are persecuted for true loving God and true righteousness.*

Verse 11: “Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute *you*, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake.” Why? *Because you’re loving God!*

Verse 12: “Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great *is* your reward in heaven: for sin this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you.” Then He goes and shows that the Law was not done away; He came to fulfill and add and bring to.

Then He gives us something that is very, *very difficult to do.* He gives us the hardest challenge of love that there is.

Verse 43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” That’s the way too many people’s love is. They live over here in this town and they hate them over here in this town. They live up on top of this mountain, the Hatfield’s, and they have the McCoy’s over here, and they hate and kill each other. Oh, they love each other, but they hate and kill each other.

Now Jesus is saying ‘This kind of love is no longer going to stand.’ Because Christ, Who died for the world because He loved the world, and He’s going to eventually bring salvation to them because He loves them, how can you have it in your heart that you truly hate someone? You can hate their deeds if they are truly evil. Get away from them. Don’t be around them. Obviously, do not do that. You can love them from a distance, by being away from them and not getting into them. But if the situation is this, Paul said, ‘If your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink. For in doing that you’re going to be heaping coals of fire upon him.’ So, if it comes right down to it, if your enemy is totally down and out, then love him in that manner.

But Jesus said, v 44: “But I say to you, love your enemies...” This is tough. There are enemies within the Church—those that should not be enemies. Part of the problem we’re up against in trying to sort everything out that we’ve been through with all the Churches of God is how do we bring brethren back together and let their wounds be healed when they maybe at one time were enemies but now God has called them to be brethren again?

You need to think on how you can start resolving those things. You don’t resolve them by shooting your brother dead. You don’t resolve them by continuing to have hatred in your heart toward them. Especially if God says this:

Verse 44: “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you...” Jesus Christ lived by this—did He not? *Yes, He did!* You go back and see the whole history of His arrest and crucifixion, right down to the very last words, ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ If those were not His enemies, I do not know what enemies are.

“...and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you.” (v 44). How can you do that? *You pray and ask God to give you grace and favor in their eyes. You pray and ask God to put the right thoughts into their mind!*

You can’t correct them. You can’t go tell them what to do because you have no control over them. But God does—does He not? *So you pray for them!* You ask God to change *their* mind if it’s possible. This is especially true in a marriage situation. This is especially true in a brother-to-brother situation within the Church. We’re bringing brethren together who have left at different times because of different reasons, and maybe went to this Church of God for a while and found that that really wasn’t right, and went to another Church of God for a while and found that that wasn’t right. In both of these Churches of God they hated each other, and God isn’t going to have that either. So, if that’s the case, drop all of this falseness and stupidity and really love one another as Christ wants you to.

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven...” That’s profound—*isn’t it?* You want to be the children of God? You want to be the children of the Father? *That’s what He says to do then!*

“...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and on *the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and on *the* unjust. For **if you love those who love you...**” (vs 45-46). That’s so easy to do. You just get your comfortable little niche and clique of friends and you love each other, and you leave out those who are neglected, and you leave out those that you don’t

love in the same way, and you leave out the widows and you leave out those that don't fit into your clique.

Brethren, did that not happen in the Churches of God? *Yes, it did!* Can we not put all of that aside now? Can we not let the love of God come into us, let it flow into us, let Christ be in us so that we can do that and be the children of God? If you love only those that love you, what have you done that's extraordinary? *Nothing!* Too much of the hospitality that people have is a pseudo-hospitality, to where they love people only on their terms. If you don't come to their terms, they hate you.

"...what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? [Yes!] Therefore, you shall be **perfect...**" (vs 46-48).

- perfect in love
- perfect in faith
- perfect in hope
- perfect with the Spirit of God in you

And if you're living under the grace of God, yes, that perfection will be imputed to you. Sure will! "...even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect" (v 48). That's the highest standard we could ever want—isn't it?

Let's understand something else that Jesus said in Matthew 6:22, a very important thing we need to understand: "The light of the body is the eye.... [Profound, basic statement. If you have the love of God in you, the light of life in you.] ...Therefore, if your eye be sound..."

- single in purpose
- single in hope
- single in love
- single toward Jesus Christ and God the Father

"...your whole body shall be *full of* light. But if your eye be evil..." (vs 22-23). I've seen people who have evil eyes; yes, I have. Some of the most deceitful eyes in men I have ever seen are now leaders of Churches of God. May that come to an end, please.

"...your whole body shall be *full of* darkness. Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, **how great is that darkness!**.... [There's no hope of recovery from that.] (Here's an impossible thing you cannot do): ...**No one is able to serve two masters...** [You cannot serve God and serve the world.] ...for either he will hate the one and love the other..." (vs 23-24).

If you're rejecting God the Father and Jesus Christ and going back into the world, guess who you are going to end up hating?

- You're going to end up hating God.
- You're going to end up accusing God.
- You're going to end up loving the world and saying of the world, 'My, what lovely, wonderful things you have in Christmas, and in Easter, and all of these things.'
- You're going to end up hating God so much that you're even going to say that the commandments have no effect today.
- *That's hating God!*

So you can't split your mind. It won't work. "...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (v 24).

- You cannot serve God and the world!
- You cannot serve God and money!
- ***You're to serve God with all your heart, mind, soul and being with the love of God in you!***

Now let's come to Luke 7, and let's see that:

- love takes action
- love requires repentance
- love brings about an attitude that is the opposite of self-exultation.

You can read about some of the other things in the chapter leading up to this Luke 7:36: "Now, one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with him.... [apparently Jesus was invited out to eat quite a bit] ...And after going into the Pharisee's house, He sat down *at the table*. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner..." (vs 36-37). Those who are truly, truly sinners and live with their ugliness and their sin and they're convicted in heart, they know they're sinners. They're not trying to fool anyone.

Look what she did: "...when she knew that He was sitting in the Pharisee's house, took an alabaster flask of ointment; And she stood weeping behind Him, *and knelt* at His feet, *and* began to wash His feet with *her* tears and to wipe *them* with the hairs of her head; and she was ardently kissing His feet and anointing *them* with the ointment" (vs 37-38). Can you imagine the spectacle that this was to all these hooty-snooty Pharisees sitting around? Woo-oooh my, this was bad news!

Verse 39: "But when he saw *this*, the Pharisee who had invited Him spoke within himself, saying..." You always do that—don't you? You always judge someone in your heart. When you don't have the love of God in you, you always judge someone and impute motives—don't you? *Yes, you*

do! Do you do that to people? *You better have the love of God and get that out of you!* You don't know their heart. The most unloving thing you can ever do and say is this, that you know exactly what someone else is thinking. You don't know what they're thinking! Are you a mind-reader? *No!* You can guess. Many times wives guess pretty close because they've lived with their husbands a long time. But still, they cause no end of grief by saying, 'I know.' *You can't know!* You don't know what's in a person's heart, mind and soul.

Here's what the Pharisee is saying: "... 'This man, if He were a prophet... [so He's not] ...would have known who and what the woman *is* who is touching Him because she is a sinner.'.... [He ought to know better] ...Then Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.'.... [in his sanctimonious pretending] ...And he said, 'Teacher, say *on.*' 'There were two debtors of a certain creditor; one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. But when they did not have *anything with which* to pay him, he forgave *them* both. Tell *Me* then, which of them will love him most?' And Simon answered *and* said, 'I suppose *the one* whom he forgave the most.' And He said to him, 'You have judged rightly'" (vs 39-43) He did this to trap him, to convict him out of his own hypocritical mouth.

Verse 44: "And after turning to the woman, He said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I came into your house, and you did not provide *any* water to wash My feet; but she has washed My feet with *her* tears and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from the *time* I came in, has not ceased to ardently kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil; but she has anointed My feet with ointment. For this cause, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven because she loved much....'" (v 44-47).

- love requires repentance
- love requires action
- love requires a whole-hearted devotion like this

When you truly come to understand the love of God, this is how you're going to feel toward God the Father and Jesus Christ.

"...But to whom little is forgiven, he loves little.'" (v 47). Oh, have we not seen this in action? All the sanctimonious pretenders and hypocrites, they love little, but

- they want the rank
- they want the authority
- they want the office
- they want the praise

- *But they don't love much!*

Verse 48: "And He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' Then those who were sitting with *Him* began to say within themselves, 'Who is this, Who even forgives sins?' But He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace'" (48-50). Now may it be that way with us, brethren. Let our faith and let our love save us.

- may we come in peace
- may we go in peace
- may we put aside all of this that goes against the love of God

Now let's see something else. Let's see how Jesus told the Pharisees—this is quite profound—after they went through the whole argument, John 8:42: "Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would have loved Me... [If you love the Father and He is your God, you're going to love Jesus Christ.] ...because I proceeded forth and came from God. For I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me.'" Why didn't they love Him? *Because their god was Satan the devil!*

We're going to cover three places here which are very important for us to understand, very important for us to realize. There are three versions of this same thing, so I want to cover them all because this is important.

Luke 10:25 "Now, a certain doctor of the law suddenly stood up... [This is one who knew the Law. Of course, lawyers are going to ask picky questions—right?] ...tempting Him and saying, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And He said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read *it*?'.... [many times you have to answer a question with a question] ...Then he answered *and* said... [the lawyer answered]: ...'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself'" (vs 25-27).

This is the whole basis, brethren, of our entire relationship with God. As we have covered before, love is the greatest. There is faith, there is hope, there is love, but *love is the greatest*. Paul says the way of love is the most excellent way. Some people want to speak in tongues. Some people want to be important. Some people want to be teachers. Some want to be recognized. But if you don't have the love of God none of it is going to work, and here's how you've got to love God: with all your heart—a total commitment—with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind. You don't reserve a little corner of your mind over here for yourself. It all belongs to God.

Verse 28: “And He said to him, ‘You have answered correctly. Do this, and you shall live.’.... [he’s willing to justify himself, because a lawyer always wants to bring a picky question] ...But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” (vs 28-29).

So then, we have the parable of the man who was robbed and left by the wayside. A Levite came by and looked at him and said, ‘Oh, I better not get involved with this.’ A priest came by and passed clear to the other side: ‘I’m on my way to do righteous, important work at the Temple, and I better not be defiled with blood.’ Here comes a Samaritan—if there was any hated person of the Jews, it’s the Samaritan—came over, picked up the man, took care of his wounds, put him at the inn, put wine and olive oil in his wounds and told the master of the inn, ‘you take care of him, make sure he’s well, and on my way back I’ll pay for it when I come.’ So, your neighbor is whoever is your neighbor. That’s the whole story of it.

Here’s another different version. Maybe a little bit different time, a different time setting. But it was always one of the scribes or Pharisees who was doing it. They wanted Him to say that something else was the primary commandment.

Mark 12:28 “And one of the scribes who had come up to Him, after hearing them reasoning together and perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’.... [The ‘first’ here in the Greek is ‘protos’—or the *primary commandment*; the *most important commandment* of all.] ...Then Jesus answered him... [Here Jesus is giving the answer instead of having the scribe give the answer]: ...‘The first of all the commandments is, “Hear, O Israel. Our one God is the Lord, the Lord.... [that means one in essence, not in number] ...And you shall love the Lord your God **with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.**”....’” (vs 28-30).

This is the foundation in the Gospel that we need to have so when we get into the Epistles of Paul, when we get into the General Epistles, then we will be able to build on that. This is the beginning, foundational thing that we need to have: *loving God this way*. This is what we *always* need to keep in mind. If you do this, are you going to serve yourself? *No!* You’re going to take care of yourself because you love your neighbor as yourself, that is true.

- Are you going to have your mind focused on yourself?
- Are you going to have your own little pity-parties all the time for all the silly

little things that you do?

or

- Other people have done to you?
- Are you going to be mad and angry and hold your anger forever?

or

- Are you going to love God?

Let that be the whole thrust of every thought that you have.

“...This *is the* first commandment. And *the* second *is* like this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’ Then the scribe said to Him, ‘Right, Master. You have spoken according to Truth... [Well, isn’t that profound, coming from a scribe?] ...that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one’s* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, ‘You are not far from the Kingdom of God’” (vs 30-34).

Brethren, let’s ask ourselves: How close or how far are we from the Kingdom of God because we’re not doing this? *This is what Jesus said we need to do to inherit eternal life*—correct? When it says ‘more than all burnt offerings,’ that means *any physical thing that can be done!* Take all the animals and all the offerings that were done under the Old Testament, they do not count for one minute of loving God. You take all the dos and don’ts that men put down to judge you and corral you and bring you into a hypocritical, pseudo-Christianity; that is a sacrifice of a physical thing. You are to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That’s how it has to be.

Now let’s see the version in Matthew, because here again He adds a little bit of something in addition to what we’ve already heard. Matthew 22:34: “But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before Him*.... [‘Now how are we gonna get this guy? Well, let’s see if we can trip Him up on a question here.’] ...And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned Him, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master, which commandment *is the great* commandment in the Law?’” (vs 34-36)—‘megalos’ in this case; not ‘protos’ but ‘megalos’—not just the *primary*, but the *great, over-arching commandment* in the law.

Verse 37: “And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’.... [complete whole-heartedness to God] ...This is the first and great commandment.... [this is ‘protos’ and

‘megalos’] ...And *the second one is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’... [Lest there be any doubt, that if you’re going to love God you do away with the commandments of God. **Never, never happen!** Notice what Jesus said]: ...**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**” (vs 37-40).

So, you have loving God and your neighbor, and then on this, from this, hanging down, proceeding from; loving God and loving your neighbor is the great foundation. The rest of it proceeds from you cannot have Law and Prophets and expect to come to love. **You must have love**, and *then you come to the Law and the Prophets*. Jesus said ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ He didn’t say, ‘Keep My commandments, and therefore, you will have love.’ **NO!** He said, ‘If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.’ That’s very important for us to realize, brethren.

When we come to the love of God in the Gospels, what we find here is this great foundation of the primary and great commandment of loving God, the ‘protos’ and the ‘megalos’—***the great commandment***; and on that then everything else is built. On that everything else hangs from.

Now next time we will begin to understand more concerning John 3:16, because here is one of the most profound things that has ever been written in the Scriptures. So profound that even those in the world, who profess Christianity, have an inkling of an understanding of this.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world...” There are some who are saying that God hates the world. **God hates sin!** God does hate the things that are wicked. He even hates wicked people that is true. But who blinded them? **God did!** Why did He blind them? **So that He can have mercy! So that He can call them in the second resurrection!**

This does not just apply to the Church only. God does not just love the Church only. He loves the Church **specialy**, but not *only*. He still loves the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He still loves the world because He created every man in the image of God—did He not? And He’s going to bring them salvation in His time and in His way. When we read this Scripture, let’s think **great**. Or, as the Greek is, ‘megalos’—***broad, huge; the whole plan of God.***

Verse 16: “For God so **loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him...” Your belief has to come **into**, as the Greek is. You are believing, coming out from your being **into the being of Christ**. His Spirit is coming back into you, and this is an ongoing, two-way thing, all the time. Just like Paul said,

- from faith unto faith
- from the love of God to you
- the love of you back toward God
- the faith of God to you
- the faith of God back to Him

all working together, believing into Him.

“...may not perish, but may have everlasting life” (v 3). That’s what God wants to give us. That’s why the love of God is so profound. Everything in the world is going to disappear. Everything in the world God is going to destroy and remake new. That’s why things do not count. You have to love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being.

Then v 17 applies: “For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

Brethren, **Christ loves you!** The **Father loves you!** We need **to love each other!** Let’s take all of these things and put them together and **build the love of God**, because that is the most important and the greatest. As Jesus said, **it is the first and the great commandment.**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scripture References

- 1) Matthew 24:12
- 2) Luke 11:37-54
- 3) Luke 12:1-3
- 4) John 5:36-47
- 5) John 3:30-34, 36, 35
- 6) John 10:14-17
- 7) John 8:23-29
- 8) John 5:16-20
- 9) Luke 4:1-13
- 10) Luke 14:26-28, 33
- 11) Matthew 10:37-39
- 12) 1 Corinthians 16:22
- 13) Matthew 5:3-12, 43-48
- 14) Matthew 6:22-24
- 15) Luke 7:36-50
- 16) John 8:42
- 17) Luke 10:25-29
- 18) Mark 12:28-34
- 19) Matthew 22:34-40
- 20) John 3:16-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 23
- Exodus 3

Paul and Love

Fred R. Coulter

Love in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul other than 1-Cor. 13. There's quite a bit here showing us what love will do for us and what love will accomplish. But before we begin we have to have another love before we can have the love of God. This is something we have to have before we can really, truly love God.

2-Thess. talks about Satan coming with all power and signs and lying wonders, and I tell you, when he comes it's going to be something else; it is going to be spectacular! And the reason he's going to succeed:

2-Thessalonians 2:10: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved." In order to receive the love of God you have to have the love of the Truth first, and

- God's Word is Truth
- Christ is the Truth
- all the commandments are true
- everything that God does is true and righteous
- There is nothing that God does that is not true and righteous altogether

So, you have to come to love that before you can love God.

Then when you love God, God shows us that we have to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being. He doesn't want it part-time. He doesn't want it one day a week. He wants you to love Him completely, devoted with your whole mind and being. For people who do not have this kind of love and love the Truth and even start there, then God does something else:

Verse 11: "And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the* lie." Is this not happening? Did we just not read part of it right here because they didn't love the Truth? Is not God's judgment coming upon one of the largest Churches of God because they don't love the Truth and don't love God? In their latest beliefs booklet they don't even have a word about it, yet, Paul says it's the greatest.

If any of you want to know what's happening to the Churches of God today it's because of the *lack of the love of Truth* and *lack of the love of God*. That's the quickest summary I can give you. When I tell you that God's judgment is because there is no love, you know that's according to the Truth and Word of God.

Matthew 24:12: "And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold." It's happened in the Church, brethren! It's happened in the lives of too many people, and that's what we need to get back to.

Let's see what the love of God will do for us, and we're going to see that the love of God and faith together has an awful lot to do with love and faith because they go together. And remember what the Apostle Paul said. 'Faith, hope and love, they abide; but the greatest of these is love.'

There's an awful lot in the book of Romans—it's really something! The whole book of Romans is such a tremendous epistle and one of these days we'll get around to studying that. Here in Rom. 1 is something we need to understand about faith.

Romans 1:17: "For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed... [This is the imputed righteousness that God gives to us through Jesus Christ—*it's revealed*:] ...from faith unto faith... [And the Greek there for *to* is 'eis'—which is *into*.] ...according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'" Why shall the just live by faith? *Because that's the only way that love is going to work!*

Galatians 5:6: "Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; rather, *it is the inner working of faith through love.*" If you're loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, Christ is sending faith to you to be *in* you, and from in you back to Christ, and this helps develop and increase the love. Faith, which "*...is the inner working...*" by love. That's why faith, hope and love always go together.

Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit of God, as well as love? It has to be given! You cannot within yourself generate the love of God; *it has to come from God!* It's God's own love; same way with faith.

Is not the Holy Spirit a spiritual substance from God? *Yes, it is!* The proper use of the term 'hypostasis,' which is here, is *substance* or *foundation*. Now let's put it in it's proper context for us,

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is *the substance...*"—which comes from God, and that unites with the spirit of your mind. When you are growing and overcoming and using the Spirit of God, your mind is *being converted*. That literally means *changed*.

They know scientifically that when part of your brain is not working you can train another part of the brain to take over the same function. They have actually been able to detect that the brain reconstructs itself to make it work. This is what conversion is all about, brethren. This is why we have received the Holy Spirit as a begettal. This is why Christ is to be formed in us, as the Apostle Paul said, because the Holy Spirit is that *substance* of things hoped for—*that is faith, love, hope* and then being able to use and explain and think with the Scriptures of God.

I got a nice tape from Dwight Blevins, which really inspired me a lot and kicked off a lot of thoughts. Learning to think with the Truth and the Word of God in your mind is very, very important. That's what makes faith work; that's what makes love work.

1. Love comes from God by faith—after we have been justified

What we're going to learn here is:

- love is from God by faith
- faith is working by love

If we can think of it this way: The Word of God is like a sphere, which you can run an infinite number lines through it and an infinite number of angles, and every one of these connections is Truth agreeing with Truth.

1-Thessalonians 1:3: “Without fail, remember your **work of faith**...” That's an interesting one—*work of faith!* Remember that one whenever someone comes along and says, ‘We have faith; we don't need works.’ Then you turn here and say, ‘Ok, explain what *work of faith* is.’ Because the Greek there is ‘ergon’—*work of faith*.

“...and **your labor of love**... [love takes a lot of work, love doesn't come easy] ...and **your endurance** in the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father” (v 3).

- we have *faith*
- we have *love*
- we have *hope*

—all the way through all connected together.

When we have this love from God we receive it once we begin to receive it. God has given us a whole lifetime to grow and develop in love and be perfected. That's why the Word of God was meant to be a challenge for your whole life to learn and relearn, and grow in knowledge and depth and understanding over and over again to where it just becomes such a profound thing in your life, and that Christ will lead you in knowing that God loves you and has called you. *Very, very important!*

We begin to receive the love of God when we are justified Romans 4:21: “For he was **fully persuaded**...” That's what we all need to be of God, brethren, *fully persuaded*. Has God ever told us a lie? Has God ever told us anything that's not true? *No!* Should we not be fully persuaded as Abraham was?

“...that what He has promised...” (v 21). What He promised was something that He spoke—right? What was Abraham commended for? Not only faith, that's true. ‘*Abraham obeyed My voice.*’ The thing that's so important is that God only has to say it once. That's all, *just once!*

Think on this: *Shall the created tell the Creator what to do?*—as Paul said, ‘Shall the thing that's created walk up to God and say, *God I don't like this?*’ (Rom. 9). *Of course not!* Shall the thing that is created tell God what laws are good and what are not good? Which laws and commandments they should or should not keep? *Of course not!*

“...He is also able to do” (v 21). Once we get over this elementary stupidity of people arguing with God, and begin to see the fullness of God's Word, then we know that what God has for us is absolutely fantastic.

Verse 22: “As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness.” That means *right standing with God*. That's why God imputes the righteousness to us because we can never earn it or do it because we have ‘the law of sin and death’ in us. Therefore, anything we do, even though it's perfect in the letter, is automatically flawed because we ourselves are inherently imperfect. Only true perfection can come from someone who is truly perfect, Who is God. Would you not agree to that? *Yes!*

That's why with the Spirit of God *in us* God does something for us. He imputes the righteousness of Christ, not so that we can go out and break the commandments of God, but so that we can be inspired to keep them in the spirit and to do it with all our heart. That's what God wants. These things are to inspire us.

Verse 23: “But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe...” (vs 23-24). Of course, *believe* is the verb for the noun *faith*. You don't catch that in the English like you do in the Greek.

“...in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification” (vs 24-25). That's why ‘if Christ be not raised then your faith is vain

and you're still dead in your sins,' because He had to be resurrected to go to God the Father so there would be justification—the proper payment for the sins of the whole world, *that is justification!*

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace...” (vs 1-2). It's important that we understand the grace of God because this means that we do not go around with a guilty conscience. Grace is more than the forgiveness of sins. It's like a great umbrella under which we are standing, which then comes:

- God's love
- God's faith
- God's Spirit
- God's blessing
- knowledge of the commandments of God
- how to keep them in the Spirit

All of this comes by the grace of God. It is just so encompassing. So, you might say that the first expression of God's love is His grace. Or you might say the first expression of God's grace is His love, because it comes hand-in-hand to us. Please go through that and really understand that.

Notice it is something in which we are standing: “...in which we stand... [We are standing in it. It's not just a quality given. It is something which has to do with the *way of life*.] ...and we ourselves boast in *the hope*... [there again, we have *hope*] ...of the glory of God” (v 2).

Can you imagine the tremendous hope that God has given, the tremendous promise and blessing of what we are going to be? That is something, brethren. I just really don't think we have fully grasped that, but it is magnificent.

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [I haven't quite arrived at that point yet, but hopefully I can begin to understand with better hindsight.] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance.” If you endure the trial or if you endure the things there, that's fine. You're going to grow.

Verse 4: “And endurance *brings forth* character...” That's what we all need—and all of us have experienced a lot of things. From experience we can know and understand what's going on. One man came up to me and said, ‘Boy, you sure know how to prophecy.’ And I said, ‘No, I don't. But one thing which will really work out: if you tell the Truth; if you compare things with the Truth it's going to happen because *the Truth is the Truth* and never changes.’ So, if we go through some of the things we've covered here and we analyze and understand what the Truth is then it's going to

happen that way. “...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been **poured out...**” (vs 4-5). That's what it means in the Greek. That's what God wants us to receive: ***His love poured out upon us!*** That's why it's very important.

I hope that God will *lead you* to this in your prayers, in your trials, in your difficulties and everything that you go through; that we'll all one day come together, and you'll be praying and you'll be asking God for His love and understanding and God's Spirit is going to convict you in heart and in mind and you are going to know the love and the Spirit of God more than ever before.

- It's going to be something you will feel!
- It will be something that you will experience!
- It will be something that you will know!
- It's something that's directly between you and God the Father and Jesus Christ!

When that happens—which it will—then you will begin to truly, truly understand the love of God and how important it is and what it will do in our lives.

“...has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time... [*at the set time*, at the *exact time* that God prophesied it would happen] ...Christ died for *the ungodly...*” (vs 5-6).

Christ did not make us go prove ourselves to Him before He would give His sacrifice to us. He died for us while we were still enemies. That takes a profound love. That's why the Protestants, even though they have a corner on the end-zone of the football games, you're going to see whenever they kick a field goal and they line up to show:

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

However they don't go beyond that in many cases. We need to understand the profound love it took for God to do that while the whole world hated Him. And not only that, when He was on the earth He was in the midst of His enemies. Even Peter gave Him a hard time, and the other disciples gave Him a hard time. Remember that? Could you take that? If you think you had a hard week, you think you've had it hard, God has dealt with you tough, and you've had a lot of trials and difficulties. Think on that for a while.

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. But

God commends His own love to us... [We need to know first that God loves us first. God wants us to respond to His love because it's going to do so many things for us.] ...because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore... [now that you understand this] ...having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.... [the whole great and tremendous purpose of God] ...For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation” (vs 7-11).

2. The love of God reveals God's plan and purpose

This is so awesome and this is so great that only God can make it known to us. We can't think of it and we can't understand it on our own. We can't think of it; philosophy can't think of it; and that's the whole purpose of why Paul was writing to the Corinthians here, because they thought with wisdom: Ho-ho, they're smart, they're great intellects. Well, here's what he says,

1-Corinthians 2:9: “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.*’” The love of God is going to do an awful lot for us. You have to love Him.

Notice what it will do, v 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us **by His Spirit**... [Which means *the more we love God; the deeper and more profound we love God;* and understand that *the more God is going to reveal to us His plan and purpose.*] ...for the Spirit searches all things—even the **deep things of God.**”

Brethren, I crave and desire to know the deep things of God, and I know you do, too. Isn't that something we should all want?

- the **deep things of God!**
- to know **the profound love of God**
- to know **what Christ is doing for us** in a greater and greater way!

Oh, yes! Then that gives us hope; that heals all wounds; that gives us understanding of all the experiences we have gone through, reveals things to us.

Knowledge of this world does not do that. What is it that men have always wanted to do? When they say, ‘God, we don't want You,’ what do they want? *They want knowledge!* More knowledge! Has it cured the AIDS epidemic? *No!* Has it solved mans

problems? *No!* Is that not what Adam and Eve started out to do? *Yes!* ‘If you eat of this tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will be *knowers* just like God.’ That kind of knowledge, it says here, 1-Corinthians 8:1^[transcriber's correction]: “...Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”

I don't know why the translators of the *King James Version* used ‘charity’ there. It's just beyond me. But **love edifies!**. That's what God wants. What is edification? *Edification is to build up and to inspire!* Like Solomon said, ‘With much knowledge comes much sorrow’ if you don't have the edification and love of the Spirit of God. It's to uplift you! It's to inspire you! Do you know what we need to do? *We need to ask God to help us just draw close to Him and fellowship with Him and Christ on the Sabbath;*

- to make the Sabbath the greatest day of the week, not just something you do because you're commanded to do
- something you do because you love God
- something you do because you're going to be inspired and uplifted

That's what God wants. He doesn't want a lot of beaten down saints, whipped and beat into the Kingdom of God. He wants us charging the gate because we're inspired. And love will do that.

Then he says concerning knowledge, v 2: “But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet to the degree that he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him” (vs 2-3). **May we have the knowledge of God!**

Let's go to Colossians 1 and let's see how this follows right through. Now remember that Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were written while Paul was in prison in Rome—the second imprisonment is what it was.

Colossians 1:8: “Who has also informed us of... [Epaphras, the minister who was teaching the Colossians] ...your love in *the Spirit*... [it's got to come from God's Spirit]. ...For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will**... [that's something] ...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (vs 8-9).

That's what the love of God will do. That's something, brethren! These, to me, are a very exciting things. They're very spiritually uplifting. God is not up there trying to say, ‘I'm a mystery, try and figure Me out if you can.’ *No!* He says: ‘I've called you. I've given you My Spirit. I want you to be in My Kingdom. I love you. I want you to grow and overcome. I want you to be able to receive the fullness of the knowledge of God.’ That's something—isn't it? *Yes!*

Verse 10: “That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God” All of this comes from the Spirit of God.

Let’s see how he says it here in Ephesians 1. This is what God wants. Now, sometime if you’re sitting there and all of a sudden a thought comes to you: I wonder why God called me? Have you ever had that thought come along? Especially when you stand up and look in the mirror. Hopefully, it’s not full-length, it might get a little more discouraging. But nevertheless, **God has called us**. Why has He called you? To torment you? To put you through problems? *No! He’s called you for the greatest and most profound thing that there is: to receive His love and His knowledge!*

Ephesians 1:15: “For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints... [there again we have faith and love. We’ll see this follow all the way through.] ...Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (vs 15-16). This prayer is for all of us because it’s written here in the Word of God for us.

Verse 17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory... [Who’s going to do this? *The Father, Himself!*] ...may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.... [that’s the kind of knowledge that comes by the love of God] ...**And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...**” (vs 17-18). Isn’t that something: ‘the eyes of your understanding’? That’s pretty profound! It means what you think in the deepest recesses of your mind.

“...be enlightened in order **that you may comprehend...** [not guess, not wonder, not a mystery] ...what is the hope of His calling, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power... [that’s what God wants us to know] ...toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead...” (vs 18-20).

Contrary to what they say, ‘Well, the resurrection was just kind of an ecstatic thought in the minds of the disciples, and it really doesn’t matter what happened to His corpse.’ *Yes, it does!* Don’t you believe that if He wasn’t resurrected that His corpse would have been traipsed around all over the place as evidence that He was a liar? *Yes, it would have been!* Did they not secure the tomb with guards and seal it so no one could get it? *Yes, they did!* No one can deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Has not every human being in the world tried to defer or escape death? *None* have overcome it

except Christ! And the older we get the more we comprehend that statement.

“...He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above every principality and authority... [He’s talking about the powers that work in the world. There are wicked spirits in high places: the principalities and powers.] ...and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the church, which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 20-23).

I’m going to have to bring a sermon on the fullness of Christ. Fullness comes from the Greek word ‘pleroma’—also part of the scheme of philosophy and philosophical salvation through the mystery religions. I’m amazed how much this is written to refute every one of these things. It is something!

3. God’s love makes us accepted in the ‘Beloved’ One

The *Beloved One* is Christ, or ‘the Son of His love.’ We covered some of those Scriptures previously: how much Christ loved the Father and the Father loved Christ always. That’s why they did what they did for all of humankind.

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with **every spiritual blessing...**” Isn’t that something? He wants to bless us with “...every spiritual blessing...” *Think* about what God wants to give us. *Think* about how much God is for us. That’s something!

“...in the heavenly *things* with Christ.” We are not in heavenly places yet. Eph. 2 tells us that’s in the ‘ages to come...’ But if we received of the Holy Spirit, which comes from God the Father in heaven above, we have received of the heavenly things.

Verse 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love.” Look, if you’ve got some deep problem that’s just really bothering you, let me ask you: Does God know? *Sure He knows!* He knows every hair that you have. What do you do then? *You take it to God and ask Him to help you overcome!* That’s how you do it, because He wants you to be Holy and without blame. *Irreproachably blameless*—that’s what it means in the Greek. Another way of saying it is *without spot and without stain and without wrinkle*.

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us for

sonship...” Not ‘adoption’ (*KJV*) because adoption is that *you adopt someone who is not your own flesh and blood*—your own children. We are begotten of God the Father. We are His children by begetting and will be by birth, belong to Him of His kind.

“...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the **Beloved Son**” (vs 5-6). Through Christ Jesus we are accepted. That is tremendous, brethren. I don’t know about you but that just inspires me every time I read it.

Verse 7: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself” (vs 7-9). No wonder Satan wants to destroy that knowledge, brethren. No wonder Satan wants to stamp that out, because this is so absolutely marvelous and loving and kind and good that it’s just amazing!

1-Thessalonians 3:12: “Now, may the Lord make you to exceed and to abound in love...” That’s what we want. That’s going to help, inspire, heal, and that is just going to help so many of the brethren.

“...abound in love toward one another and toward all, even as we also *abound in love* toward you, That your hearts may be established blameless in Holiness...” (vs 12-13). There it is again: *unblamable!* That’s why He imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, that you have no blame; you have no fault. Not to give you license to go sin, but to just *inspire you* to really want to love God and do what He wants.

“...in Holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (v 13). So that’s when it will be perfected in us.

4. Love covers our sins by grace and faith

That’s why the love of God is so important. I think if we understand the love of God and what He’s doing for us, and understand that so many brethren have just been beaten down and discouraged and depressed. That’s why we nickname ourselves the No Hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God. There’s got to be hope somewhere on this earth where you know God is there and God is love, and we need to get around all this stupidity of what we do to each other and what men do to each other. There is God.

Titus 3:3: “For we also were once... [in the time past] ...foolish...” Still am to this day in many

things. Do you ever go around saying ‘Do-do’ to yourself? *Yes!* Do you ever do something stupid? *Yes!* I just did yesterday. I won’t tell you about it.

“...disobedient, deceived... [Isn’t that something—walk around deceived, don’t know a thing, just terrible.] ...serving all kinds of lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another” (v 3). My, my, my, that just tells us so much about the way that it is. Unfortunately, it’s been that way in the Church. Why has it been that way in the Church? *Because they haven’t had the love of God!*

Verse 4: “But when the graciousness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we practiced, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that, having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (vs 4-7). There it is again: The *hope of eternal life* and the *love of God* working together.

Let’s see what the Apostle Paul said of himself, how he viewed himself. You can only truly accept and understand your evil condition if you have the love of God. You can’t accept it otherwise. That’s why you can’t run up and tell the full Truth to people in the world. They can’t take it! They are deceived and their eyes are closed! That’s why in some things you can give it to them bit-by-bit, but as God’s Spirit works with you through your life, as it did with the Apostle Paul here:

1-Timothy 1:11: “According to the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.” This is something that needs to be for all ministers and elders. They need to know and understand that they have been committed with a trust from God. It is not a political reward. It is not something to give you authority to use and abuse, but *it is a trust*.

Verse 12: “And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, Who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy...” Why? *Because God said, ‘All right, I’m going to convert one of the enemy.’* That’s why what he writes is so profound!

“...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 14-15). That’s how he viewed his life, and the more that you are converted and the

more of the love of God that you receive, the more that you understand your own human condition and sinfulness. Therefore, there won't be any bragging and boasting of how good a person is.

(go to the next track)

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.... [that's something] ...Now to the King of eternity, *the* incorruptible, invisible, *and* only wise God, *be* honor and glory into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 16-17). So, *love covers our sins!*

5. Love protects us

2-Thessalonians 3:3: "But the Lord is faithful, Who will establish you and keep *you* from the evil one.... [love will keep you from evil] ...Now concerning you, we trust in *the* Lord that you both practice and will be practicing the things that we command you. And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and **into the endurance of Christ**" (vs 3-5)—so that you have the same endurance as Christ does.

1-Thessalonians 4:9: "Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need *for me* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another." That's something—isn't it? *God is going to teach us!*

What is the Holy Spirit called? And when the Holy Spirit comes, it will *teach you all things!* The Holy Spirit will teach us that we know. That's why when you're going about doing something and all of a sudden, have you had this happen: a thought comes and you really understand something for the first time? It's kind of like a light comes on—*ding!* That's the Holy Spirit teaching you. That's the Holy Spirit connecting it. That's the Holy Spirit working in your mind to bring you that understanding.

6. The Holy Spirit inspires us

That's why we get excited about this, it's the Holy Spirit that inspires us. It inspires us, it gives us strength, it gives us confidence. And again we're going to see this with faith—*faith and love working together!*

2-Timothy 1:5: "When I remember the unfeigned faith *that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice—and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you to **stir up the gift of God** that is in you by the laying on of my hands" (vs 5-6). We do have to *stir up* the Holy Spirit within us. Yes, we do, and we can!

Verse 7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of

sound-mindedness." That is tremendous, brethren! We don't have to take a back seat to anybody, anywhere. We don't need to be boastful and vain and arrogant, but because of the love of God we can have the strength of God, the faith of God, the power of God, the preaching the way it needs to be.

Verse 13: "Hold *as the* standard *for doctrine* the sound words that you heard from me, in *the* faith and love that *are* in Christ Jesus." There again *faith, love and hope* all working together, and that's to inspire us.

7. We are to walk in love, which means as a way of life

This is the challenge. Here is a really profound Scripture. This is also a life-long project, but this is pretty profound, Ephesians 5:1 "Therefore, be imitators of God..." The Greek means *to imitate God*. Now, that's a tall order—isn't it? Imitate God? Remember what Jesus said? *He said that you are to become as perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect!* That can only be done with the love and Spirit of God. To imitate God! Is that not a life-long challenge? *It sure is!*

"...as beloved children... [be imitators of God] ...and walk in love... [In other words, the path in which you are walking is in love and it's going to present a lot of challenges. I'll guarantee you that one of the first things that's going to happen is you're going to have situations confront you that are unloving. That, in fact, may be downright disastrous and nasty and mean. How's that for a challenge? So you can walk in love] ...even as Christ also loved us..." (vs 1-2).

These are some tremendous goals to aim for—aren't they? And brethren, you know what is so wonderful, ***we can do it with Christ in us and the Holy Spirit and the love of God, we can do that!*** God would not ask us to do something we cannot do. If it's something that we cannot do He'll give us the strength to do it. But as human beings we always have to have these lifetime goals; that's what He's giving us—*lifetime goals*.

I'll use the example of television: 54 channels and nothing on. All the channel surfing for hours brings nothing. There's no challenge, there's no interest. How would it be if life were like channel surfing and there was nothing on? *That's why God gives us these goals, because they're profound to reach out. We're going to be the very children of God, composed of the same substance as God!* We're going to see Him as He is. That's a tremendous lifelong thing to keep looking to.

Verse 2: "And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

Here's how part of it is to walk in love and walk with God and imitate God.

Verse 3: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you, as is fitting for saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving. For this you know, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous *person*, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (vs 3-5). Just isn't going to be. Is God not taking care of it and judging it right? This day? Today? For those very things? *Yes, He is!* May they all repent.

Verse 6: "Do not let anyone deceive you with vain words..." Don't let someone come around with persuasive sounding arguments as if these things are really something. Be well rooted and grounded in the love of God and the Word of God and these things won't deceive you. You'll know and see what they are, and what the result of it's going to be. We're to follow God.

8. Love passes all human knowledge

The love of God passes all human knowledge. That's why it is available to everyone that has the Holy Spirit of God. It's not counted whether you're educated; it's not counted of who your parents were; *it's counted because of God's Spirit and God's knowledge!*

This is how it's going to be; this is why the love of God is so important for us, Ephesians 3:17 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts **by faith**; and that being rooted and grounded in love... [the very anchors of your foundation in Christ] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height... [full, lifetime challenge] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge... [greater than any education you can get in this world] ...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (vs 17-19). That's what the love of God is going to do for you.

9. The love of God perfects you

Here's the reason for the ministry whether they be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers, Ephesians 4:12: "For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith..." (vs 12-13). What is it that brings the unity of the faith? *It's the Spirit of God!* Not a name, not an association, not even doctrine, but *the Spirit of God; the love of God*. You can have some doctrine but not have the love of God. Have we all experienced that? Did that produce unity? *No, it produced disunity—didn't it? Yes!*

"...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ... [That's what love is going to do for us] ...So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men... [Does that sound like some of your experience in the Church recently?] ...in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error" (vs 13-14). They've systematized the error. It's called in the parlance of theology 'systematic theology.'

Verse 15: "But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part..." (vs 15-16). Everyone in the body of Christ has something that he or she can do—*everyone!*

And that's how the Christian Biblical Church of God has grown, brethren, because the brethren love the brethren and they're out there helping them. I try and do what I can, but I can do nothing without what God gives me to do and without what God gives the brethren to do because it's every joint supplies. I'm sure there are other people in other churches trying to do what they can do. May we all, with God's Spirit, *come to the unity of the faith* in the time that God wants us to.

"...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (v 16). *Perfects the saints!*

10. Now love helps us overcome

With all of this, it's *overcoming with understanding*. I'll tell you, the best way to get hindsight real quickly is when you have a problem, repent of it as quickly as you can, then God will give you hindsight to understand it. *He will!*

Romans 8:28: "And **we know**... [this takes time; this takes experience; this takes living] ...that all things work together for good... [Sometimes they don't look like they are. I know, I've seen a lot of things and I could not figure out how on earth this is going to work for good, but in the final analysis it will.] ...to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." They'll all work out. If you love God go to Him, ask for His help, ask for His Spirit. It will work out. *Yes, it will!* Love is going to help us to overcome everything.

Verse 35: "[Who] What shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation... [We've all had our difficulties and trials—haven't we?] ...or distress... [Have you been under stress lately? *Yes!*]

...or persecution... [I don't think any of us have really, really been persecuted, I mean truly.] ...or famine... [none of us are hungry; we have no scarceness of bread] ...or nakedness..."

We can go home, throw open the closet and there's so much there you don't know what to do with it. There are times that Dolores will buy something and she won't wear it for a while, and then she'll put it on and I'll say, 'Oh that's new.' And she'll say, 'No, I've had this for x amount of time. And I'll say, 'Well, I haven't seen it. When have you worn this?' And once in a while I'll get it out of her that even though she's had it all this time this is the first time she's worn it. Other times I just miss the boat entirely. Stupid men never pay attention; you know how that is. We're not naked. I know you don't have as many shoes as Imelda Marcos, but you probably have so many in your closet they get in the way—right?

"...or danger, or sword? Accordingly, it is written, 'For Your sake we are killed all the day long... [Listen, believe me, there isn't any of us going to be a martyr unless we love God more than our own lives, more than anything else.] ...we are reckoned as sheep for *the* slaughter.' But in all these things we are more than conquerors [overcomers] through Him Who loved us. For I am **persuaded**... [We'll have to make sure we understand what that is: persuaded or convinced, either one] ...that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 35-39). That's how we overcome, brethren. That's something—isn't it?

Many times we've had the cart but we haven't had the horse. We haven't understood it and we've told everybody to get their carts out there and get them straightened up and make sure they go. You find out it doesn't work because ***you have to have love first***. It'll work.

It's the same way within the Church. How is the Church going to run? How's the Church going to be effective? What is the most inspiring and uplifting thing that can be with church? Now, *church* I mean when we come together and we assemble together. God wants it to be centered on Christ and Him that it is going to be a wonderful and a joyous experience for all of us. That's why in our experience we've all had to come to ground zero and build again on the foundation of Christ so that we really understand and get the true perspective.

Colossians 2:1: "Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in *the* flesh; That their hearts may be

encouraged, being knit together in love... [That's how it needs to be: ***knit together***. What do you do when you knit? *You work*—right? *You plan*—right? *You have a pattern*—correct? ***You knit!*** God does that for us; our hearts are knit together in love] ...unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto *the* knowledge of the mystery of God, and of *the* Father, and of Christ; In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (vs 1-3). Then he goes on to say don't let any man deceive you with enticing words.

This is how a church needs to be run. That's why we need to shed all the baggage from the past, put it all aside, retain all of that which is good. We need to do that. That doesn't mean throw away what we really understand, but all the baggage.

Philippians 1:27: "Only conduct yourselves worthily of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent..." What is he saying? '*This is for mature responsibility. You are responsible.*'

In this age I have never seen anything like it. I mean it is something else! No one is responsible for his actions! It's either him or her, or the bureaucracy, the law or the policeman, or my friend, or my aunt or uncle, or someone oppressed me when I was a kid. My father shouted at me before I was born and I was born with a complex. I'm not responsible.' *Stupidity!* That's not the way it should be. He's saying be constant in Christ all the time.

"...so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear the reports about you; that you are standing fast in one spirit, striving together with one soul for the faith of the Gospel... [Again, we have faith preceding love—don't we?] ...and not being intimidated in any way by those who oppose *the Gospel*; which to them is a demonstration of destruction, but to you of salvation, and this from God; because it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His name's sake" (vs 27-29).

That's what the whole Church of God is going through right now to suffer for His sake because they have been deficient and neglecting, in fact in some cases, even disdainful of the love and grace of God. God is not going to tolerate that because the whole Gospel is based on the grace and love of God.

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions." Mercies and compassion from the very innermost part of your being. Not just something, you know, 'Hi, how are you?. Oh, it's wonderful to see you,' and in your mind you think, 'I just wish they'd get away from

here, I hate that person.' No, none of that kind of stuff.

Verse 2: "Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind... [This is what Christ wants us to have: **the mind of Christ!**] ...having the same love, being joined together in soul, **minding the one thing**"—which is the Kingdom of God and the calling of God. That's what that means.

Verse 3: "*Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not only after his own things, but let each one also consider the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*" (vs 3-5). Then he emphasizes, after he tells about Christ and what He did. He also emphasizes something concerning our own responsibility.

Verse 12: "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both **to will and to do** according to *His* good pleasure.... [*to have the desire*; God is working it in you ...Do all things without complaints and disputes]" (vs 12-14).

We're going to cover a couple of Scriptures, which have been so misapplied. Have you ever heard this: 'if you're loving your neighbor you have fulfilled the Law and you don't need to keep the Sabbath or Holy Days or any of those other things.' Does that sound a little familiar to you from Protestant theology? Let's look at a couple of these verses now and let's understand them, because they throw this out just sort of just like a wet, cold fish out on the table: 'Now what do you have to say about that?'

Galatians 5:13: "For you have been called unto freedom, brethren; only do not *use* this freedom for an occasion to the flesh; rather, serve one another with love. For the whole law is fulfilled in this *commandment*: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (vs 13-14). So therefore, if you do that you have nothing else that you have to do. That's the conclusion. That is **not correct**. This means: *For all the law is summarized, or the full expression behind the law is summarized, in one word or one saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*

Is it talking about any of the commandments toward God? *No!* It's talking about neighbor-to-neighbor, brother-to-brother. It is not discussing the laws toward God. Is it discussing idolatry? *No!* Is it discussing taking the name of God in vain? *No!* Is it discussing having other gods before you? *No!* It's talking about love to neighbor.

Verse 15: "But if you bite and devour one

another, watch out *lest* you be consumed by one another." He's saying, 'Now look, this is the way that you're going to overcome the difficulties between each other. It has nothing to do with the commandments toward God.' That's handled in other places. So, don't ever let them come and throw that old wet fish on the table and say, 'That's all we have to do.' It doesn't mean that at all. You have to read all the verses.

Verse 16: "Now *this* I say, walk by *the* Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Here's another one they turn to, Romans 13 and they say, 'See, see, it doesn't say the Sabbath, therefore, you don't have to keep it.' *Not true!* It's not talking about the Sabbath.

Romans 13:8: "Do not be indebted to anyone for anything... [Oh, that would be so nice—wouldn't it?] ...unless *it is* to love one another. For **the one who loves another has fulfilled the Law.**" Tie in 'What is the first and great commandment? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your mind, all your soul, and all your being' (Matt. 22:37-41). So, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Now then when it comes to neighbors is what he's talking about here correct? Verse 9: "Because *it says*, 'You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder....'" Now, it doesn't say honor your father and mother—does it? So therefore, no children have to honor their father and mother—correct? Because it doesn't say it here—right? **Learn to take their logic and turn it right back on them and make them eat it!** Of course that's a stupid statement. It's meant to be with your neighbor; love your neighbor as yourself.

"... 'You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not lust.' **And if there be any other commandment**, it is summed up in this saying, *even* by this *standard*: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does not do any wrong to *its* neighbor; therefore, love *is* the full expression of *God's* Law" (vs 9-10).

In other words it is the highest attainment and fulfillment of the Law—because the Law was designed to bring you to the love of God—that you would think of the things for your neighbor that you would do for your neighbor because you love God and love your neighbor. So therefore, these Scriptures have nothing whatsoever to do with the first five commandments—do they? Remember, it doesn't say honor father and mother.

There's some that have to do with family relations, which are also very important. I want you to understand something very important concerning

the Bible: It is not a marriage counseling, psychological textbook. As a matter of fact there are very few places in here which really talk about marriage—are there not? *Yes!* Why is that? *Because if you have the love of God things are going to work so much better in your marriage—correct? Yes! Yes, they will!*

Ephesians 5:20: “Giving thanks at all times for all things to God and the Father in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit yourselves to one another in *the* fear of God” (vs 20-21). My wife has talked to me about a lot of things a lot of the time. And if it’s correct and true that’s fine. It doesn’t mean you’re letting women rule, but you love and understand each other and that’s the way it needs to be.

Verse 22: “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” This is what needs to be in a marriage. No marriage is going to be successful where there are partners. It won’t work! Man is the head. God made it that way by creation and it cannot be changed. When it’s topsy-turvy and upside down, does it work? *It may for a while!* What has to happen? *Well, the husband has to become Mr. Wimple Softnoodle and run and hide in a corner!*

Then his wife is mad because ‘You are a spineless creature.’ *Well, you’ve driven me to it.* You can’t change what God has set up. It won’t work. You are to submit unto your husbands as unto the Lord. Are we all to submit to Christ? *Yes, without a doubt!*

Verse 23: “For the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church; and He is *the* Savior of the body. For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives...” (vs 23-25).

I’ll guarantee that each one of us—husbands and wives—are going to make that a challenging thing. Every one of us has something that grates the other one the wrong way. If you don’t, thank God, praise God, work together, don’t let anything happen that way because all human nature is the same. This is the way that God has said we should get it straightened out: love your wives even when they’re snitty; even when they do things that you know they shouldn’t; even when they provoke you. That’s a hard one. Next time your wife really provokes you into something see if you can still have that love. You try it! That’s a challenge! Didn’t I say that love is a lifelong challenge? There’s one of them—your wife.

“...in the same way that Christ also loved the Church and **gave Himself for it...** [Whew! How

far do we have to go in this? *To the nth degree—do we not? Yes!*] ...So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word; That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies...” (vs 25-28).

Isn’t it true that all of you women and all of you wives will say, ‘Aren’t men cowards when they get sick?’ *Yes!* Well, that’s Scriptural. Yes, we are! And I know all of you who have had children say, ‘Well, you’ve never had to bear children.’ *Yes!* Try that, that’s painful. Yeah, when we get sick we like to take care of ourselves and baby ourselves and all this sort of thing.

“...husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church. For we are members of His body...” (vs 28-30).

This is a profound verse here, brethren—and the first time I read that I could not understand it because are we not to be in the Kingdom of God spiritually? *Yes!* So then, why does it say this?:

Verse 30: “For we are members of His body—**of His flesh and of His bones.**” What does that mean? Well, I think it means this: *of His flesh* through the crucifixion; and *of His bones* the same way that the bone was taken from the rib of Adam to make Eve that the Church is formed from the innermost part of Christ. That’s why it’s “...**of His flesh and of His bones.**” Bones through the very crucifixion—*He died for us!* He’s talking about not loving your life unto death.

Verse 31: “For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let each one of you love his wife even as himself; and *let each* wife see that she reverence *her* husband” (vs 31-33). 1-Pet. 3 says that a meek and a quiet spirit is of a great price.

Now then, he talks a little bit about family relations, Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in *the* Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and *your* mother, which is the first commandment with a promise” (vs 1-2).

That’s why the public schools, the first thing they do is: ‘Don’t obey your parents. Obey your social worker. Don’t honor your father and your mother, you honor this socialist system that we have.’ What is the result of it? *Murder is the #1 killer of teenagers! Auto wrecks are #2, suicide is*

#3. I'll have to admit that in today's world, all who are parents, you've got a great challenge. And that's why a lot of the parents that I know of have gone to home schooling. They've just had it up to way over their head with this school system.

You cannot combat or turn back eight hours of teaching at school with an hour at home after school and an hour at home before they go to school, plus their own carnal nature and human nature mixed in it with the music and entertainment and all of that. ***It is tough!*** I understand that, but we have to do the best we can under the circumstances if we can. Let your children know that, and let them know that they're responsible; ultimately, it is true, their own free choice they're going to have to exercise. And ultimately, it is true that God is going to judge them for what they do. If we can reach out and help some of the children that way then that will be fine.

Verse 3: "That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. And fathers, do not provoke your children; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (vs 3-4). I will have to say to children: Do not provoke your parents to wrath either. We can add that as a subsidiary commandment because a lot of them do. It's in human nature to see how much you can get away with. Why don't you turn human nature around and see how much you can do; to do what is right and be responsible; not how much you can get away with so that you can provoke people or do whatever you want to.

There's one other thing that love will do, and I saved this for last because it has to do with correction. None of us like correction. None of us like difficulties. Let me just mention here very quickly:

- The easiest way to receive correction is to ***love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being so He can reveal to you your faults*** so you can repent.
- The next easiest way is in ***studying God's Word***; you take it to heart and you change.
- The next easiest way, and becomes more difficult, ***is someone to tell you.***
- Then the most difficult way is to ***let the circumstances and other people correct you.***
- ***That is tough!***

Hebrews 12:5: "And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him.'"

- listen
- learn

- pay attention
- don't give up and faint

Verse 6: "For whom *the* Lord loves He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as a *Father* with *His* sons. For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly* be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*? For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them..." (vs 5-10). Lots of times we thought it wasn't fair. ***Fair is a communist idea. Justice comes from God!***

"...but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness. Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards... [Great! 100% hindsight!] ...it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it" (vs 10-11).

So, the love of God does all of these things for us ***so that we can be the very children of God. That's why love is the greatest!***

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

Scripture References:

- 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11
- 2) Matthew 24:12
- 3) Romans 1:17
- 4) Galatians 5:6
- 5) Hebrews 11:1
- 6) 1 Thessalonians 1:3
- 7) Romans 4:21-25
- 8) Romans 5:1-6
- 9) John 3:16
- 10) Romans 5:7-11
- 11) 1 Corinthians 2:9-10
- 12) 1 Corinthians 8:1-3
- 13) Colossians 1:8-10
- 14) Ephesians 1:15-23; 3-9
- 15) 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13
- 16) Titus 3:3-7
- 17) 1 Timothy 1:11-17
- 18) 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5
- 19) 1 Thessalonians 4:9
- 20) 2 Timothy 1:5-7, 13
- 21) Ephesians 5:1-6
- 22) Ephesians 3:17-19
- 23) Ephesians 4:12-16
- 24) Romans 8:28, 35-39
- 25) Colossians 2:1-3
- 26) Philippians 1:27-29

- 27) Philippians 2:1-5, 12-14
- 28) Galatians 5:13-16
- 29) Romans 13:8-10
- 30) Ephesians 5:20-33
- 31) Ephesians 6:1-4
- 32) Hebrews 12:5-11

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 9
- Ephesians 2
- Matthew 22:37-41
- 1 Peter 3

Is the Love of God Unconditional?

Fred R. Coulter

Well, I'm up to my old tricks again—I'm reading a book—and this book is called *Liberation of the Worldwide Church of God* by Michael Feazell: 'The remarkable story of a cult's journey from deception to truth.' it's really quite the other way around—from Truth to deception. I'm going to cover a couple of things here, because I want to ask: Is God's love always unconditional? Having unconditional love means—in *their* view of thinking, especially with the Protestants—that as long as you're *feeling good* about God and *feel good* about what you are doing, then you are loving God. And what you're doing is right and God does not judge you. However, we're going to see there's quite a bit to *love*—God's love, our love:

- has to do with *the heart*
- has to do with *faith*
- has to do with *obedience*
- there's also the love of the 'prodigal son'

—and there's another ingredient that is missing in *all* of what is said here, because people can be very well intentioned and do things and really *feel good* about them.

You can go, almost anywhere—a high school football game, basketball game—and everybody's there to have a good time, and everybody *feels good*—especially if your team wins. The cheerleaders are out there and they *feel good* about their cheers; they've practiced them, everyone is really ready for this. The crowd is there to chant to make them *feel really good* about this and how wonderful it is, and so forth.

So, to *feel good* about something emotionally does not mean that it's good with God, because the Bible says there is 'pleasure in sin for a season.' Using that kind of reasoning, you can conclude almost anything. As long as your intention is right—you say to yourself, 'God knows my heart and therefore, since God knows my heart, since I *feel good* about this, He must accept it.'

This is where Feazell is coming from; he was the assistant to Joseph Tkach Sr. and Jr. In reading the book, I would have to say that there is an awful lot in here that is just muddle-headed thinking. I might say, too, the cover of the book—where they have the picture of Herbert Armstrong in the upper left and then it looks like the picture is torn—on the original version they had flames of fire on the tear, as if Herbert were going to eternal hell. The Canadian government refused to allow that into Canada because that was against their religious harmony law, so Zondervan, the publishers, changed

it. I'm going to read on page 18 from the Prolog. He's talking about the grass there in Pasadena on the campus—remember? They had the dychondra, it says, "please don't walk on it." And he got upset about that. He says:

Immediately I saw the reason for this rule of not walking on it and made it my lifelong policy never to walk on Ambassador's magnificent carpets of green. At the same time, though, I felt it was a colossal shame that what seemed to me to be the most fantastic lawns in the world could only be looked at and not walked on.

Go to Germany, my friend. You walk on the grass, any grass, and you've had it! There are lawns that kids can walk on; nothing wrong with that. Now, notice his conclusion:

That is what legalism does to people. It can create the illusion of something wonderful, but something that can never be what it was meant to be is not. In the end, wonderful. Maybe it is better than nothing, but it is still at best, only a hollow shell. Until the liberating war of Asian shadows it into it's worthless dust it is... [oh, that is an awkward sentence] ...legalism ironically imprisons it fixed and was confounding dungeon of smug anxiety and self-satisfied frustration.

He has a point concerning legalism; and the Worldwide Church of God was very legalistic, because they did not teach the members to look to Christ. You don't solve the problem by throwing away the Truth of God in that. What you do is you teach people to follow Christ. You point them to the love of God. Somehow, *he concludes* that

- you can't keep the Sabbath and have the love of God
- you can't keep the Feast of God and have the love of God
- you can't keep the laws of clean and unclean meats and have the love of God
- you can't give tithes—*especially tithes*—and have the love of God.

That's the reasoning that this comes to.

I want to cover today: *is God's love unconditional?* That He is bound under all circumstances—because we *feel good* about it—that He is obligated to acknowledge what we are doing is acceptable in His sight.

Within weeks... [after the death of Herbert W Armstrong] ...the first challenge was raised to Armstrong's presumed absolute insight on the Scriptures. Mark Kaplan, Ambassador College's professor of Hebrew raised a question about Armstrong's dogmatic teaching that the children of Israel did not depart from Egypt on the same night as they ate the Passover meal, but on the next night.

I distributed Kaplan's paper to the members of the Council of Elders and the consensus was that Kaplan was right. The preponderance of Scriptural evidence lay in favor of the millennial or Jewish viewpoint.... [What a surprise!] ...The cork was in the dam... [the cork was in the dam now to start taking away all doctrines of the Church] ...Armstrong was wrong about a point that he taught with particular force and dogmatism, Tkach decided that the best course of action was to delete the offending section from the Church booklet about the annual Holy Days and officially inform the pastors that the issue was more historical not doctrinal and therefore of no consequence.

Now you know why we have *The Christian Passover* book—which goes into every detail of it. I never knew until I got this book that that was one of the first things that they did.

Mark Kaplan was one of the insiders—you know, the sleepers—to come in and do this very thing, to help bring down the Worldwide Church of God. I need to mention one other thing that he doesn't mention. He has some charts in the back showing the changes and so forth and how they lost membership because of the changes. He is dishonest in his conclusion because he did not say that these people—for the sake of keeping the Sabbath, for the sake of keeping the Holy Days—left the Worldwide Church of God and are currently in other Churches of God.

Before we go any further, let's go to Rev. 14, and let's see something that is very important concerning commandment-keeping. This is what we need to realize, brethren. This is everyone, whether it's Protestants, Catholics, Buddhist, Hindus or whoever—we've got to include all the religions of the world in this now, since we live in a diverse society. We're going to learn a principle here:

Revelation 14:12: "Here is *the* patience of the saints... [or the endurance; the saints are to endure] ...here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

Let's understand a principle here that is very profound and important, which is this: ***In order to keep the commandments of God, the way God wants them kept, it must be by faith.*** All the commandments of God are by faith because you believe God. This thing that faith comes without keeping the commandments of God, because you feel good, ***is wrong!*** Back to the book:

Small and merely historical as this particular point may have been, later changes would raise the larger question: how could Tkach have the authority to changed Armstrong's teaching and then the conundrum? If Armstrong was wrong about that, then he could have been wrong about appointing Tkach. And worse, but still unthinkable at this early stage, if Armstrong really was wrong about something he felt God had revealed to him, how could he have called himself God's only true apostle.

In that there are some questions of truth and questions of error. It is true, he shouldn't have called himself God's only apostle, no question about that. Here's another sleeper:

K.J. Stavrinides, an Ambassador College faculty member was a friend and frequent research resource for Tkach. Stavrinides explained to Tkach that Armstrong's idea of the sacrifice of Christ being segmented into blood for spiritual sin and broken body for the physical sin was erroneous. Instead, Jesus' sacrifice was one unified whole for the whole redemption of humanity.

The Bible does say that you 'wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb'—correct? It does say that you are 'healed by His stripes'—correct? Those are two parts of a whole unified sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of those that God calls now—and, for those God calls later when He executes His Plan.

Let me read another section here—concerning Christmas. Why it's okay to keep Christmas. He let his children watch Mr. Rogers. Mr. Rogers would come every morning and teach the kids the ABCs and all their little sing-songy little things. It came Christmas time, so Mr. Rogers dresses up as Santa Claus. And they looked at their father and said, 'Is Mr. Rogers bad?' What he kept telling them all along is Mr. Rogers is good. And how can he now say that Mr. Rogers was bad? Should he tell them that he was doing something that was bad, that he is basically a good person? He didn't know how to handle it, so he uses this device as a way for keeping Christmas. Now, we come to the final rational:

Christians who condemn Christmas have their reasons. Prior to the fourth century, December 25th was indeed a day of pagan merry-making in the Roman Empire in honor of the birthday of the invincible son.

Who was Baal? *The sun- god!* Go back and read the Old Testament on how many times God condemned the Israelites for following the days of Baal.

It marked the lengthening of day following the Roman solstice—the dying sun indicated by the shorter days of winter was reborn at this time and it began to increase again—it’s strength is shown by the longer days. How can a day devoted to pagan rubbery be used to honor Christ?

So, here’s his answer:

To the contrary, of avoiding it, perhaps December 25th was ultimately settled on by Christians, laid by the decree of the pope, for celebrating the birth of Christ precisely so that the Christian observance would coincide with the pagan festival. So as to over-shadow and replace it, which of course it did, Jesus Christ is worshiped as the true light of the world and as the true Son of righteousness who rises with healing in His wings.

So conscience and condemnation:

The Christmas tree is highly offensive to some Christians who consider it a leftover of pagan rubbery and nature worship. It is interesting however, to know that Yahweh is not reluctant to compare Himself to a pine tree (Hosea 14:8).

Hosea will show you the kind of reasoning that is used. Let’s come Hosea 14:1, so we’ll get the whole flow here, so we’ll understand what’s going on. “O Israel, return to the LORD your God...”—because he corrected them and sent them into exile for transgressing and sinning—correct?

“...for you have fallen because of your iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the LORD. Say to Him, ‘Take away all *our* iniquity, and receive *us* graciously, that we may repay *with* the sacrifices of our lips. Assyria shall not save us... [they came to realize] ...we will not ride on horses. Nor shall we say any more to the work of our hands, “Our gods”—for in You the fatherless finds mercy.’.... [God’s words]: ...‘I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely; for My anger has turned away from him” (vs 1-4).

We show that some of the conditions of the love of God has also to do with **correcting**, because Heb. 12 says ‘for whom God loves He chastens’—

right? *Yes!* That still is an expression of God’s love. To love one **freely** means they have repented of their sins, that they’re in good standing with God, and you can’t be in good standing with God until you repent of your sins and return unto the Lord—correct?

Verse 5: “I will be as the dew to Israel ... [Do we worship ‘dew’? Do we celebrate the feast of ‘dew’? I say that with a little cynicism and sarcasm, rightly so as you will see] ...he shall blossom as the lily and cast out his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. Those who dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive like the grain, and grow like the vine. Their scent *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim *shall say*, “What have I to do any more with idols?” I have heard *him* and watched him; I *am* like a leafy cypress tree. Your fruit is found from Me” (vs 5-8). So therefore, since God says, “...I *am* like a leafy cypress tree...” ***it is all right to have the Christmas tree.*** In all my years in the Church that’s the first time I have ever heard that justification.

Feazell quotes from the *New International Version*—here’s verse 8 in his book quoted from the *NIV*:

“O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a green pine tree; and your fruitfulness comes from me.”

What is the difference between this and the Christmas tree? *He’s picturing this as a living tree; it’s not cut!* Remember Jer. 10 ‘One goes in the forest and cuts a tree. Nails it with hammers and nails, decks it with silver and gold,’ and so forth.

To be like a green pine tree or fir tree is a *simile!* Meaning that from that you are going to draw the aspects of life, of health, of protection by the shadow of God, as by the tree. God pictures Himself as everything. So He says, ‘I’m like the dew.’

Do we take this green pine tree and get the squirter and if you want to take it literally, and this gives you cause for having a Christmas tree in your house, then you must get a squirt bottle and every day put some mist on it. I’m being facetious, of course. Now then, here’s his conclusion:

Thus, in direct contrast to idols, God compares Himself to a green pine tree as a symbol.

No, He said it was *as a likeness*, not a *symbol*. A *symbol* can be turned to worship.

That He is the only Source of the fruitfulness of His people. I know of no Christians who worship the Christmas tree. Perhaps there are some but I’ve never

heard of them. While I can respect and understand the viewpoint and decision of Christians who avoid Christmas, I have come to view it in a fresh way, a way that provides another excellent opportunity to focus and orient my life around the saving and empowering work of God through Jesus Christ.

Then, he wrote a *long* poem, here's the conclusion of it here:

That's what Christmas is all about, the love of God. That's the story the Christmas tree tells us on this Christmas season. There is no sin in approaching these matters differently. The Bible is silent about the celebration of Christmas. There was no sin in the Worldwide Church of God avoiding Christmas for reasons of conscience. The sin lay in the unrelenting condemnation of all Christians who view the matter differently from the way we did.

See what he's doing? He's taking all the teachings from the Bible and saying these are human expressions of interpretation from the Scripture, therefore we can re-interpret it a different way.

They are symbols of a new life we have in Jesus. It is another way of drawing... [if you don't keep Christmas] ...a boundary around the grace of God. It is another way of declaring God's grace reaches to us and no further—how is that so? The grace of God does not have boundaries.... [Does it or doesn't it? What is a boundary on the grace of God?] ...And also with this, the love of God has no boundaries.

What are some of the boundaries on the grace of God? *Okay, there must be repentance, true!* What's another boundary on it?

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!...**" (vs 1-2). Is that not a limit to the grace? *Yes it is!* That is a distinct boundary—is it not? You can't live in sin and claim the grace of God—correct? So therefore, you're obligated to find out what is sin. From the Word of God, not your own ideas or how you feel.

Verse 2: "**MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?"

Romans 3:7: "For if, by my falsehood, the truth of God has shown itself *to be* supremely great, to His glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner? But not, according as we are being blasphemously charged, and according as some are affirming *that* we say, 'Let us practice evil things in order that

good things may come.' Their condemnation is deserved" (vs 7-8).

That's what he's saying here, but he says it nicely. So therefore, if you say 'evil' nicely and you look at it with a warm, fuzzy feeling in your heart and you claim you love God, now therefore, it's got to be right because you feel good.

Verse 31: "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, we are establishing law." That it may be *written in our hearts and within our minds*—correct? *Yes!*

Let's look at one other thing that limits grace, if there were no boundary at all to the grace of God—in other words, the grace of God is boundless. In other words, there are no boundaries, meaning there are no parameters, there are no definitions, but however you want to claim it: 'Lord just as I am,' implies no repentance.

Jude 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled... [obligated] ...to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints." Which we have seen must also include commandment-keeping.

- It takes faith to keep the Sabbath
- It takes faith to keep the Holy Days
- It takes faith to do the things that God says
- It takes *no* faith to have an idol
- It takes *no* faith to worship other gods
- It takes *no* faith to keep Sunday
- It takes *no* faith to commit adultery, murder or whatever justification you want

Verse 4: "For certain men have stealthily crept in... [stealthily, just like Kaplan] ...those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally... [When you do that, what happens?]: ...denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." So, there are boundaries to it—right? *Yes, indeed!*

Our petty ideas about pagan origins and outward appearances evaporate under the intense heat of God's love. God is not interested in our self-aggrandizing quarrels about theological details, He is interested in us.

Then he quotes John 3:16. So, he puts it in the realm of rather than the Truth of God it's theological arguments.

Our theological disputes seem bent on separating us from each other.

Did not God call us to be separate? Are we of the world? *or* Not of the world?

This is New Testament doctrine by Paul—is it not? 2-Corinthians 6:14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? What fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union...” (vs 14-15)—*or agreement*. Isn’t it interesting that the agreements between the governments of this world and the Vatican are called *concordance*.

Verse 15: “And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of the living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, **come out from the midst of them and be separate,**’ says the Lord, and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty” (vs 14-18).

So therefore, what we have is 2-Corinthians 7:1: “Now then, beloved, since we have these promises, we should purge ourselves from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the* spirit, perfecting holiness in *the* fear of God.” So, yes it does have a limit.

Is the analogy important? Yes, it’s even critical, when it is about what God is and what He has done to save the world. That is just the point: Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am the chief. I don’t need hair-splitting definitions of sin, I need Jesus Christ, my Savior, Lord and Teacher.... [Yes he does! We all need Christ] ...Praise God for Fred Rogers and Santa Claus. Praise God for the Easter Bunny and chocolate eggs. Today in the town of Bethlehem and build it up, a Savior has been born unto you, He is Christ the Lord. I celebrate on Christmas and Easter because, by the grace of God, and only by the grace of God, I love Jesus.

If you love Jesus, do you believe what He says? Here’s a statement by Jesus, we’ve gone over this many, many, many times, but we’ll do it again. And of course, remember what I’ve said about writing books on history. Who writes the history? *The victor!* This will be the interpretation to the world of what happened to the Worldwide Church of God—the true story will never be published. Because when you have certain men who stealthily creep in unaware and a conspiratorial overthrow they do not leave footprints, they only leave the

fruits of destruction. That’s why when you say of a conspiracy that you must have proof that will stand up in court—that is a long standard. Jesus said ‘you’ll know them by their fruits.’ If you see these things going on and you listen to their words and hear what they say, then compare it with the Scriptures. Then you’re comparing it with the standard of God and you’re not comparing it with your own ideas and your own self in your own way.

Here is what Jesus said, John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” He did not say, ‘If you feel good about something I know you love Me.’ No, He said, “If you love Me, keep the commandments...” We’ll come back here and look at some other things.

Like any other verse in the Bible this one needs to be understood in the whole context of the plan of God and what God is doing, John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

That is a very broad verse—isn’t it? What has to happen in belief, for the ‘whosoever’ [everyone]? *They have to repent! Yes!* What is there to believe in if you don’t repent? Is it to believe because “...God so loved the world...” that if you *feel good* about things and *you say* that you love God that you can do anything you want—as long as you *feel good? That’s not true!*

Let’s understand something about God’s love in relationship to God’s responsibility and God’s power and God’s understanding. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth—correct? *Yes! He reformed the surface of the earth in six days!* What did He do on these days, when He brought forth the animals and so forth? *He blessed them said, ‘be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth’—correct?* What did he say to man? *He said that He made them male and female, and blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and I’ve given you dominion of the whole earth.’*

That’s an expression of *God’s love to all people*. But that expression of God’s love to all people *does not mean salvation to all people*. What happened to Adam and Eve when they sinned? Was the blessing changed to a curse? *Yes!* Is that a limiting of God’s love? *Yes!* A curse from God for correction is also an expression of God’s love, which limits the blessings that He would give for obedience, He limits the blessings that He gives to those for disobedience, or, in fact, brings a curse.

Remember what happened to Cain? Remember what happened at the Flood of Noah? God was very particular with Noah—wasn’t He?

The whole earth had corrupted His way and was only evil in the thoughts of man, were only evil from his youth up, so therefore, God said, 'I will destroy man and beasts from the face of the earth, for it grieved Me that I have made man. But Noah found grace!' Was God's grace boundless or limited? *It was limited to Noah, and his family!* God's grace does not go out to the whole world as a *boundless* thing in which then you can do anything you want to.

Now let's see where God has bound Himself with something which He will not violate. So therefore, because these things are and these things happen and these things continue this way, does not mean that God's love is boundless to the whole world and equals salvation. God gave a promise as an expression of His love and faithfulness to mankind this way.

Genesis 9:1: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.'"

Verse 7: "'And you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and increase in it.'" Has mankind done that? Does that blessing still apply to all of mankind regardless of where they are? To all nations and tribes, etc.? *Yes!*

Verse 8: "And God spoke to Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 'Behold I, even I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you'" (vs 8-9)—which means all nations. Here is a covenant with all nations, which is an expression of God's love.

Verse 10: "And with every living creature that *is* with you—of the birds, of the livestock, and of every animal of the earth with you—from all that go out from the ark, to every animal of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you. Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood. Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (vs 8-11).

Did God keep His promise? *Yes!* There have been major floods in different parts of the world but it didn't cover the whole earth or destroy it. Which then is also another proof that the whole earth was covered with water.

Verse 12: "And God said, 'This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature with you, for everlasting generations... [it is a covenant for 'perpetual generations.']. ...I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be *the* sign of *the* covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all

flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the rainbow shall be in the cloud. And I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.' And God said to Noah, 'This *is* the token of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.'" (vs 12–17). There we have it.

- Has God kept His word? *Yes!*
- Is this an expression of God's love to the whole earth? *Yes!*
- Does this give salvation to the whole earth? *No!*

Because the rest of the story is, and we've covered it, what happened? *God called Abraham, and Abraham alone*—correct? One man! Is that restricting His love to other nations? *Sure is!* He said, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that 'all the nations of the earth will be blessed'—*through* them—not unilaterally, unboundedly to all of them.

Let's look at some of the other things, showing the love of God to the world—whether they are sinners or whether they are not sinners.

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'.... [Even God showed that there's a difference between love and hate—correct? *Yes!*] ...But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (vs 43-44). Did not Jesus say, 'So Saul, is it hard for you to kick against the pricks and you persecute Me?' And was Saul, at that time, hateful toward God? *Yes!* In God's mercy, how did God deal with Saul who became Paul? Well, He struck him down and *called* him—correct? But he had to repent—correct? He had to stop his sinning—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 45: "So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on* the good..." There are good people in the world, there are evil people in the world. The good people are not on a 'greased slide' to salvation, and the evil people are not on a 'greased slide' to ever-burning hell—God just hasn't called them, as you know, at this time.

"... and sends rain on *the* just and *on* the unjust" (v 45). There you have it. That's still an expression of God *toward* those people—expression of God's love—whether they are sinners or whether they are not sinners; whether they are good or evil; whether they are just or unjust.

Luke 6—we'll see the parallel account of it here. You cannot extrapolate this into meaning that

this is love unto salvation. Love unto salvation is another thing.

Luke 6:35: “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be *the* children of the Highest; for He is good to the unthankful and *the* wicked.”

(go to the next track)

In time, as we know through the Last Great Day, God is going to resurrect those who did evil to a second life in the flesh so they can have an opportunity for salvation. But since people have the *thought* that God is trying to save the world now, we must include everybody that we can. That’s the whole motivation behind this ecumenical thing, and at the same time they take down Christ to level of Mohammad.

Let’s see something here very important. Let’s see what Paul said, and this will show us how God then expresses His love and goodness in keeping the covenant with Noah. All of these are because of the covenant that God made with Noah and his descendants—that means all human beings today, and with the earth. When he came into the city, which they had the priest of Jupiter and they had all of that going on.

They wanted to call Barnabus, *Jupiter* and Paul, *Mercurius*, because of the miracle that they did, Acts 14:15: “And saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, with the same nature as you, and we have been preaching the Gospel to you, *so that* you will turn from these vanities to the living God...’” Jupiter and Mercury have *the pagan equivalent* of Christmas and Easter and all that—right? *Yes!*

“...vanities to [to serve] the living God, Who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all the things in them; Who in the past generations allowed all peoples to go in their *own* ways; though, indeed, He did not leave Himself without witness, in doing good to us from heaven *by* giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (vs 15-17).

That’s an expression of God’s love to the whole world to fulfill what He said there in the covenant with Abraham.

Let’s see how God’s love is *selective*. Can God be selective in His love? *Yes, He can!* Here we see that God’s love is *selective* and it also is *conditional*. When we enter into a relationship with God, like they did here, then we will see that it is *selective* and *conditional*.

Deuteronomy 7:6: “For you *are* a Holy people to the LORD your God. The LORD your God

has chosen you...” If you choose someone different from someone else, is that not being *partial* or *selective*? Did not God choose Isaac and not Ishmael? The source of the world’s problems today? *Yes!* Did not God choose Jacob and not Esau? *Yes!*

“...[He] has chosen you to be a special people to Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.... [That is selective love—is it not?] ...The LORD did not set His love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number...” (vs 6-7). God defines definitely that *His love was selective*—right? *Absolutely!* It didn’t go to the whole world—did it? If it does go to the whole world, when does God apply these things, especially with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Oh, the very first thing Jesus said when He began His ministry was ‘*Repent and believe the Gospel.*’ It’s the same thing that John the Baptist said. He said, ‘Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.’

Verse 8: “But because the LORD loved you and because He would keep the oath, which He had sworn to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love Him... [love is a two-way street; God’s love to you must elicit back more love to Him] ...and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations. And he repays those who hate Him to their face...” (vs 8-10). Their God is love, which He is. Correction and repayment for their sins and their hatred also comes from God’s love, but it is different expression of His love—it is a correction.

“...to destroy them. He will not be slow to repay him who hates Him. He will repay him to his face.... [I tell you, if there is anything that says that God’s love is selective, there it is.] ... You shall therefore keep the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which I command you today to do them. And it shall come to pass, if you hearken to these judgments to keep and practice them, *then* the LORD your God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you...” (vs 10-13). *Conditional!* See, ‘*if you hearken*’—there is a condition to the love of God. What did Jesus say, ‘*If* you love Me, keep My commandments.’ That’s your condition. *If* you do these, then God will love you. It’s the same way.

Verse 13: “He will love you and bless you and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all people....” (vs 13-14). Now, that’s

partiality! That is not ecumenism; that is not the United Nations; that is not Communism. That *is* partiality.

“...There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. And the LORD will take away from you all sickness and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you know, upon you. But He will lay them upon all who hate you” (vs. 14–15). So there you have it! That’s *selective*—isn’t it?

Deuteronomy 9:1—this is interesting, because He also reminds them of some things: “Hear, O Israel! You *are* to pass over Jordan today to go in to expel nations greater and mightier than you, cities great and fenced up to heaven, a people great and tall, the sons of the giants, whom you know and have heard it said, ‘Who can stand before the sons of Anak!’ Therefore, understand this day that the LORD your God *is* He Who goes over before you. *Like* a consuming fire, He shall destroy them, and He shall bring them down before your face. So you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly as the LORD has said to you” (vs 1-3). When God has done that; when God has given something to you; when God has intervened in your life.

Verse 4: “Do not speak in your heart after the LORD your God has cast them out from before you, saying, ‘**For my righteousness...**’”

- for my goodness
- for my strength
- for my ability
- for my brains
- for my cunning

—whatever you want to say.

“...‘For my righteousness, the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’; but for the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you. Not for your righteousness, or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God drives them out from before you, so that He may perform the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob....” (vs 4-5). *Partiality! Yes, indeed!*

Verse 6: “Therefore, understand that the LORD your God does not give you this good land, to possess it for your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.” We can add right here, *the covenant that God gave to them was conditional. IF* you hearken and obey these blessings will come; *IF* you do not hearken and disobey these curses will come—correct? *Yes!*

Let’s come back to Romans, the ninth chapter, because we get into this argument: ‘In the New Testament, God is not partial.’ Yes, God *is partial*. And God’s love, though it is maintained to the world in the ways that I have covered, that does not mean that God’s love reaches out to all the world for salvation today. God’s love reaches out to those He *calls*. If He *calls* someone, that is a *selection*—right? What does it mean to be ‘the elect’?

The word *elect* in the Greek means: *one who is selected*. For example, within the group we have here: if I go along and I say, ‘Al, I want you to do this.’ Does that mean I disrespect all the rest of you, because I ask Al to do something? Does that mean that he has higher standing before me? *NO!* It just is, at this time, I want him do this and at some other time I may want you to do something—that’s all. So it is with the rest of the world.

- God chooses whom He will chose.
- God does what He does because He is God.

We will see how this operates, Romans 9:1: “I am telling you the Truth in Christ, I am not lying, my own conscience in *the* Holy Spirit bears witness with me That it is a great grief to me and an unceasing sorrow in my heart, causing me *even* to wish myself to be accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to *the* flesh; who are Israelites, to whom *is* the sonship and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service and the promises” (vs 1-4).

If he wished himself a curse, would God curse him to accomplish this for him? *No!* No more than God would have blotted out Moses’ name from book of Life, because when Moses pleaded for the children of Israel, after their sin. Remember, Moses said, ‘Forgive them Lord, and if You don’t, blot my name out of the book of Life.’ And God says, ‘I will blot out whom I will blot out.’

Verse 5: “Who are of *the* fathers, and from whom *came* the Christ according to *the* flesh, Who is over all—God blessed into the ages. Amen. However, this does not mean that the Word of God has failed because **not all of those who descend from Israel are Israel**” (vs 5-6).

What was Israel’s name before it was called Israel? *Jacob!* Who was born to Isaac and Rebecca? *Jacob and Esau!* All those of Esau, though they came from Jacob, are not of Israel.

He makes it clear—v 7: “Nor because they are Abraham’s seed does it mean that they *are* all children of *the promise*....”

- Is Ishmael of the seed of Abraham? *Yes!*
- Are they the spiritual children of God? *No!*
- Are they the physical children of God of Israel? *No!*

Verse 7: "...But 'In Isaac shall your seed be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh *are* not the children of God; rather, the children of the promise are reckoned as *the* seed... [Isaac and Jacob] ...because this *is the* word of promise: 'According to this set time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only *that*, but Rebecca also having conceived by one, Isaac our father, But before *the children* had been born, or had done anything good or evil (in order that the purpose of God according to His own selection might stand—not of works, but of Him Who calls)" (vs 7–11).

Remember, God said, "there are two nations in your womb"—one was Esau, the other was Jacob. Where did the races come from? Can God create them, just like that? *No doubt about it!*

Verse 12: "It was said to her, 'The elder shall serve the younger'.... [Has that happened? *Yes, indeed!*] ...Accordingly, it is written, 'Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated'" (vs 12-13). Do we see that today? Does God hate the things that they are doing today? With all the terrorist things? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 14: "What then shall we say? *Is there* unrighteousness with God?... [Is He partial and gives blessings to whom He will bless, and curses whom He curses?] ...MAY IT NEVER BE! For He said to Moses, 'I will show mercy to whomever I show mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion.' So then, *it is* not of the one who wills, nor of the one who runs; rather, *it is* of God, Who shows mercy. For the Scripture said to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up...'" (vs 14-17).

- gave him power
- gave him wealth
- gave him glory
- gave him honor
- let him be the representative of the head of the religion of Egypt—which represents Satan the devil

"...I raised you up in order that I might show in you My power, so that My name may be declared in all the earth.'.... [It still is through the Word of God—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*] ...So then, He shows mercy to whom He will, and He hardens whom He will. Will you then reply to me, 'Why does He yet find fault? For who has opposed His purpose?' Yes, indeed, O man, who are you to answer against God? Shall the thing that is formed say to the one who formed *it*, 'Why did you make me this way?'" (vs 17-20).

God has His reason for Esau. God has His reason for Ishmael. He said they would become a great people and He would bless them. But, He hasn't called them to salvation. He did not call them

into the physical relationship that He had with Israel and the promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has not called them unto salvation, at this particular time, as a nation. Nor, has He called Israel, at this particular time, unto salvation. So, He was drawing a very good lesson here to show that God is going to do His will, God is going to *call*, God is going to *select*, God is going to *show* His love to those whom He will show His love and give salvation to those whom He will call. And no one is going to stand in the face of God and ask, 'Why are You doing thus?'

Verse 21: "Or doesn't the potter have authority over the clay to make from the same lump of clay one vessel unto honor, and another vessel unto dishonor? And *who dares to question His purpose* if God, willing to show *His* wrath and to make known His power, chose in much long-suffering to put up with *the* vessels of wrath which were created for destruction... [Which we see happening in the world today—correct? *Yes!*] ...In order that He might make known the riches of His glory unto *the* vessels of mercy, which He prepared before for glory, those of us **whom He also called**, not from among *the* Jews only, but also from among *the* Gentiles?" (vs 21-24). Then He gives a little warning that God is able to do these things.

Why does God hate Esau? Hatred is the opposite of love—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* But many people say it is the same side of the coin, or the opposite side of the coin. No, we're not going to do an in-depth study of Esau, safe to say that. This is what God has said. Now, if this makes ecumenists unhappy, or if this makes people feel as though that God is *unjust*, then you better go read Rom. 9 again.

Malachi 1:1: "The burden of the Word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 'I have loved you,' says the LORD. 'But you say, "In what way do You love us?" *Was* not Esau Jacob's brother?' says the LORD. 'Yet I loved Jacob. And I hated Esau and made his mountains a desolation, and his inheritance *to be* for the jackals of the wilderness.' If Edom says, 'We are beaten down, but we will return and build the waste places,'—thus says the LORD of hosts, 'They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall be called the border of wickedness, and the people *with* whom the LORD *is* indignant forever. 'And your eyes shall see, and you shall say, "The LORD will be magnified beyond the border of Israel!"'" (vs 1-5). So, God hates Esau. One of the sons of Esau was Amalek.

Amalek is remembered and here is what God says of Amalek. God selected Israel, brought them out of Egypt, was bringing them to Mt. Sinai. God was bringing the children of Israel out into the wilderness, to give them the Ten Commandments, and:

Exodus 17:8: “Then Amalek came and *made war against* Israel in Rephidim.” Then Joshua and his troops would prevail as long as Moses’ hands were in the air. When they went down, Amalek would prevail. What they did, because Moses’ arms were weak, they took and moved a rock under his arms so he could hold them up, and hold the staff up, and the battle was theirs.

Verse 14: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this as a memorial in a book, and rehearse *it* in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.’ And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it The LORD My Banner. And he said, ‘Because the LORD has sworn *that* the LORD *will have* war against Amalek from generation to generation’” (vs 14-16). Now, we’re experiencing part of that today. That’s part of what’s going on with Esau.

We have another Amalekite, the king called Agag. Here is God’s retribution to the Amalekites, 1-Samuel 15:2: “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I will punish Amalek for *that* which he did to Israel, how he set against him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek, and completely destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey’” (vs 2-3).

This would seem rather harsh if you didn’t know the Truth of the second resurrection. But, nevertheless, that is God’s judgment—isn’t it? Whether you count it fair or not, fairness is not equated with God in the way that human beings equate fairness. You know the rest of the story. They took the best of the sheep, the best of the cattle and they saved Agag, king of the Amalekites, alive. Saul’s action constituted rebellion, which is worst than witchcraft. He was then sentenced to losing his kingship and his dynasty, through his children, to be kings. The finality of it is this, is that Samuel had to hack Agag in pieces to fulfill the Word of God. Read the whole chapter, 1-Sam. 15. So, God will do those things that way.

Now let’s come and see some things that are very important for us to understand concerning God’s love and God’s way. Psalm 11:4: “The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD’S throne is in heaven. His eyes behold; His searching gaze tests the children of men. The LORD tries the righteous, but **His soul hates the wicked** and the one who loves violence. Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone; and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup, **for the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness...**” (vs 4-7).

He loves righteousness, He hates iniquity. That’s what we read there, and remember what we

covered in our series on Hebrews, the very first chapter. The reason that Jesus has the throne and sepulcher of power forever and ever is because He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness or iniquity.

Psalm 146:8: “The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD raises up those who are bowed down; **the LORD loves the righteous.**” We just saw that the Lord *hates* the evil; the Lord *loves* the righteous. So there we have it.

Now let’s see the conditional aspects of the love of God. *It is conditional!* It is boundless, but it’s conditional. And in it being conditional, God is the One Who limits Himself—correct? Many times **our actions** will limit God’s love to us, so He must correct us—which then is done in love (Heb. 12: ‘Whom the Lord loves He corrects’).

John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the – namely My commandments.” We’ve gone over this many times, but in order to understand the basic Scriptures and the things we need to understand, many times we have to go back to these basic Scriptures. These basic Scriptures are those things that define for us *the foundation on which we understand the Word of God.*

Verse 21: “The one who has My commandments... [New Testament doctrine, the word from Jesus, the promise He spoke on the Passover night—correct?] ... and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me.” We have our part back to God. Part of loving God is keeping the commandments. Part of loving God is with the emotion, but you must have both parts. You can’t have one without the other. The Jews had commandments and laws *without love*. And granted, that was part of the sin of Worldwide, because they got into this Pharisaical attitude. So, we are to respond **back to** the love of God by keeping His commandments, and—that’s the responsibility of love—and with our whole hearts.

It is true that our love for God is greater than all doctrine, is greater than all the prophets, but yea, the love of God establishes all of those things because they flow from the love of God. Now, we saw the responsibility of needing to keep the commandments of God because we love Him. We will see that God will love us in return. But, where is the emotional response that we have for God? And that emotional response is *a complete commitment to God, in love!*

Matthew 22:37: “And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart...’” There is to be emotion, there is to be heart, there is to be feeling. But those emotions and heart and feeling do not override the necessity of keeping the commandments of God—they are part of it.

Just exactly as you would have with water. Water is composed of *hydrogen and oxygen*—H₂O equals water. Separate, you have two different components, which actually cause fire and make fire accelerate. If you put oxygen on fire it's going to burn hotter. As a matter of fact, they do that to perfect steel, to make really hard steel. They blast oxygen into the furnace. Hydrogen burns! Isn't amazing that God could take two opposites, combine them in a special way—of what we call H₂O and you use that to put fire out.

Likewise with the love of God. You cannot have just one part of it, because it will lead to licentiousness. If you think God's love is just so boundless that it goes to everyone everywhere all the time; and you can't have it where it's just legalistic and law-keeping because there's no love. *You must have both!*

"... 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'" (vs 37-40). So, *the law* is based upon love! And keeping it requires faith.

Let's see how this all comes together now. Yes, God's love is boundless towards those who have repented, who've been baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit of God. And that love is boundless unto salvation through His grace, provided that we continue in His love. *God's love is boundless to the world in the things that God has promised to them through the covenant of Noah*—but has nothing to do with salvation at this present time.

John 14:21: "The one who has My commandments... [*has them, has knowledge of them*] ...and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." So, there you have the two-way operation:

- the emotion, the obedience
- the commitment—your love to God, God's love to you.

He says, 'My Father will love him and I will love him.' Does God love you? *Yes!* Does God love the world? *Yes*, in a different way! Sooner or later—through the plan of God, and as we know the meaning of the Last Great Day—God will extend salvation to those people God has not called now. If He hasn't called them and selected them, then God has excluded them for this particular time. But, nevertheless, He gives them a measure of His love

by the promises that He has given—which is not unto salvation.

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... [that's much more than just commandments, that's everything] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.'" That's through the power of the Holy Spirit, because then you are part of the temple of God.

Verse 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words... [you could just phrase it this way: 'He that keeps not My sayings, does not love Me.' Would that not be also correct? *Yes, it would!*] ...and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (vs 23-24).

Now, let's see what Christ admonishes us to do—conditional. This shows a condition. God does not put a condition on Himself. The condition is always upon us, because we are the ones who are flesh; God is spirit.

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love" (vs 7-9).

- You need to understand that *Jesus loves you!*
- You need to understand that *the Father loves you!*

—and that is with a special love unto salvation, because you love Him with the whole heart and you keep His commandments—and, with all your heart, too.

He says "...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. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: **that you love one another, as I have loved you**" (vs 9-12). Then He says that He laid His life down for His friends.

Let's see a prayer of Jesus that is partial. This is quite a prayer, and it *excludes* the world from those that are called.

John 17:6: "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word. Now they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You. For I have given them the words that You gave to Me; and they have received *them* and truly have known that I came from You; and they have

believed that You did send Me. **I am praying for them...**" (vs 6-9)—selected prayer—correct?

Verse 9: "I am not praying for the world... [Therefore, God's blessing and God's love, He has determined Himself to limit!]...but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and all Yours *are* Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*" (vs 9-11). They are not at one with the world—that won't happen until later

Verse 12: "When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I am speaking *while yet* in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them. I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that You would **keep them from the evil one**" (vs 12-15).

So, we need to realize in this time that we're living in, God will keep us from the 'evil one.'

- ***God's love is partial!***
- ***God's love is special!***
- ***God's love is conditional!***

Though it is boundless to those who love Him and keep His commandments; and His grace is there to cover our sins, it doesn't give us license to do anything we *feel* that is good and *feel* as though that God is required to accept us the way we are without repentance and change.

The long and short of the story is that in order to love God you can't possibly do away with His commandments and go keep all the pagan days of the world and say, 'we're delivered to do this' and because 'I feel good about it, therefore I praise God for Easter and Christmas and chocolate Easter bunnies.'

God is going to have something else, different, to say that later on.

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

Scripture References

- 1) Revelation 14:12
- 2) Hosea 14:1-8
- 3) Romans 6:1-2
- 4) Romans 3:7-8, 31

- 5) Jude 1:3-4
- 6) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 7) 2 Corinthians 7:1
- 8) John 14:15
- 9) John 3:16
- 10) Genesis 9:1, 7-17
- 11) Matthew 5:43-45
- 12) Luke 6:35
- 13) Acts 14:15-17
- 14) Deuteronomy 7:6-15
- 15) Deuteronomy 9:1-6
- 16) Romans 9:1-24
- 17) Malachi 1:1-5
- 18) Exodus 17:8, 14-16
- 19) 1 Samuel 15:2-3
- 20) Psalm 11:4-7
- 21) Psalm 146:8
- 22) John 14:15, 21
- 23) Matthew 22:37-40
- 24) John 14:21-24
- 25) John 15:7-12
- 26) John 17:6-15

Scripture references, but not quoted:

- Hebrews 12
- Jeremiah 10

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Liberation of the Worldwide Church of God* by Michael Feazell
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series: *Hebrews*

Love & Overcoming Offenses

Fred R. Coulter

What is happening in the world and the Churches of God today?
What is the solution to what is happening?

We are seeing an unprecedented scattering of the people of God to many different directions—to all the four winds. That was prophesied that it would happen. But there are things that are happening within not only the Churches of God, but every church and in the whole society. There's a bigger picture that we need to look to. We need to understand what's going on.

Paradigm Changes:

I'm going to read to you from this report, *Global 2000* by John Coleman, which is a blueprint for global genocide. That may shock you to find out that's what some of them have planned, but when you read the book of Revelation it should not come as a shock. This *Global 2000* report was accepted by former President Jimmy Carter. There are a lot of things that you don't know that are kept from a lot of people. This man does a lot of research and finds out what is going on. He used to work for the CIA and he knows an awful lot. Let me read on page 12 from this report, *Global 2000*:

Global 2000 and the New World Order, for which it stand, plans fundamental societal changes for man.

Are we having fundamental societal changes now? *Not only here but in every society!* Look at China, Africa, Russia, Europe, South America—fundamental societal changes.

- Have you been affected by these? *Yes!*
- Has it affected your family? *Yes!*
- Has it affected your children? *In many cases, Yes!*

I've got something else here I need to add in this point concerning children just to show you how subtle that this is, and how that they're working on every front. You need to understand when anyone talks about the CFR, the Trilateralists, the Bilderbergers, etc., you know they're dealing with a lower level. The higher level is bigger than that. They are working on the younger generation, because the first thing that you want to do, in order to create this new generation, in order to bring about these fundamental changes is that you *must* get to schools. Have the schools been had? *Totally!*

What does Hillary want to do with the children? This is all a part of United Nations Year of the Children kind of thing. Did you know that the

one-worlders are striking, through the cereal boxes, at your kids? This came in Post Corn Flakes. Let me read it to you; this is for kids. Now they're going to participate in voting, so it's kind of a game—all right. They send you a free voting phone card. The kids get this and it says, tells you how to do it if you have a touch-tone phone.

Secret Code. You have a secret code. And this one is #21814607608, then you can vote for Flintstone for President—first President of Bedrock.

Remember this: *Satan gets in all of his evil through humor!* Understand that! If you don't believe me, watch Walt Disney. If you don't believe me, watch the slapstick of the Three Stooges. That's how he gets it in. That's how he gets in homosexuality and transvestitism and all kinds of terrible behavior—ungodly, abominable behavior—by first introducing it with comedy.

Now then, there's going to be a prize; there's a prize panel. This is also sponsored by Post and Nickelodeon Kids/Nickelodeon Cartoons. That's one of the leading stations in the world today, Nickelodeon. It's not only here; it's worldwide. This is going worldwide. I won't tell you about the prizes, but Nickelodeon, Kid's Bill of Rights:

In the course of history it has become pretty clear that all people are born with certain unalienable rights, among them: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But these rights haven't always been applied to kids. Now, 200 years after the creation of the American Bill of Rights, this declaration proclaims to the world...

That is this declaration right here, that I'm holding in my hands is proclaiming to the world:

...that you, as a kid, have rights, too.

I want you to think about rights. Want you to think about that, as we go through:

- You have the right to be seen and heard and respected as a citizen of the world.
Nothing like taking away a little patriotism—Yes!
- You have a right to a world that is peaceful and an environment that is not spoiled.

Peace under whose regime and environmental control by whom?

- You have a right to be treated with equality regardless of race, religion, nationality, sex, personality

personality includes lifestyles

- grades or size
- You have the right to make mistakes without someone making you feel like a jerk-head.
- You have the right to be protected from harm, injustice and hatred.

Who's going to do that? Hillary!

- You have the right to an education that prepares you to run the world when it is your turn.

Remember 1992 election, 'it's our turn.' The younger generation: 'It is our turn, move over George Bush, the baby-boomers are taking over.'

- You have the right to your feelings and opinions even if others don't agree with them.

What's wrong with rights? There can be no rights without responsibilities and duties! For example:

- You have a right to a fair trial—*provided you tell the truth.*
- You have a right to equal access—*provided you don't cheat.*
- You have right to be heard—*when it's your turn.*
- You also have the right, as parents, to discipline your children—which this takes it away from you lock, stock and barrel.

This is no little thing that is happening. This is something! I want you to think on how this is affecting the Church in some ways, too.

Fundamental changes. Part of Global 2000 bears a resemblance to the work of Louis Mumford entitled, *Transformation of Man...* [We're getting better and better and better] ...written in 1956. Mumford argued that changes are taking place all the time but there seems to be particular periods in history when society has gone through fundamental changes. Every society ever known rests on the same basic assumptions about: who we are, what kind of world we are in and what is ultimately important to us.

What is our basic—not assumption, but—Rock? *The Word of God!* What are they trying to do to the Word of God to change that? *Well, if you haven't heard New Age Bible versions one and two, you better!* Now we're finding out that the *New King James Version* is almost as bad as the *NIV* and the *New American Standard Bible*. But, what is it doing in the world? *They are changing all of these things!*

The Tavistock Institute for Human Relations...

That is in Great Britain. That is a leading center for brain control, propaganda, the think-tank for world control and one-world government and everything.

...they borrowed this from Thomas Kuhn's, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* particularly by using his term: "paradigm changes...."

Have you heard that? **Paradigm changes! Yes!** John Morgan is editing his paper that he did entitled, *Brainwashing and Subversion*. And you're going to be astounded at what happened.

...When referring to societal transformation, with such as we have undergone, very much against the will of the majority.

Have you ever wondered how it is, that the majority of people are against all of this, but it still keeps coming? In spite of everything that you do? If you want to change the school system, go to the school board. **No!** They won't give you an ear because they have the 'program coming down.'

I want you to think of this in relationship to the Church. I want you to think of what these things do to individuals, because it has an effect when you know that these changes are going against Truth and against what is right and against the Word of God; it does something to you.

Examples of cultural paradigm shifts are acceptance of homosexuality and lesbianism; pornography; disgustingly degraded music; so-called rock music...

That's how Satan puts them on his wave-link, right there: the rock music, MTV; if you're too young for MTV, then Nickelodeon. Nickelodeon has this contest where they have this big head of Baal. Have you seen that? He opens up his mouth and he talks with the kids and rewards prizes and they have certain contests they go through—all sponsored by Nickelodeon. Of course, all under *fun and games*, but what is it doing?

- it's changing values
- it's changing thought patterns
- it's bringing in idolatry
- it's bringing in reward from Satan for doing his bidding.

It's something! That's linguistic programming, there, Nero linguistic programming, that's all part of it.

...pornography; rock music; modern art; degradation in education; infanticide—called, *aborticide*—rampant divorce; disrespect for religious institutions....

But the problem is they have also taken all the religious institutions and put in people there,

which *cause* disrespect for them. How can you believe someone like Robert Schuler? I mean, just look at him. I keep praying that that crystal palace will have a great earthquake under it one day and it all comes tinkling down.

In the political arena, we have allowed tampering with our priceless constitution....

And he showed one of the keys of how this was done with the Gulf War thing. Very subtle!

The President is commander-in-chief only after war is declared by congress. He is NOT commander-in-chief to instigate a war at any time he wants to.

Very subtle change. This stuff is big, I'm telling you.

And permitted our president to break both domestic and international laws and treaties. Tavistock called this "tampering with the minds on a mass scale. The basic way of perceiving, thinking, valuing and doing associated with a particular view of reality."

This paradigm shift marked the turning away from the thoroughly decent society that America was up until the 1950s when President James Earl Carter accepted *Global 2000* report as a guideline for the future. Beyond the capacity of any of us to forecast the consequences of such demonically inspired paradigm shifts, but the conspirators always knew what they would be.

Most of us did not realize that the profound changes were being forced upon us so that we could resist them. But now that some of us it has taken years of our time to investigate these paradigm shifts, there is no excuse for us to remain ignorant. The cause and effect of such profound changes has been fully identified.

Then he says now what we need to do is go fight against it. Well, the problem is that's exactly what they want you to do so they can isolate you and take you out.

Global 2000 is working for a total belief system and organization of beliefs which we, Americans, accept as truth of the country in which we live: verbal, non-verbal; implicit, explicit; conscience and unconscious.

Has something like this happened in the Church? *Yes!* What happens when these things take place? When you come to a point that it looks like

you yourself are going to be absolutely violated—either mentally, spiritually or physically—what do you do? *You put up barriers and protection*—do you not? *Yes, you do!*

What else happens? Well, we're going to look at some of these, because it affects the Church. Let's look in Luke 15. First of all, it will affect many people to give up on God, and go in their own carnal way for a while though they know better. If you have not heard the sermon that I did *To Return to God*, I recommend that you go ahead and listen to that.

This is the parable of the prodigal son—Luke 15. You know the story, the son said, 'Hey Dad, I want my money, I want to go on my own, I'm big and strong and tough and know everything in the world; and I have all the wisdom that there is ever to know and so, I'm gone, bye-bye.'

So, the Dad gave him his inheritance and he left. And then lo and behold it didn't work out like he expected. The son went out and thought, 'I'm going to have a good time.' He wasted the money on wine, women and song and all kinds of things like that, got in debt and then he had to go to work for someone who was raising hogs.

Now, consider for a Jew, what would be the worst possible job of all? *Going out and feeding hogs!* That's what he did, and he was under strict orders: 'You are not to touch any of this grain that goes to the hogs.' He was starving to death and then something happened.

This shows that even in this, even if people leave God, *God never leaves them!* Which means that, in reality, they have never left God. They're only kidding themselves in what they're doing, just like this. But something happens.

Luke 15:17: "And when **he came to himself...**" That's a point of repentance for all of us. We all have to come to ourselves. So, it's affected many people that way, and some are not ready to face themselves, yet. Let's hope and pray that they will, so they can come back to God. I remember talking to a man, which inspired the sermon that I gave: *To Return to God*. He said, 'I left the Church 20 years ago. I didn't do the things I knew I should have done, but I never forgot what God was and I never forgot what I believed.' His conscience just ate away at him **until he came to himself.**

You may know some people that way yourself. You may have come to that point yourself, I don't know. But just understand there's *hope*.

So then, he came to reality: "...he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him,

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants”” (vs 17-19).

Of course, the father was out there probably every sunset like Jacob did when he thought that he lost Joseph. Sitting there moaning, wondering: Is this real? Holding that bloody, multi-colored jacket that he gave Joseph. And the lying brothers kept this up for 17 years!

If you think you have difficulty in your family, just go back and read about the patriarchs. It wasn't all sweet roses and nice. There were carnal, human things that took place, too. If you have some of those things in your family, in your life, don't think God is against you and don't think you're a failure. There are more factors involved and there's a choice of the people involved that's greater beyond that. Don't go around and condemn yourself and have a guilty conscience. You repent of your part and let God help you over that and what you're doing—and *He will!*

The father saw him a long way off, the sun came up, he had his speech all ready, he said, 'Father, I have sinned against you and heaven.' The father said, 'Son, I'm glad you're back.' He called the servants and said, 'Let's have a feast. Clean him up and put the best robe on him.'

Then you know what happened with the brother. We don't want to be like the brother who said, 'Where have you been, what have you been doing? You mean you're coming back and you're getting this; and I've been here doing this all the time? Now Dad, you're not fair. I have rights!' The father has a right to do with his son as he pleases. *God will do that with us!* He will welcome us back with open arms, and it will be solid, it will be good, and it will happen.

I'm building up to something, because we're going to see that what God is doing in bringing people together, bringing them to us. We don't go out and solicit; we don't go out and politic; we don't go out and count numbers. We ask God to send the ones He wants. That's not a matter of being selfish. That's a matter of God sending us the greatest job to do, when you understand it. It's harder when there have been a lot of difficulties and problems; and trust has been violated; and feelings have been hurt; and disillusionment has set in.

I know there must be *thousands* of brethren out there somewhere, whatever we can do to reach out and help them. You have those who are the prodigal son/prodigal daughter-type, who gave up on God, went off on their own temporarily. *God hasn't forgotten!* If they have the Spirit of God they are

going to think on it *everyday*—though they try to push it out of their minds. And every time the Sabbath comes along, they're going to think of it, they may push it out of their minds, but God is not through with them.

Speaking in Tongues:

Here's the next problem that we find in the Church—which is quite prevalent. Concerning *speaking in tongues*, because that seems to be the current rage of false doctrine now, and there are many false doctrines going around like leaves in a hurricane. We'll see a Biblical explanation of *speaking in tongues*:

1-Corinthians 14:22: “Consequently, *gifts of languages* are a sign... [it has no place within the Church] ...but for those who do **not** believe....” So, they can hear the Gospel preached in their own language, which they know that the speaker doesn't know. It is not a so-called 'Pentecostal experience' because every religion on the face of the earth has a Pentecostal branch of its religion. You didn't know the Muslims did—did you? The Hindus do, and the Hindus roll up their long hair, the men do, in these big turbans. When they get dancing, they have their hair down and they roll their heads around and chant and chant, jump up and down, and yell and scream and lose their minds by doing this: by de-voiding your mind of thought.

God never wants you to devoid your mind of thought! That's what happens with this. Besides, it becomes vain repetition—doesn't it? It is for the unbeliever.

“...But prophecy... [that is inspired speaking, not just speaking in prophecy, to move people to serve and love God] ...*is* not for the unbelievers, but for those who believe” (v 22). That's why there are levels of preaching. We are at a higher level of preaching now than we would be for a brand new group, because you should know your Bibles and we're going to learn more of the depths of the Scriptures that we need to know. Now is the time to perfect those saints that God would have perfected. That doesn't mean that we're avoiding the new people.

Verse 33: “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” What were they having in 1-Corinthians? *Why, they were having a grand old heretical time!* That's what they were doing. Everyone was big and important; everyone was a preacher, teacher and evangelist.

Verse 26: “What is it then, brethren? When you assemble together, each of you has a psalm, has a doctrine, has a language, has a revelation, *or* has an interpretation.... [a wild mob scene in church]

...Let all things be done for edification.” In other words, these things are not to edify.

So, we have within the Church, sweeping false doctrines and people who have been dumbed down and don't know their Bibles and they get carried away with it, because people are able to quote Scripture, clearly quote the Scripture, which is *Truth*, and then misapply it. As I mentioned at the Feast, Scripture properly quoted but misapplied is still **false doctrine!** You need to understand that. We are dealing in a day when we not only need to know the *true* doctrine. We need to know why it's true. On the other hand, we need to know the *false doctrine* and we need to know **why** it's *false*. It's not sufficient to say it's a false doctrine any longer.

Now then, please understand this: ***Do not treat doctrine as you treat the wayward sinner or Christian.*** That is a confusion that has come into the Church and has turned everything upside down. Why? *He believes this; he has a right to believe that as you believe this!* Basic doctrine is not a matter of personal interpretation and belief.

So therefore, they have transferred to doctrine the relationship we need with brethren to help, to encourage, to give the benefit of doubt, to lead along. They have then ***treated the brethren as doctrine!*** Now, think on that! Why do I say that? ***Because false doctrine is not to be tolerated!*** But brethren who have difficulties need to be loved and tolerated and helped to overcome. We can never overcome being a dirty, rotten no-good if you're always told you're a 'dirty, rotten, no-good'—can you? *You know you can't.*

- You have to know that God *loves you!*
- You have to know that God *has called you!*
- You have to know *why He's called you!*

Offenses:

What happens when that occurs? People are ***easily*** offended, and sometimes at the slightest thing. Sometimes you don't even know that you have offended people. Let me ask you: How many of you have offended someone and didn't even know it? Were you surprised when that occurred? *Yes!* In how many cases did they ***not*** come to you? *Every case!*

This is not just in the Churches of God, but this is everywhere in the world—is it not? So, you see what's happened, these planned societal satanic changes coming down in the world has affected the Church, and the satanic infiltration in the Churches of God have also affected it. What do you do? *You guard yourself—correct? You say no one is ever going to do that to me again! Right? Yes!* And that brings offenses!

We all like to go to Matthew 24 and read the prophecies, but there's one that is active and on-going right now, which Jesus said would happen, that we need to understand and face with reality, because it does affect us. I'm not going to read all the big things in world events that's going to take place.

This is why, when society becomes unglued, there are many ways it's going to be done. I think one way it's going to be done is to cut off government aid to people who are dependent on it, and then guess what's going to happen? *At each other's throats.*

Matthew 24:8: “Now all these *things are* the beginning of sorrows.” When you have your back up to the wall, you have your rights taken away from you, you're offended because of what people have done—and likewise it's happened in the Church—you're very defensive. I've been; I know you have been, because you don't want it to happen to you again. You don't want to be lied to again. You don't want to be robbed again, you don't want to be led down the path with false doctrine and false teaching again. Now you're in a perfect place, you just say, 'Me and You, Lord.' If you work it out between you and God, that's fine. But not everyone does.

Verse 9: “Then shall they deliver you up to affliction, and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake.... [that's coming] ...And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another... [That's why, brethren, preaching and teaching the love of God is so important, that's the only solution to this. There's no other solution. What happens when this climate takes place?] ...And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many” (vs 9-11). Is that happening? Is it happening within the Churches of God? *Yes!* So then, we have the offended. This gives us the biggest task of all, because we are beginning to have a phenomena occur that you would never think would happen.

Proverbs 18:8: “The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” Has that not happened to every one of you? *Yes!* What has it done? *Turned you off on God! Turned you off on church! Turned you off on the whole thing!* Remember, you can never take a vacation from God. You may need time to get your head squared around, but you can never take a vacation from God. If you have God's Holy Spirit, He is not ever going to let you go—without a doubt.

Verse 19—here's what we're up against, brethren, right here: “A brother offended *is harder to win than* a strong city; and *their disagreements are* like the bars of a fortress.”

We're having a strange phenomena happen, and I appreciate your prayers concerning this, because all of the brethren need to be involved in this. We're having people come to us who are offended by someone else who is also coming to us. Now we must meet in the same congregation again. Is that not a hard task? *Yes, it is!* Now what are you going to do? *You have to do Matt. 18! Go to your brother alone!*

Since the Feast I've had two Matthew 18s myself. One to me: someone said, 'Fred, I need to talk to you Matt. 18.' When someone says that, **pay strict attention!** Be very willing to listen and don't react and get mad because it is a **right** and it is a **duty!** I truly offended someone, but I was happy that they came to me so we could resolve the issue and get it clarified, because I didn't even have a clue.

The worst mistake brethren make—husbands and wives, especially—is that you know what the other person is thinking. But you really never know! Have you done that with people? 'I know what he's thinking.' How do you know? Are you a mind-reader? What happens when you do that? **You automatically make a judgment**—don't you? What happens, nine out of ten times you're wrong.

Wives have a little better batting average, because they live with their husbands all the time and I think they're the greatest offenders of this; but when they're right, 'see, I was right, I was right, I was right.' *Yes! Yes! Yes! you're right!* You must use Matt. 18 to solve the problems. You go to the person, and you say, 'I need to talk to you Matt. 18' and get it resolved, love each other and make up, as brethren to brethren.

Now, **you don't treat doctrine that way!** What you do is you examine the Scriptures and **prove what is being said, whether it is true or not.** But **don't treat brethren like doctrine!** They're not doctrine, they're brethren!

That's why some people get angry at me, because they can't separate my pointing out their false doctrine from their person. So therefore, I am attacking that person. *No, I'm not!* But, when I see what we're doing to other brethren, somebody's got to say something—don't they? As one man said, 'Doesn't it say, *cry aloud and spare not*?' Are teachers and ministers exempt from that? *Well, of course not!*

We're not going to cover doctrine now. We need to pray that God will help us be able to help everyone overcome their offenses. Isn't it wonderful when you really forgive each other, whether it was a real hurt or imagined hurt, and I would say 60-80 percent of them are imagined hurts because you

want to be offended. Some people walk around just wanting to be offended. 'I got this chip on my shoulder and if you knock it off you're going to offend me. If you look at me you're going to offend me. How dare you, you looked at me!' Like little kids when they're fighting: 'Daddy, he looked at me!' That's what we have been doing in the Church—with all of these lies and enforced changes—because your trust has been betrayed. Part of it is that you put your trust in the wrong place. Your offense is your own. So, we need to pray and ask God to help us, but that's going to happen to everybody.

Matthew 26:31: "Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you shall be offended in Me during this night; for it is written, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.'"" That's exactly what's happening in the Church today.

- Many are offended in Christ.
- Many are offended in brethren.
- Many are offended in ministers.
- Many are offended at everything.

Some people are just grumpy all the time. I've been that way, too.

Verse 32: "But after I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee.' Then Peter answered *and* said to Him, 'Even if all shall be offended in You, I will never be offended.'.... [Oh, really?] ...Jesus said to him, 'Truly I say to you, during this *very* night, before *the* cock crows, you yourself shall deny Me three times'" (vs 32-34).

(go to the next track)

Verse 35: "Peter said to Him, 'Even if I were required to die with You, in no way would I ever deny You.' All the disciples also spoke in like manner."

There it is, the flesh is willing but the spirit is weak—they *all* got offended. All of us are basically here because we got offended sometime. We've got a big job to do. We have to start with ourselves, like the prodigal son who 'came to himself.' Set aside your own self-created offense. We can self-create our offenses. 'I'll never speak to that individual again.' Well, try it Matt. 18 in the spirit of love and repentance and see what happens. *It'll work!*

Let's apply it to the Church, because this is what needs to be done. There was delivered to Christ the book of Isaiah, He read, saying, Luke 4:18: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth in deliverance those*

who have been crushed, to proclaim *the* acceptable year of *the* Lord” (vs 18-19).

Let’s apply this to the Church. Do we have broken-hearted people in the Church? *Yes!* Isn’t that the hardest heart to heal? *Yes, that is,* because you’ve been so offended by people and leadership and one another and yourself. It is awfully hard to get healed, but let’s pray and ask God to help us heal the broken-hearted.

I get letters all the time from people saying, ‘Boy! I feel healed.’ I’m happy that we’re doing that. That’s why we send out the care package; to help them. That’s why in the letter I wrote the reason we send out the care packages: ‘...to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to *the* captives...’ You’re a captive to your own carnal self. Your captive to your own sins and lusts. You’re also a captive to the way that this world is, but there *is deliverance!*

One woman said, ‘Where do I begin? I know I need to begin.’ *Well, you start by asking God for the gift of repentance!* That’s where you start, because it has to come from God to bring that gift of repentance. Because only He can change the heart to motivate you to do what you need to do. With all of these things bottled up inside you, and all of these offenses crashing in about you, and with your defenses—so it will never happen again—it’s almost an impenetrable barrier for some brethren. They need to start by asking for the gift of repentance—that they can repent. Everything else will flow from there and the deliverance will come.

“...and recovery of sight to *the* blind...” (v 18). Too many brethren have been blinded Scripturally—haven’t they? I was talking to a man here just this morning and he said, ‘You know the last Feast of Atonement that I kept, they didn’t even mention one word about Satan.’ Well, that’s a very important part of Atonement, getting rid of Satan, wouldn’t you think? *Yes!*

They take the same thing that they have done with *Global 2000* and the Tavistock Institute to dumb everybody down and mold them into this one world thing. It’s happened within the Church to a certain level. So, they need to have their eyes opened to understand the Word of God and God needs to provide us the things that we can help them with that.

“...to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed... [the spiritually bruised and abused to set them at *liberty*, meaning in the liberty and freeness and joy of Christ, that He alone can provide] ...to proclaim *the* acceptable year of *the* Lord” (vs 18-19) That’s what it is today, all who are like that, and we’ve all been like that.

I remember in the heights of my depression I was really feeling sorry for myself and I had the greatest ‘pity-party’ possible—*I did!* You know you love ‘pity-parties.’ That soothes your offense; that justifies your offense; that makes you right in everything you are doing. I had a little bit of ‘adult’ beverage—Scotch, as a matter of fact—and I thought this is going to help me. I went to bed and couldn’t go to sleep. I tossed and turned and what happens?

The Scripture says, ‘Don’t let the sun go down on your wrath,’ because you’re going to have just a terrible, miserable night. *And I did!* I was laying there, and I was right! I was right! I was right! It’s even worse when you know you’re *right!* And everybody *knows* they’re right! I was right! I was laying in bed and about 2 o’clock in the morning I woke up and said, ‘*They can’t do that!*’ But, they just did! And this is part of the trauma that everyone who’s been associated with the Churches of God and maybe other churches—that things have happened in their churches and they’ve been taken down the garden path as well, they say the same thing. It’s a common problem we *can* overcome.

Let’s look how to overcome it. When that happens, don’t you feel *exhausted?* I mean, you wake up the next morning and it’s a *dirge!* Five cups of coffee doesn’t even lift the eyelids—isn’t that right?

- you feel *miserable*
- you feel *justified*
- you feel *hateful*

Christ has a solution for that, Matthew 11:28: “Come to Me... [you go to Christ] ...all you who labor... [laboring in your own stupidity and your own offense, and your own thing] ...and are *overly* burdened...” You do! You go around with a burden.

Someone comes up and says, ‘Man you got the whole world on your shoulders?’ *Yeah!* Understand how merciful and kind and tolerant and loving and understanding that God is. Think of that! He says He will lift this, He will take it, He will help you. This is what we need to get out to the brethren. ***God will help them! If they come unto Christ!*** There it is, ‘the heavy laden.’

“...and I will give you rest” (v 28). Don’t kill yourself any longer. It’s peaceful; it is wonderful; it is great when you come to the point of coming to Christ and laying it all before Him.

Verse 29: “Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me...” He went through everything. He was the loneliest man in the world. The most offended of any. You just think of what He did? Never sinning once, never raising His voice, never justifying Himself, but always knowing that God the

Father was right.

“...for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (vs 29-30). He’ll take it for you, you can count on God to do that.

How’s He going to do that? There’s this battle that goes on, and you need to understand that the inner battle with sin that you have is *because* you have the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that is convicting you of the inner battle with sin. People without the Holy Spirit don’t have this inner battle. They don’t fight it. They just go with the flow. That’s what the Apostle Paul was talking about here:

Romans 7:14: “For we know that the Law is spiritual [and it is, always ever working] ...but I am carnal...” Now, an apostle of God for over 20 years saying, ‘I’m carnal’—he’s being inspired to being honest—right? *Yes!* Do we all get carnal? *Yes!* That’s why God gives us inspiration so when we remember the inspiration, when we’re in the pits of our depression, remember the inspiration, God will raise you up.

Verse 15: “Because what I am working out myself, I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do.... [that’s the conviction of the Holy Spirit to show you right from wrong within your own mind] ...But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that *it is* good.... [The Law is good, nothing wrong with the Law; it gives you the knowledge of sin.] ...So then, I am no longer working it out myself; rather, it is sin *that is* dwelling within me; because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good. For **the desire to do good is present** within me; but how to work out that which is good, I do not find” (vs 15-18).

Verse 21: “Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me.... [everybody’s got the ‘law of sin’ from inheritance—called *human nature*. He also defines it as ‘the law of sin and death’ (Rom 8:2). But notice, he is stuck in this thing, doesn’t know what to do] ...For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members” (vs 21-23).

If you have something that’s part of you, can you get rid of it? Well, you could even cut off fingers one at a time; hands one at a time; feet one at a time; arms one at a time; you could gouge out the eyes! You could stop up the ears and lie there in your bed as a paraplegic and *lust*—right? The answer is ***a physical, carnal solution will not solve***

the spiritual problem.

Verse 24: “O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death? I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve* the law of sin” (vs 24-25).

Romans 8:1 is very important: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit.” Come to Christ, that’s the solution, that’s the answer.

How do we come to Christ? This is very important to know, very important to understand and realize. This is what the brethren need to know. I’m going to bring a sermon on how we are to handle doctrine at a later date, because it’s handled considerably different.

1-John 1:6 “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not **practicing the Truth**.... [The Truth is ‘Your Word is Truth, Your Law is Truth.’] ...However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another... [That’s how we have the fellowship. Why?] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us... [present tense participle, ***is cleansing us***] ...from all sin” (vs 6-7).

- Does God want you to be perfect? *Yes!*
- Does God want you to be spotless? *Yes!*
- Does God want to present you blameless before the Father? *Yes!*
- Is Christ there to accomplish that? *Yes!*

“...cleanses us from **all** sin”—and that means ***everyone!*** Cleansing is ‘katharizo’—*cleanse, purge, clean it.*

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins [to Christ], He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (vs 8-9). That’s where it begins, brethren, regardless of what it is. God is there. He’s instant to forgive.

If you don’t believe that, read about Ahab, that’s one of my favorites. He sent Elijah over there, ‘You go tell that Ahab he is just sold himself to sin and his retribution is coming heavy and hard and the dogs are going to lick up the blood of Jezebel and eat their flesh.’ Elijah goes over there and pronounces it and lo and behold, free choice is involved. *Ahab chooses to repent!* So, Elijah turns around after giving that pronouncement and is

walking down the road and the Word of the Lord came to Elijah and said, 'Elijah, see My servant, Ahab, how he's walking tenderly.' *Ahab repented! He put on sackcloth and ashes!*

If Ahab can repent, we can repent. God is willing and able and ready to forgive all sins if we confess our sins from the heart. That's how we can bring the brethren together, because then we don't have anything against each other. We've all brought it to Christ and we all lay it before Him. That's what's important. That's how it's going to be done. Isn't that going to be a marvelous thing indeed, when that occurs.

Will not God the Father and Jesus Christ be happy and rejoice? Won't the brethren be happy and rejoice? You can't accomplish it by political means. You can't accomplish it just by getting together and saying, 'Okay now, we're together again, yep.' ***NO!*** You have to have the love of God to do it. That's what they need to understand. That's what heals: ***the love of God!*** That's what inspires.

Let's see what is to happen, then we can begin to ask God to help us. Love is also a gift that comes from God. We have to pray for the gift of love. When you have someone who has offended you and you have had something that has gone wrong—husband/wife, friend/neighbor, brother/sister, whatever it may be, in the Church or out of the Church—I've had to learn, and it's difficult to learn because sometimes when you're real hard-headed like I am, it takes a little while to get into my cranium. I'm asking God to help me be more sensitive and attentive so I don't have to have the 2x4 treatment.

Instead of someone that has offended you or you have a problem with them, that you are going to ***wait*** until *they* straighten out *their* act and then you will forgive. Pray and ask God to give you of His Spirit, and pray and ask God to help Him change the mind of the person that you're having the difficulty with. You can't change the mind—***God can!*** What you can do, in spite of everything, with a pure heart, love that individual. Best recipe in the world for husband/wife relations. In spite of everything! Even if they get angry back at you. Don't worry, maybe they're just testing you.

Here's how we're to do it, John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you..." Is that not a lifetime goal? ***Love each other as Christ has loved us!*** Look what He did for everyone of us. That's why in 1-John 4 it says, 'How can you love God when you haven't even seen Him and hate your brother whom you have seen.' ***Can't do it!***

"...that you love one another in the same

way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another. By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another" (vs 34-35). It's not something that you can just work up, because it's the love. How can you love anyone as Christ has loved you unless Christ is in you? ***You can't!*** It's an impossibility because that love has to come from God. That is the gift of God.

Let's notice how this works. John 14 is one of my favorite places in the whole Bible. It tells us an awful lot and this is how we can help the brethren; this is how we can help each other. It's very important.

Let's also understand something about love, too. Love is the ***greatest!*** We are using the greatest, the most effective, the most unfailing thing that we can use when we use the love of God, because ***love never fails!*** It might be tough sliding for a while. But love ***never*** fails. You need to understand that.

John 14:15: "If you love me... [notice, the condition is on us.] ...keep the commandments..." With the love of God we're not dealing with commandment breaking or we can throw them away or anything like that. If you love Christ, keep His commandments. That means all of them. Then He says He's going to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. It's going to

- guide you
- comfort you
- lead you
- help you

There will be changes, and it's dwelling in you.

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them..." If you begin to keep the commandments in the proper way, with the Holy Spirit of God in you, and fellowshiping with God the Father and Jesus Christ, not only are you just going to keep the commandments, you're going to have another aspect of it that's going to come. You're going to want to do the things that please God; that's what's important. The biggest hindrance is that ***old self*** standing in the way; ***it is!***

"...that is the one who loves Me... [the present tense, it's always on-going] ...and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father..." (v 21). I want you to understand that. You get low and depressed and down—fighting the world, fighting yourself, fighting everything around you and seeing all this rottenness and sin that's around—***God loves you!*** You may say to yourself, 'He will love me if I overcome this.' No! He loves you, and will help you overcome this or that or the other thing. He called you and loved you knowing that you have this or that or the other thing. That's important to understand.

“...and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.... [This was kind of a tricky thing to understand] ...Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...** [We have all the words which Jesus said *they came from the Father.*] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him” (vs 21-23).

Not only do you have the Spirit of Christ in you, you also have, as part of the Holy Spirit, the begetting of the Father. That’s how you can fellowship both with the Father *and* the Son, because the indwelling of the Holy Spirit comes from both of Them—the begetting of the Father and Christ dwelling in you. That’s very important to understand. Once you understand that, brethren, it is going to *lift* that big burden right off of you. It’s going to *lift* all of the weariness of the labor of you trying to overcome yourself. That’s an incongruity in itself—isn’t it?

You can’t overcome yourself, because yourself is the problem. ***You need the Spirit of God!*** That’s like saying put out a fire by throwing gasoline on it—it doesn’t work! ***You need the Spirit of God!*** You need Christ *in you* to do it. That’s the whole thing. That’s the *perfecting* of the saints.

When we understand this, just think how much it’s going to help and encourage all the brethren when they know this. To help and encourage them to come to God and resolve their offenses. To go to one another (Matt. 18), the way that you need to and resolve it. I’ve also learned there are certain problems that a person has that only God can deal with when you come Matt. 18 to a person to resolve your differences. ***Don’t try and change them in the things that God alone can change.*** Understand what I mean?

If you’re dealing with someone who’s filled with vanity, don’t say, ‘Well, you’re filled with vanity and you offended me.’ No! Deal with the problem that caused the offense. The vanity may have been the cause, but deal with the problem that occurred and pray that God will help him understand his vanity. I have learned that you can never show a person their vanity by saying ‘you’re vain.’ That’s why we go through all these troubles so we can learn some love; we need to.

Now let’s come to 1-John 3 and let’s see something else that takes place. This gives you the courage and confidence to pray when you know you need to but really don’t want to. Have you ever had that feeling? *Yes!—I have.*

1-John 3:19: “And in this way we know...”

We have to know these things—not only be convicted of heart and mind, but know and *know* that we know.

“...that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him, That if our hearts condemn us...” (vs 19-20). We’ve all had that! When you sin, don’t you feel miserable? When you sin you don’t want to go to God, do you? *No you don’t!* But that’s exactly what you need to do, right then, because, if you’ve sinned, does God know that you’ve already sinned? *Yes! if you have the Spirit of God,* He knows—correct? *Yes!* So, your heart condemns you.

Remember, “...God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.... [that caused the condemnation of your heart, so don’t carry that burden] ...Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us... [That’s the blessed condition to get to where we want to. I’ve had both. I’ve had where my heart doesn’t condemn me and I have had where my heart condemns me.] ...*then* we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight” (vs 20-22).

What is one of the most pleasing things in the sight of God? *Repentance! Loving God!* I gave a sermon one time: Can a Man Bless and Inspire God? *Yes!* By so choosing to love God with all his heart, mind, soul and being, and by going to God and asking God to help me be like Christ—*that’s pleasing to God.* Then you’ll keep His commandments in the right way.

Verse 23: “And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us.... [He makes this all possible so that we know; He doesn’t want us to be in doubt.] ...And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him [Christ], and He [Christ] in him; and by this we know... [He wants us to have that confidence, He wants us to have that assurance. He wants us to have that love and that conviction, so that ***we know***] ...that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us” (vs 23-24). That’s how we’re going to solve those problems, brethren.

1-Corinthians 13 is very interesting and very profound, because Paul is not pointing the finger to anyone else but himself. He says 1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”

That’s why you’ve heard me say, unless you have the love of God nothing else counts. If you keep the Sabbath, but don’t love God, what good does it do you? *No good!* You can’t keep Christmas and love God because you’re breaking His

commandments. That's why it's so important. And it's tough; tough living in a world when you've got all these pressures coming down on us and everyone wants to re-conform your mind to the way of the world.

Or re-conform your mind to the way of an organization, or whatever. But, God wants to re-conform your mind by Himself with His Spirit because you love Him. The Father loves you. He has called you, and He wants you. That's why He has called you. I can't answer why did God call you? *I don't know, God knows!* Chances are none of us are going to find out any of that until we're resurrected—right? But, in the meantime, He has called us. So, let's all thank God and love each other and do as Christ has said, because it's the Father's will!

Verse 2: "If I have *the gift of prophecy*... [Man, can you build a church on 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." Look at all the human accomplishments over here, that people get overwhelmed with. If you don't have the love of God, you're nothing.

Verse 3: "And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned... [That's a notable thing—isn't it?] ...but do not have love, I have gained nothing... [Now then, it tells what love is to do]: ...Love is patient..." (vs 3-4). Whether it's pain because you're sick; whether it's because of circumstances in an enduring trial; or whatever the suffering may be, remember Christ suffered.

"...and is kind..." (v 4). That's the hardest thing to do when you've been offended—isn't it? Be kind! I've spoken offensively enough times to know I was not kind.

"...love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up" (v 4). Is not sold on itself! As a matter of fact, when you

- come to understand the love of God more and more
- how great the love of God really is
- how much God loves you
- why He's called you
- what He's going to give to you

there's really not much self left, and then you come to the realization that self is really a misnomer, because *everything you have came from God—everything!* There's not one thing that didn't come from God.

- That takes away all the vanity—doesn't it?

- That takes away all the barriers—doesn't it?
- That takes away all the stupidity we put ourselves through.

Verse 5: "*Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil." That is in terms of *doing* evil to other people, or imputing evil motives. Love is difficult because sometimes you get burned. Sometimes you get taken advantage of. Did Christ go through that? *Yes! He did!* Did His love diminish any? *No, it didn't!* As a matter of fact, it grew! So, use those things as opportunities for growth.

Verse 6: "Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (vs 6-7). *There's always hope!* That's the whole lesson we're going to learn of Abraham, when we get to that section in Rom. 4, that Abraham hoped in hope. There was nothing left but hope. And that hope was that *God said so!* And if God says so, it's as good as done!

Verse 8: "Love never fails... [all these other things are going to fail] ...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease; whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away." Can you imagine what the knowledge in the Kingdom of God is going to be like? It's going to be something!

Verse 9: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside.... [that's what we need to look to, brethren] ...When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child" (vs 9-11). In other words, he's saying to all of us, if you want to understand Christ and the love of God, *grow up!* in Christ.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 12-13).

So, brethren, even though 'a brother offended is harder to win than a fenced city, or a barred castle,' *love can melt it all!* That's what we need to do to reach out and help the brethren and help each other.

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

Scripture References

- 1) Luke 15:17-19
- 2) 1 Corinthians 14:22,33, 26
- 3) Matthew 24:8-11
- 4) Proverbs 18:8, 19
- 5) Matthew 26:31-35
- 6) Luke 4:18-19
- 7) Matthew 11:28-30
- 8) Romans 7:14-18, 21-25
- 9) Romans 8:1
- 10) 1 John 1:6-9
- 11) John 13:34-35
- 12) John 14:15, 21-23
- 13) 1 John 3:19-24
- 14) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Romans 8:2; 4

Also referenced:

Sermons:

- *To Return to God*
- *Can a Man Bless and Inspire God*

Articles:

- *Global 2000* by John Coleman
- *Kid's Bill of Rights* by Nickelodeon
- *Transformation of Man* by Louis Mumford
- *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas Kuhn
- *Brainwashing and Subversion* by John Morgan

Godly Love vs Carnal Love I

Fred R. Coulter

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-ling, 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...

(go to the next track)

...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

Scripture References:

- 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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Also referenced:

- Article: Greek Tests & Translations
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Godly Love vs Carnal Love II

Fred R. Coulter

Let's come to 1-Corinthians 13, and what we are going to do, we are going to come to these things that show the very attributes of God. This is very important ***because love is the essence of being God-like; or God-like love is the essence of God-likeness!*** I want you to understand something very clearly as we are going through. I'll give you a little summary before we get into it in detail. What we have are 14 descriptions of love, given in seven pairs. Let's read them. We'll just go right through them. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

- 1) Love is patient *and* is kind...
 - 2) ...love envies not, does not brag about itself...
 - 3) ...is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully...
 - 4) ...does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked...
 - 5) ...thinks no evil, Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth ...
 - 6) ...*Love* bears all things, believes all things...
 - 7) ...hopes all things, endures all things....
- And then you could tie it all in at the end here:
- 8) ...Love never fails

What you have with the love of God, the *agape love*, is a sure guarantee that *will not fail*. The love of God cannot fail, because if you say that the love of God fails, then you're saying God is a failure, because God is love. *Yes*, you would be doing that! So, all of these are the attributes of God.

What you might do, get out your handy-dandy little concordance and look up all of the things God is:

- God is love
- God is merciful
- God is gracious
- God is kind
- God is longsuffering

Put all of those together and that then is summarized here in 1-Cor. 13.

Exodus 34:5 is when the LORD descended to show His glory to Moses: "And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*...'" (vs 5-7). I might mention here that God is going to keep mercy for thousands.

I talked to a young woman yesterday who's, I think, just in her early 30s, who grew up in the Church and didn't pay much attention to it; went out into the world. But God didn't give up on her. Now she's been called back and God has opened her mind to understand. I talked to her yesterday, and she wants to be baptized.

Remember this: it is not over till it's over. God is not done with the children who have been in the Church. They may have to go out and become like the prodigal son or daughter, but God is not done with them. That's why we need to *hope all things, believe all things*, and all of that because God is going to do greater than what we expect, brethren. I was really happy to hear that.

Actually we have the toughest job of all, to try and teach all of the various factions of the Church of God, to heal all the problems of all the Churches of God, and ***the only way it's going to be done is with the love of God!***

- It isn't going to be done with reorganization.
- It isn't going to be done because of a corporate structure.
- It isn't going to be done because of an organization.
- It isn't going to be done because of what I'm doing.
- ***It's going to be done because of what God is doing.***

I want to do what God wants me to do, and *it will!* God is merciful, kind, and longsuffering. Listen, if God can forgive Manasseh and Ahab there's hope for everybody who's attended church. Think of that! You know, I've mentioned Manasseh is like 55 years of Bill Clinton. Aren't you glad he's restricted to two terms?

Verse 7: "Keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... [that is upon repentance] ...but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [*if* there is no repentance] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation" (v 7). So these are some of the attributes of God.

Let's see the fruits of the Holy Spirit. I think if you put this together with it then you will see how God wants it done. That this *agape* love from God comes from God's Spirit, comes down from God to us.

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit... [that is, this is what the Spirit is going to produce] ...is **love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control**; against such things there is no law” (vs 22-23). Why? *Because these are the very attributes of God!* There’s no law against God—is there? *No! God is Lawgiver!* Just the opposite!

Verse 6: “Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision... [In other words, you can’t start out in the Spirit and finish in the flesh. You have to grow in the Spirit.] ...rather, *it is the inner working of faith through love.*”

How do we grow in faith? *Faith works by love!* How do you grow in faith? *By growing in love!* Love is the greatest. I mean, there it is all the time—right? There it is right there. You’re not going to grow in faith by browbeating. You’re not going to grow in faith by sending out desperate letters. Maybe there’s a time for correction because we’ve sinned, that’s true. But then ask God Who leads us to repentance—correct? *Yes!* That’s what’s going to happen here.

Love in suffering is kind. Longsuffering also means that *you suffer long.* When we first left Worldwide we began the Biblical Church of God and immediately grew to 250 and had five congregations, 11 elders, and we had a constitution. It was déjà vu United. So, we didn’t really repent, we just reorganized, and we went from the dictatorship of one to the dictatorship by committees. The only difference is, one is more political than the other. That fell apart. That’s when I hit bottom.

But in that situation I can look back and see that *there wasn’t the love of God* that God wanted. Since love is the greatest, He wants that. So, we’ve all been put through trials so that we know that’s what God wants, and we know that’s the only thing that is going to really heal and fill the void. Nothing else is going to do it. And so that’s why it’s very, very important that we understand this concerning suffering, and so forth.

Well, this woman—Esther Greisinger—was a diabetic, nearly blind, had the tendons in her right leg pulling up so that she could hardly walk, and had to walk with a cane or walk with a walker. After a while she had to just be in a wheelchair suffering terribly with pain. Gradually she couldn’t see at all. Her husband, who had been attending church while they were in Worldwide, but unable to quit smoking, was finally told to leave because, ‘You can’t quit smoking, and you’re an evil man.’ So, he would bring her to church and sit out in the car and smoke. But she was very diligent, and she was very kind,

and she would encourage everyone in her longsuffering.

Though she was in pain, people who were depressed would call her and she would cheer them up. And yet, she had everything in the world to complain to God that was wrong—but not one word. Then when they were in their worst and most desperate straights, her husband Robert had a massive stroke and almost died, and was in the hospital.

So, here she is in a wheelchair at home nearly blind, and her husband in the hospital nearly dead, and it finally gets to the point he can come out of the hospital and come home; had to have to have home nursing come in. There he is confined in the bed. You know how when you have a massive stroke your one side is such that you can’t walk, and there he was that way, and having to have the therapy and the nurse come in, and Esther taking care of him.

It was really a sad, pathetic situation. And everyone would say, ‘God, if You’re a God of love, why would You let this happen to these people with all the suffering, and suffering upon suffering, upon suffering mounted up so high. Where is Your love, where is Your mercy?’ ***His mercy and love was shown in the suffering,*** because Robert gradually was healed, and he asked to be baptized.

He did quit smoking. He knew all the commandments because he’d been keeping them for how long anyway because of his wife. I had the blessing and privilege of baptizing him. And then he kept his first Passover, which was a very, very moving event. Then before the Passover of the next year, Esther died. At the funeral Robert cried out and said, ‘Why, Lord? Why, Lord?’ Because he had depended on her for so much. I just stopped the service, walked over to him and I said, ‘Robert, Esther was ready. That’s why.’ But even in that suffering, Robert had to prove that he could stand by his own before God. *And he did!* He died right after the next Passover.

There are a lot of brethren out there like that; and I can’t reach them, but you can. *They’re both going to be in the resurrection.* Was all that suffering worth eternal life? *Yes, it was,* because all that suffering was just in the flesh—wasn’t it? *Yes!* Was God merciful? *Yes!* Was God kind? *Yes!* Not everything appears as we view it. That’s why it says, *love is longsuffering and kind.*

1-Corinthians 13:4: “...love envies not...” You don’t want what other people have. If someone is blessed and increased, you rejoice with them, even if you’re not. You don’t go to God and say, ‘God, why did you bless him instead of me? I’ve gone to

church longer than that person's gone to church. I've kept so many Sabbaths and Feasts. I've tithed. I've done all these things.' *NO!* You don't envy. And it ties in with 'love vaunts itself.'

Let's see the opposite of this kind of love. Here's what happens when you have envy, and you have vaunting of the self; boasting. Yes, boasting of how good they are.

- blow your own whistle
- puff up yourself
- tell everyone how good you are
- how much you know
- who you know
- where you've been

God could care less! So you've been around the world 50 times. Do you love God?

Luke 18:9—and He spoke this parable: “And to some who trusted in themselves...”—because they boasted about themselves, and envied and lusted against others. Envy comes in two ways:

1. by comparing yourself that you are much better
2. by saying that you need what the other person has.

“...that they were righteous, and despised others...” (v 9). There's no love there!

Here's the same kind of attitude, without love, Luke 11:42. “But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God...” Jesus said to the Pharisees, ‘I know you. You don't have the love of God dwelling in you.’

- Should we go back and do what the Pharisees do then?
- Should we follow their Seder, should we follow their practices?
- Should we wear their yarmulkes and their prayer shawls?
- Should we do their praise dancing?

None of that has the love of God in it. That's all physical things.

“...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things, and not to set aside those *lesser things*” (v 42).

Here the Pharisee doesn't have any love, but he sure loves himself—doesn't he? Doesn't have the love of God, Luke 18:11: “...‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector.’”

He's judging, criticizing, putting down—right? *Yes, he is!* Look at that. We shouldn't be extortioners, we shouldn't be unjust and we shouldn't be adulterers. Brethren, all of those things

are required anyway. What did Jesus say? *When you've done all that you're commanded, you're unprofitable servants!* This is what you ought to do; this is nothing to brag about.

Verse 12: “I fast twice in the week... [so I'm better than anybody else] ...and I give a tithe of everything that I gain.'.... [to the tiniest little teeny-weeny seed] ...And the tax collector... [that he was judging and criticizing] ...standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner’” (vs 12-13). God is looking on the heart as well as on the knee, so we don't need to envy. Let's be happy and rejoice. If someone succeeds in something, praise God and thank God for it. Be happy and rejoice.

Verse 14: “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself **shall be humbled...**” That's what happens when you are envying and when you're vaunting, and when you're having this kind of behavior. Not just brought low, ‘abased.’ The day is coming. So, remember as the wheel turns, it's going to happen. As the chickens come home to roost, it's going to happen. We don't have to worry. God will take care of it.

“...and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted” (v 14). The way you humble yourself is with the love of God. You don't put on a pseudo humility and say, ‘Oh, I'm humble. I fast, I'm humble. I tithe, I'm humble. Oh God, I deserve this.’ No! Be thankful that God has called you and you have the Spirit of God. What we are all worthy of, every one of us: ‘the wages of sin is death.’

This leads to judging other people. You judge people physically: too fat, too thin, too tall, too young, too old, you're a woman, you're a man, you're bald, you have too much hair. Right? *Yes!* You are what you are. Jesus said you are not going to think and make yourself one cubit taller. And you're not going to think and change your hair one white or black, unless you have Clairol. So, accept all these things. We don't look down upon a person if a person is sick and ill and say, ‘Well, you deserve it. You sinned.’ Maybe they did sin. What if they do deserve it? Should you rub it in and stomp them into the ground? *No! Pray for them!* Pray that God will heal them and help them, and give them the understanding they need. It's all very important.

I'm going to give you four Scriptures down which goes into this section concerning envy; showing that envy never profits.

1. Proverbs 14:30
2. Mark 15:10

3. Romans 1:29—these are all the works of the flesh—

4. Titus 3:3-7

1-Corinthians 13:4. "...[Love] does not brag [vaunt] about itself..." I like to watch some professional sports. But after a while I get tired of it. You can only watch so many passes caught, so many touchdowns run in, so many tackles made. What happens? *They're all number one! They vaunt themselves and they taunt each other!*

All that competition is *not* the love of God—that's of the world. I'm not saying don't watch football, don't watch basketball, but just understand what you're watching. It's just in the flesh. If you're team loses, don't go into a depression. God doesn't care one way or the other.

To vaunt means to puff up or blow up. Some people puff themselves up so much they ought to literally blow up. That's why in what I do you don't hear me say anything what I do, this or that or the other because if I've done it—so what?

- That's yesterday—isn't it?
- Is that going to change today? *No!*
- Is it going to make me better today? *No!*
- How about tomorrow?
- Well, if I don't do today what I need to do today then what am I going to do tomorrow?

It doesn't matter how many people you've met. It doesn't matter who you knew. ***If you don't know God, it doesn't matter*** if you know the most important person in the world—does it? We need to understand that. *Let your boast be in God!*

1-Corinthians 1:23: "But we proclaim Christ crucified. To the Jews *it is* a cause of offense..." They can never understand how God became a man, not realizing that in the very first chapter of Genesis God said 'Let Us make man in Our image after Our likeness,' for the very purpose that God could become man and man could become God. So, it's a terrible stumbling-block. They have never recovered to this day. Judaism has never.

"...and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; but to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom.... [that's where our hope lies, brethren] ...Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men... [if there be any foolishness of God, we could add] ...and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (vs 23-25)—if there be any weakness in God. He's using oxymoron's here to drive home a point.

Verse 26: "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh... [you're trying to act like wise, and you know everything' all puffed up] ...not

many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen..." (vs 26-28). Maybe you're in God's Church. Some people say, 'Well, why did God call me?' *Well, maybe just because you're despised!* Maybe just because you're an oddball, don't fit anywhere, and God had mercy on you. Sometimes I feel like that. And that's just the way it is.

"...*even* the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; So that no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; So that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*'" (vs 28-31). Don't boast in yourself, boast in God. Thank God for what He's done.

1-Corinthians 4:7: "For what makes you superior *to others*? And what do you have that you did not receive?..." You see how foolish it is to get all puffed up about yourself. *Whatever you have you received from God. Everything that there is*, every thing that's physical, everything that's spiritual.

"...But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?" (v 7). In other words, why are you saying to yourselves and each other, 'I am spiritual,' which if you may be, it came from God. Be thankful and be humble, and don't be boastful, 'For God had to call me.' No, God is not compelled to call anybody. He chooses of His own will and volition. So, it's all foolishness to brag and boast.

Let's come back to 1-Corinthians 13:4. again: "...does not brag about itself, is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully..." (vs 4-5). That means in a rude and a brash way. And boy, how many lives have been ruined in the Church because of that? We don't need that! I remember when I was going to Ambassador College, when I came there I thought that everyone was going to live by the Truth. When I was in the ministry I thought that's how all the ministers treated each other. Boy, was I in for a surprise. When I came to Pasadena the years '72-'75, I didn't know it, but upstairs in the exalted evangelist lounge at the handball court, where no one, unless you were politically correct, could get up there.

Well, of course, I was never invited up. I was never politically correct. I was really shocked and dismayed that what they did, they sat up there

and told dirty jokes and played cards. Now brethren, that's *unseemly* behavior. And then get up in the pulpit and blast and condemn all the brethren for not sending in enough money. 'We want more racquetball and more beer.' Those that were there, they would come to work at nine, and they would go play handball at 11:30, and they would finish about 1:30, and then they'd go have lunch with a martini and come back to work, and work from 3 till 4:30 and go home. And those were the ones who were making \$200,000 a year! No! It doesn't work. You can't behave yourself unseemly. Those things are not right.

"...does not seek its own things..." (v 5). You don't have your own agenda. You don't have your own way. You try and always follow the way of God. What happens if you just seek your own? Well, you're going to be in real trouble. So, if you have the love of God, what do you really seek?

Let's see what it's like. Here's what you are to seek. Here's how we are to be with the love of God. Brethren, this is what I hope God will grant us in His Church. Grant us with all this. I don't know where you've come from, your background, but I have certain ideas in talking to everyone, and I know that you've all had different stories and different problems, and difficult things.

I know most of you here because you're rejects, or you have left those who have sinned, and in doing that you also become a reject from them because you're not politically correct. And you go to church and you hear all of these lies, and you hear all of these smooth things. God doesn't want that. It's going to come to an end.

Here's what God wants, Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit..." That's what we want because, brethren, ***our fellowship first begins with God the Father and Jesus Christ***; and if we have that on a daily personal basis, when we come together on the Sabbath can we not leave behind all the picayunish little physical things that trouble us and drag us down? *Yes, we ought to be able to!* God loves everyone that He's called. Let's ask God for the love for those that have called to assemble with us, because we are a motley crew as I read there 1-Corinthians 1. By our own volition, choice and will out in the world we'd never associate with each other—would we? *No!* But God has called us with His love

- so that we do associate with each other
- so we can learn the love of God
- so we can understand each other
- so that we can appreciate each other.

Fellowship of the Spirit.

"...if any *deep* inner affections... [if someone hurts, you hurt with them; if someone suffers, you suffer with them] ...if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy..." (vs 1-2). Wouldn't this be a joy to God, and joy to everyone if we could do this.

Verse 2: "Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind... [that's the mind of Christ] ...having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing." Not that we're robots and automatons, but joined and knit together in such a way that we have that love of God.

Verse 3: "*Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory...*" I hope we've all fled that. We don't need that. I hate it when there's strife. I hate it when there's pomposity, human vanity and stupidity. That doesn't work. What does it do? *Just offends the brethren; turns them off!* God doesn't want that.

"...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself" (v 3). That's the opposite of exalting the self—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* And besides, you never know, the person that you may look down upon may in the Kingdom of God have a higher reward than you. You never know. So, you esteem the other better than yourself. You don't compare and say, 'Well, ta-da-da-da-da. I'm this and that person is ta-da-da-da-da that, therefore I am better or whatever.' No, you esteem the other person better and you help them, and you pray for them, and you encourage them.

Verse 4: "Let each one look not *only* after his own things... [not just for yourself] ...but each one also *consider* the things of others.... [to make sure that the other person is growing in grace and knowledge] ...Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 4-5). That's a tremendous thing, brethren. Let the mind of Christ be in you. Now notice how He humbled Himself; the very epitome of love. Didn't Jesus say, 'I love you with the same love that the Father has loved Me.' You have no savior unless Christ loved you. You have no savior unless Christ humbled Himself. You think you've given up something? Look what Christ gave up; He emptied Himself.

Verse 6: "Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself *and* was made in *the* likeness of men..." (6-7). He didn't come down to this earth and say, 'Why, you people, don't you know I created all of these things. What's the matter with you? Why don't you accept Me?' He came down and took it. When He was reviled, He didn't revile again.

- He came down and healed.

- He came down and helped.
- He came down also to rebuke and correct,
- He came down to instruct and to raise up His apostles and start His Church.
- He came down to be the sacrifice for us—*that covenantal sacrifice for the New Covenant.*

“...and took the form of a servant...” (v 7). Which in the Greek is ‘doulos’—which means *a slave*. No slave is ever going to say, ‘Well Lord, You were God and came down here to be a human being, but you don’t know what it’s like to be a slave.’ Yes, He did! He served everyone—didn’t He? He was rejected, He was despised in a greater way than you and I.

We can be rejected and despised, but what are our accomplishments? *Nothing!* What were God’s accomplishments? *He created everything*, and yet, He was still rejected and despised.

Verse 8: “And being found in *the* manner of man...” Means everything. I was thinking on that the other day. When He was a baby, He had diapers. He nursed at His mother’s breast. He had to learn to crawl, had to learn to walk. But the Father was with Him always, and He was filled with the Holy Spirit from conception.

“...He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of the cross” (v 8). Some people aren’t even willing to be obedient to keep the Sabbath. Do you think they are going to be in the Kingdom of God when Christ was obedient unto the death of the cross? *Not going to happen!*

(go to the next track)

Verse 9: “Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him...” Remember what we read? He who humbles himself shall be exalted. Who humbled himself greater than Jesus? *No one!* Who is exalted more than Jesus? *No one!*

“...and bestowed upon Him a name which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father” (vs 9-11).

We’ll see where v 10 is fulfilled in type. Revelation 5:9—this is after Christ was given the scroll to open it, open the seven seals, and then the 24 elders sang this hymn: “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book, and to open its seals because You were slain, and did redeem us to God by Your own blood, out of every tribe and language and people and nation.’” That is a marvelous thing, brethren.

God is doing things that we don’t even know

about. When we get to the point that we think we are the only ones, we’re the most small-minded people in the world. Even Elijah, after he did what he did, ran away after they killed the 450 prophets of Baal. Then Elijah got afraid after he prayed for the rain and the flood came, so he ran away from Jezebel. Went down in a cave quivering and whimpering and said, ‘O God, I’m alone. I’m the only one left. They killed all your prophets and I’m down here.’

God was merciful. He didn’t answer him in the thunder. He didn’t answer him in the earthquake. He answered him with a small, still voice and said, ‘Now Elijah, behold, there are 7000 who haven’t bowed the knee to Baal.’ And he didn’t even know one of them. And I often wonder with that. how many more people God has that we don’t have a clue about. Wherever they may be on the surface of the earth, of every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people.

Verse 10: “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.’ And I saw and I heard *the* voices of many angels around the throne, and *the* voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands” (vs 10-11). Do you ever think you ever heard a choir? Whew, imagine what that’s going to be like, thundering up there before the throne of God.

Verse 12: “Saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing.’ And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are on the sea... [there’s the fulfillment of Phil. 2 right there] ...and all the things in them, I heard saying... [I don’t know how the whales are going to bless God. I don’t know how the fish are going to do it, and I don’t know how the birds are going to do it, but they’re going to do it.] ...‘To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity’” (vs 12-13).

This is why God wants us to have the love of God. Stop and think how puny all these stupid little doctrines. How puny all of the hard-handed judgments and criticism we’ve had against each other. Sometimes we need to stand for Truth and show what’s wrong, that’s true. But we don’t need to kill each other in the mean time. God has called us to something so great and marvelous and powerful that it is absolutely just the greatest thing that has ever been.

Let’s come back to 1-Corinthians 13—the formula to have the love of God, and *love is the essence of God-likeness*. If we’re going to be Godlike we must have love.

“...is not easily provoked...” (v 5). I will have to admit, brethren, that’s one of my greatest weaknesses. Yes, it is! That’s a hard one to overcome. But God willing, given time, God’s Spirit and understanding, with Christ in me I can overcome it.

“...thinks no evil” (v 5). Boy, I tell you that’s why we need to be very careful what we’re watching on TV and listening to on the radio. Have you ever had one of these stupid ads stuck in your head, and you can’t get rid of it? One happened to me the other day. ‘Don’t forget a Mazzetta’—Mazzetta cheese—‘Don’t forget a Mazzetta.’ It’s going to take me another two days to get rid of it.

“...thinks no evil” means, *don’t be imputing evil motives to people*. Though some people may not have overcome enough that they can do things in a way that you really think they ought to, but who are you to be their judge, to condemn their heart. Accept what they do on the surface of what they do. Don’t think evil and say, ‘Well, I know why he did that, or she did that.’

- Can you read a mind?
- Can you understand a heart?
- Do you really know the motive?
- *No! I can’t! You can’t!*
- Are we sometimes taken advantage of because of that, by giving the benefit of doubt? *Yes!*
- Is it not better to be taken advantage of a little bit than to think evil and impute wrong motives and judge the heart when that’s God’s prerogative and domain? *Yes!*
- Can God heal it and overcome it? *Yes!*
- Have you lost anything? *No.*

Verse 6: “Does not rejoice in iniquity...” I don’t rejoice in the things that happened because people get hurt. I tell you, these tornadoes that were down there in Alabama—250 mph wind. Oh my, my, my. And you see the houses torn apart, hundreds of them, ripped away. Don’t rejoice in iniquity. Don’t watch that kind of thing. You don’t need to do that. Even if your enemy is done in, don’t rejoice in it. Thank God that He delivered you, but do as David did with Saul and Jonathan—*mourn!*

“...but rejoices in the Truth” (v 6). That’s what we need to be looking to, the Truth of God, the love of God all put together.

Verse 7: “Love bears all things...” Think on that. What is God going to ask you to bear? *I don’t know!* But whatever it is, all things that come to you, bear them. That means bear up under. That means to hold up as to having pillars to strengthen and uphold. You bear all things.

“...believes all things, hopes all things...” (v 7). That’s very important, because in hoping you can realize that even those who have gone astray, as I mentioned before, God can bring them back. If God can call people out of the world, the Catholic Church, or the Protestant Church, can He not call them out of an apostate Worldwide or UCG or whatever? *Yes, He can! Hope for them!* I don’t condemn the people. I condemn the practices that are ungodly because God does.

- I hope that there will be repentance.
- I hope that there will be change.
- I hope that those people who have conducted themselves in an evil and a wrong way—even out of maliciousness or ignorance—that they come to repentance and be in the Kingdom of God.

We all need to have that hope. If someone offends you, hope that they will learn and overcome and you don’t have to go correct them or do anything. Overlook it; be forbearing.

“...hopes all things, endures all things.” I don’t know what it’s going to be like when we come to the beginning of sorrows, but there’s going to be a time when we come to the beginning of sorrows. I’ve got a booklet at home that someone mailed me from a converted Russian. I think he was a converted Russian Jew in the Soviet Union who, in believing Christ, was thrown into jail, into prison. The worst part of his ordeal was for three years he was placed in a cell 30 feet below the surface of the earth with no light. They slid his little tray of pittance of little food under there. He said when you’re down there you lose all track of time. You lose all track of when things begin and end. You sit there and pretty soon you understand that the only thing that really counts is the love of God. The only thing that he could do toward the last of the three years that he was there was say, ‘O God, help me. O God, help me.’

At that point Sabbath-keeping is not important. You don’t even know what day it is. None of us have gone through anything like that. And I tell you: “...**endures all things.**” For some of us, we endure going through a day of trial and stress. We come to the end of the day in exhaustion and say, ‘Man, that was a hard day.’ But I tell you what, we need to keep things in mind like this man went through to understand we’ve gone through nothing.

“...endures all things. Love never fails.... [The love of God cannot fail! God cannot fail!] ...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease...” (vs 7-8). Let me just mention here that does not mean the prophecies of God. I know that has been used as a justification when the Church, in

making a mistake, and the prophecies didn't come out the way they said they would, they said, 'Well, it says prophecies will fail.' Whose prophecies were they? God's or men's? *They were prophecies of human interpretation*—weren't they.

Matthew 24:34: "Truly I say to you, this generation... [whichever one is the end-time generation] ...shall in no wise pass away until all these things have taken place. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, **but My words shall never pass away**" (vs 34-35.) If the Word of God is Truth and there's no lie in it, how can any prophecy of God fail? Did any of the prophecies concerning Christ fail? *No!* What prophecies have failed? *Human interpretations wrongly interpreting Scriptures have failed!*

And this is what it's talking about in 1-Corinthians 13:8; those are the prophecies that will fail. "...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease; whether *there be* languages, they shall cease..." By the way, God created all languages. So, for people to say you have to have sacred names—*they shall cease*. What language are we going to speak when we're resurrected? *I don't know, but God will put it in our minds at the resurrection what kind of language we will speak*, just like He created Adam and Eve with a language already in their brains—right? *Yes!*

"...whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (vs 8-9). We better always understand that brethren. We don't know everything. We don't understand the prophecies. But if we love God, we will when the time comes that we need to.

Verse 10: "But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child..." (vs 10-11). All childish things hold back from growing up in a maturity of Christ. This is what Paul is talking about. You come from a childish love to a mature Godly love. That's a total change.

Verse 11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child." That's what we need to do in the Church of God. We need to put away all the childish things and the petty little things that come along. Let's focus on the love of God.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly... [we can't see everything clearly, but we see darkly] ...but then *we shall see* face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known." That's going to be a wonderful thing, brethren. Jesus prayed the last prayer, 'Father, I pray that they will know You, the only true God,

and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent them.' And that is eternal life.

Verse 13: "And now, these three remain.... [Living and remaining—now is living. What we're talking about are the issues of life.] ...faith, hope *and* love; **but the greatest of these is love.**"

Brethren, that's what we really need. That is the difference between carnal *eros/phileo* love, which can never substitute for the true *agape* love of God. The true *agape* love of God **comes down from God to you with His Holy Spirit**. Has come down to you through the sacrifice and the love of Jesus Christ. We need to have that come *out from us to each other, and then back to God, and God back to us*. That's how then we can really truly grow. **The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the greatest way to put away the leaven of sin, is to be filled with the love of God!**

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

Scripture References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- 2) Exodus 34:5-7
- 3) Galatians 5:22-23, 6
- 4) 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 5) Luke 18:9
- 6) Luke 11:42
- 7) Luke 18:11-14
- 8) 1 Corinthians 13:4
- 9) 1 Corinthians 1:23-31
- 10) 1 Corinthians 4:7
- 11) 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
- 12) Philippians 2:1-11
- 13) Revelation 5:9-13
- 14) 1 Corinthians 13:5-8
- 15) Matthew 24:34-35
- 16) 1 Corinthians 13:8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Proverbs 14:20
- Mark 15:10
- Romans 1:29
- Titus 3:3-7

Love One Another

Fred R. Coulter

In my travels this year, I've seen people come out of all kinds of Churches of God. I've seen people with their difficulties and their problems and their ups and downs and trials and things that they go through. And let's just understand something very important, here. You're going to have troubles in your life—people are going to have trouble in their lives whether they are in the Church or not. Did you have troubles and difficulties before you came into the Church of God? *Yes!* But, you have one great advantage being in the Church of God: ***You have God with you and you have the Word of God*** and God shows you the right and the proper way.

In the world, we like to solve problems and problem solvers are promoted. But many times when you solve a problem or you look at a difficulty and you try and correct it, what you're doing, you're correcting the *effect* and God wants us to learn how to correct the *cause*, and to replace the *cause* with the right and the proper things. And, of course, God calling us is the most important thing that we need to understand. God has given us a guaranteed way ***that will never fail.***

Do you understand that? Not that you're going to eliminate difficulties and problems; you're going to encounter them all the time. That's just the nature of life. But, it's what you do with it, and how you do it; and remember this, in all your troubles and difficulties, with the Spirit of God in you, Christ is in you, Christ is there with you.

As you suffer He suffers. But, He gives a guaranteed way. Let's see the guaranteed way:

- God is eternal
- God is righteous
- God is true

He *gives* us the way so that we understand that by using this and building on this foundation, we can never fail and we'll attain to eternal life.

1-Corinthians 13:8: "**Love never fails.**" That's what we need to focus on. All the other things are going to fail, be in part. Then he says, v 13: "And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love."

Let's start out with what we need to do first. This is the most important thing, and this is where it needs to be. What we're going to talk about is something that you do not have naturally. So, what we're talking about is going to be a gift, which comes from God through the power of His Holy Spirit. Since we have human nature to overcome, we are going to have our ups and downs in learning this.

I'm still learning myself, brethren. We're all learning, and everyday presents us with an opportunity to learn and to apply this.

Of course, the Pharisees who always wanted to know which is a direct commandment so they came to Jesus and said, Mark 12:28: "And one of the scribes who had come up *to Him*, after hearing them reasoning together *and* perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is *the* first commandment of all?' Then Jesus answered him, '*The* first of all the commandments *is*, "Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* Lord, *the* Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'"...." (vs 28-30).

Since this is the ***greatest***, therefore this cannot be preached enough. Because, we're always going to have where the troubles come from and why we need the love of God, and why the love of God keeps us in the right focus in what we need to do. That's why that is first. It is to be absolutely indivisible, it is to be absolutely ***all***. The reason is that God, in His plan, is going to give you the greatest things.

"... all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is the* first commandment. And *the* second *is* like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'...." (vs 30-31). We're going to see there are four aspects of love. Here are the first two:

1. **Love God**
2. **Love your neighbor**

Your neighbor can be anyone.

"...There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to Him, 'Right, Master. You have spoken according to Truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as oneself, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices'" (vs 31-33).

It's more than all the religious effort that you can make and this man understood it! We'll have to hold in abeyance, did he learn it? Become a true follower of Christ? As a true Christian? *We don't know, we're not told!* But now this is what Jesus said:

Verse 34: "And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'" What is this

telling us? *How the Kingdom of God is going to operate*—doesn't it?

Everybody's so interested in getting practice for the Kingdom of God, so they are qualified. We even have some women rising up as preachers, because 'how are they doing to be able to teach in the Kingdom of God unless they teach now'? *Very simple—learn the love of God and you will know!* When you're a resurrected spirit being, you will have no problem teaching and you will have the authority at that time to teach. Not all men teach, either, so it applies the same way.

God does things differently than people look at things. That's why we're here and the world is not here. God is the One Who does the choosing and calling. The scribes and Pharisees didn't like what He was doing, Matthew 9:10 "Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples."

What I want you to do is, I want you to think of a local restaurant/bar and picture this; kind of like it's happening in Hollister today. They've got all the motorcyclists there. And I imagine many people raise their eyebrows and turn down their nose when they see all of these motorcyclists. There's one little restaurant/bar in Hollister, it's called Johnny's Bar. They make the greatest hamburgers. Delores and I go there and we get a hamburger there from time-to-time, and it's really good! So, just picture Christ and the disciples in Johnny's Bar with all the motorcycles out front. And a religious leader walks down and says, "Boy, how can this guy be from God? Look, he's in Johnny's Bar, and we know that is a dive—don't we?"

Verse 11: "And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples... [here is the unsaid thing: 'If your Master is from God'] ...Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?... [They'll be contaminated!] ...But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, 'Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now go and learn what this means...'" (vs 11-13). We have to learn what that means, too. I think those who have been in other churches in the world and other Churches of God, you need to go and learn what that means in relationship to each other.

"... 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but **sinners to repentance**." (v 13). That's what we are. All the people in the Church of God are sinners. Understand that? *We're all sinners!* We're trying not to be sinners in overcoming and using the Holy Spirit of God. But how many times do we fall short because we still have 'the law of sin and death' in us? *Well, many, many, many times!*

3. Love your enemies

Let's look at a love that is even more difficult than this. Here's the third kind of love. This is the *hardest* one indeed!

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" Almost everywhere I go, as I checked out of the motel this morning the gal there said, 'Have a great day!' and I said, 'Thanks, I need one.' No one has wished me an awful day. Have you ever gone into a store to get something and clerk says, 'Thank you, have a miserable day! May your life be just filled with trouble and difficulty.' So, occasionally, I answer back and say, 'Why thank you, I need a good day, but perhaps maybe my enemies need a miserable day.'

But, that's not true. What is God interested in, even with the enemy? I'm not talking about ourselves, here, in this case. God is interested in that the enemy *repent*. Did you know that's why He called Saul, who became Paul? Some of the brethren still weren't willing to accept it. Especially if he killed one of your sons or your daughters. Or ran your family off to prison. That's a hard pill to swallow—isn't it? *Yes!*

Notice what Jesus said, v 44: "But I say to you, love your enemies... [That's hard! How do you love your enemies? You do no harm to them, because even your enemy is still your neighbor.] ...bless those who curse you... [that's difficult—isn't it? Even from a point of view of total conversion, that's difficult] ...do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

That's a tall order—isn't it? What I want you to do is I want you to think about this in relationship to your past church experiences—whatever they may be. Because just about everyone who comes—finally is able to fellowship with us—have come from some church, either a church in the world or a Church of God, and a lot have gone through a lot of difficulties and problems and things and they need to be healed. In being healed, you can't be healed unless you understand this.

Doctrinal problems, that's another thing. Heresy is another thing. One of the ways that you love your enemy is to expose the truth. State what the truth is. That doesn't mean because you love them that you give into them. Did Jesus state the truth when He was being tried and later crucified? What did He say? 'Father, forgive them for they do not what they do.'

- Did Stephen speak the truth? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he love them? *Yes!*
- Did he warn them? *Yes!*

- Did they love him? *No!*
- Did they kill him? *Yes!*
- Did he say, “God, Lord, don’t lay this to their charge?” *Yes!*

That’s how it’s done!

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven...” In other words, if you’re going around acting carnally, are you really the children of your Father in heaven? *or* You probably are, no doubt about that, but your carnality is hanging out.

- Have there been times when my carnality hangs out? *Yes!*
- Have there been times when the whole church sat down with me and said, ‘Fred, we want you to listen to us?’ *Yes!*
- Have I learned from that? *Yes!*
- Has it been beneficial to me? *Yes!*
- Has it been beneficial to you? *Yes!*

That’s all part of love—need to understand that. Unless we get to thinking because God has called us and He has chosen us that we are special to Him, lest we forget, the more we have come and what our nature really is, let’s understand this:

“...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good...” (v 45). When you stand out there, enjoy a beautiful sunrise or beautiful sunset and everything is just fine and lovely, and you feel real good, and you say, ‘God thank you for this’—remember, it still rose and set on the evil.

“...and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing?*” (vs 45-46). We’ll talk about love of brother here in just a minute. But what he’s saying here is this: If you end up having the kind of carnal love that is in the world—for their clubs, for their societies, for the acceptance of the people that belong to them, my team, my club, my town, and so forth—and you avoid and shun others, what have we done any better than the world? *Nothing!* Absolutely nothing at all whatsoever!

Verse 47: “And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary?....” What if you don’t even salute your brethren? Where are you? I see that in my travels where I go. There have been a lot of people who have been at each other’s throats for one reason or another, and you’re not going to solve it by going after the problem and say, ‘This is the problem.’ ***We need to go to the solution and ask God for love!*** That’s what needs to be.

Maybe you’ll get a whole different perspective. I know I have! Every time I get angry and upset at something, or I think someone has, then

I go pray and ask God to help me to really understand, give me His love and help me to ***love*** that person. Then I see where I’ve fallen short. Then I find out that some of the things that I have assumed have been just that, assumptions, not truth.

Since this is not natural and it has to come from God, we should ask for it everyday. I do! Let’s understand something here: True humility does not come because you make yourself humble by being a sycophant. ***True humility comes from God*** when you understand the greatness of God and the greatness of His love, and the greatness of His calling—then you’re humble, and that you understand ***you have absolutely nothing you didn’t receive!*** Everything has come from God—all that which is physical and all that which is spiritual.

And you can always do a reality check. What is a reality check? *Well, you either sit up real straight or stand up real straight, and you put your hand right down here and you find your belly-button,* and when you find it, you know you came from your mom and dad. ***You have nothing that you didn’t receive!*** That way then, you’re not going to be all uppity-uppity and, you’re going to have a little more patience and understanding. But the thing is, because we’re carnal and human, it’ll go for a little while and then something will change—so you got to come back to the reality.

Now here is the reason for the whole thing, v 48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” ***And that is the goal!*** If Christ is *in* you, and God the Father imputes the righteousness of Christ to you and you love God and you love your neighbor and you love your enemies, then you ***are*** imputed *perfect*. Do you understand that? All the while realizing your imperfections? God works the opposite way. When you realize your imperfections, you realize that *you need the love of God*. To realize it, you need to express the love of God and that that has to come from God. Then you are becoming *perfected* through the operation of God’s Spirit. God does things the opposite way that human beings do, and we’ll see that as we go along.

Matthew 7:7: “Ask, and it shall be given to you...” Most people ask for physical things. That’s not necessarily what you need to ask for. You should ask: ‘Give us this day our daily bread’—correct? But what do you need more of? ***The love of God!*** the Greek here means *ask, keep on asking and it shall be given you*. That is something you have to exercise and is something that you have to use.

Go and look at the trial that Abraham went through, and finally when he offered his son, remember what the angel said the second time? He said, ‘Now ***I know*** that you fear Me! Because you

have withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Everything that we are going through is so that God can give us His character, so that we can come to the same point that Abraham was; that God *now knows!* That took quite a few years for him to accomplish—didn’t it? *Yes!* So, likewise with us, it will take some years.

“...Seek, and you shall find....” (v 7). You have to ask and you have to seek: You have *ask* for the love of God, you have to *seek* the love of God, and you have to *apply* the love of God.

“...Knock and it shall be opened to you” (v 7). That’s whatever circumstances you may need or want or whatever it may be—God *will work it out His way* and it will be best in the long run. But, while you’re going through the trial, sometimes it’s difficult to see the end, because you haven’t arrived at the end, yet. When you have finished the trial and there’s some space in time and you have time to think about it and you look back, you have perfect 20/20 vision that God was right all along.

Verse 8: “For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you who, if his son shall ask *for* bread, will give him a stone? And if he shall ask *for* a fish, will give him a serpent? Therefore, if you, being evil...” (vs 8-11).

I want you understand. He’s saying, ‘If you then, having an evil nature’—this is what it is talking about. Notice what that applies to, because that has followed shortly after what we read in Matt. 5 about loving your enemies. ‘That you may be perfect.’

He now says, v 11: “Therefore, if you, being evil know *how* to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father Who *is* in heaven give good things to those who ask Him? Therefore, everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets” (vs 11-12).

4. Love one another

The fourth kind is the most important kind of love for us who are in the Church of God. This is something that comes with:

- great difficulty
- great effort
- prayer
- study
- time
- experience.

John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another...” How are we to do this? “...love one another...”

After we’ve been scattered and beaten up and have gone through so many experiences, you know, brethren, it’s nice when we love each other. That we can walk into the congregation and we can realize that these people love me, they love God. But, you know, you have to express it, too. Sometimes, it’s kind of like the cranky old man. The cranky old man most of the time, when you get to know him, turns out to be more kind than you would ever imagine. But, you’ve got to get past the crankiness.

I never will forget when I was suffering with my hip, before I had the operation. I was in such pain, I was walking down the hall—and those of you who have been in our house, we have long hall downstairs—and I was just grimacing with pain. And, Rachelle was coming this way and I was walking down the hall, and she’d just seen the movie, *Grumpy Old Men*. So, she came and said, ‘Hi, dad, how are you?’ I just sort of grunted! You know, because I was in such pain. She says, ‘Dad, you are the *two* grumpy old men!’ I’ve never forgotten that!

I just use that as an example that you can misinterpret people so easily. Being close together, we can misinterpret each other very easily! If we’ve gone through the mill and if we’ve had our feelings hurt, and if we’ve had people ‘dump on you’—what does that mean? That’s like you’re standing here and all of a sudden the dump truck comes up and dumps a whole load of sand right on you. Sometimes people will do that to you; come and just ‘dump’ on you. And you say, ‘I didn’t deserve that!’ You know, you’re very sensitive. *Yes!*

I tell you, some of these wounds are hard to heal. Some of the things that we go through are very difficult; some of the things that we do stay with us a long, long time; some things that people do to us also stay with us a long, long time. That’s why the daily prayer is, ‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive others who trespass against us.’

Here’s love: “...in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another” (v 34). That’s a great challenge with all the doctrinal wars and church wars that we have gone through; and religious wars in the world.

I just talked to a man the other day who had to work for a Hindu and every Friday the Hindu would ask him: ‘Well, what are you doing tomorrow?’ He said, ‘Well, you know, it’s my Sabbath.’ Of course, he knew he was a Christian, and so forth, and, one day the Hindu said, ‘Well, I have no respect for Christians, I have no respect for Christ.’ And we have some people in India that we send things to, and he just e-mailed us back and said that this is a godless, antichrist society.

Brethren, while we have freedom and things like this, we need to concentrate on loving God and loving each other. I mean, think about that! We have freedom of assembly, we have freedom of speech—they don't have it. **God has given it to us so that we may do His will!**

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..." How do you get the words of Christ *in* you? *By study, through the Spirit of God!* If they're living *in* you, then that's how you are living *by*. This is the thing that motivates you.

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples" (vs 7-8). {put in there, Gal. 5:22-23, which is the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering and so forth.

Verse 9: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love." That means: on a continuous basis remain in the love of Christ. And remember, we are to love each other as Christ has loved us.

- With Christ in you—has He put up with a lot of your carnality? *Yes!*
- Does He still love you? *Yes!*
- Has He cast you off? *No!*
- Does He bring it to your attention that you are carnal and miserable? *Yes!*
- So that you may what? *Repent!*

That's what God has called us to. That's why we have the nickname The No Hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God; because we're tired of all the hassle and the stupidity that comes along with religion and churches and the church wars that have gone on.

So, what we have to do is each one of us resolve to stop it! We're not going to instill the love of God by being nit-picky, that won't happen. You instill the love of God by desiring it and seeking for it and asking for it and growing in it and practicing it. And in your practicing of the love of God then you have failures that come along so you're going to learn a lesson. If you've been fighting with your husband or your wife and you're mad and you're angry and you're carnal—well, stop it! Ask God to help you have the love of God and ask God to help you love your husband or love your wife in the same way that Christ loves you—and you will see that **that will work!**

I have never, *never, never* yet seen an argument that has been won by debate! You may get your point across, **but have you generated love?** Sometimes there's correction that comes. That's another story, we'll talk about that.

"...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. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: **that you love one another, as I have loved you...** [How great was this?] ...**No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends**" (vs 10-13). That's what it's all about, brethren, and we need to get right to that—we need to understand that.

Let's look and see where the trouble comes from, 'cause we're going to beset with a lot of troubles and difficulties. We live in this age! This age is offensive.

Matthew 24. 10: "And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another; And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold" (vs 10-12).

So, we've got the offenses of the world—don't we? You think people are not easily offended? Try cutting in close to someone on the freeway. You better have a very fast car, because of the road-rage that people have today. Are people offended because you speak the Truth? *Yes!* We're living in a society that's easily offended. Do we become easily offended? *If we're not concentrating on the love of God, it's very easy to become easily offended!* Do you still have temper and anger? *Yes, you do—I do!* Do you get mad and make caustic remarks when you're driving along? 'Did you see what that person did?' We're just talking about driving. We're not talking about anything else. Try husband wife relationships! Try child-rearing! **Easily offended!**

So, there are troubles that come from the world. We have to learn how to handle that. There are also troubles, which arise in the Church that need to be taken care of. This became a whole Church problem that hadn't learned very much in the love of God at this particular point, because it takes time. There were still very nationalistic Jews and Gentiles, Jews and Greeks. Some were looking for *equal time*, equal opportunity as they would say today.

Acts 6:1: "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint... [Complaining! We never have that among ourselves—do we? *Of course, we do!* Can be individuals or it can be a thing that takes place.] ...a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews... ['Oh, yeah, we know, you Jews always think that you just gotta be on top of everything. 'Christ has called us'] ...because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." What's going on! That's what was happening!

Verse 2: “And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, ‘It is not proper for us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word’” (vs 2-4). What they did, they selected seven men—all Greeks—to wait on the Greek widows. This thing was a problem in the Church all the way down, just like circumcision wars.

There are going to be doctrinal problems, too. We have problems in the world; we have problems within the Church. Why do we have problems in the Church? *Because we still have our carnal nature that we’re carrying around with us*—right? Why do we have problems in the Church? *Because we carrying them from wherever we came before!* Either from the world, because we’re in the process of overcoming, since we’ve been baptized; or from another church, because you have come out of that church, and as was said years ago, ‘You can get the people out of Worldwide, but you can’t get Worldwide out of the people.’ Or whatever Church of God or whatever denomination you have come from. So, we’ll have those problems.

Now let’s look at some doctrinal problems which will come here.

(go to the next track)

Let’s come to 2-John and let’s see that there will be even church difficulties, which will be *very difficult!* I want you to understand how they’re going to be *solved*. They’re solved with *truth* and *love*—that’s how they’re solved.

2-John 1: “The elder to *the* chosen lady and her children, **whom I love in Truth**, and not I alone, but also all those who have **known the Truth**... [If you **know the Truth** and have the love of God then you’re going to have to apply it and use it.] ...For *the* sake of the Truth that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever: Grace, mercy, *and* peace shall be with us from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, **in Truth and love**” (vs 1-3). I want you to just emphasized that as we go through. We’ve had *Truth* four times in three verses, now, five times:

Verse 4: “...I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are **walking in Truth**, exactly as we received commandment from the Father. And now I beseech you, lady...” (vs 4-5). This is written to the Church, so this is an overall teaching to the Church as to what to do when there are deep problems within the Church.

- Have there been deep problems within the Church? *Yes!*

- Have there been deep problems within Protestantism? *Yes!*
- Catholicism? *Yes!*

This tells us what we need to do, v 5: “And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have *observed* from *the* beginning, that we **love one another**.” When troubles are all around, on every side, if we be like the Galatians, and if we backbite and devour one another, what’s going to happen? Can’t be having that, brethren!

Verse 6: “And this is the love of *God*: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the* beginning, that you might walk in it Because many deceivers have entered into the world [and into the Church], those who do not confess *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh....” (vs 6-7). That’s happening right now in the Presbyterian Church. Not only did they approve of the ordination of homosexuals, BUT they’re questioning the very nature of salvation through Christ and that there are religions which lead to salvation, too!

“...This is *the spirit* of the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out for yourselves... [that is, be on guard to yourselves] ...order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished...” (vs 7-8). Living in the Laodicean age:

- Is it easy to lose the things that you have worked? *Yes!*
- Is it easy to lose the love of God if you neglect it? *Yes!*
- Is it easy to forget about prayer and study because you’re *so busy*?

If you don’t have time to pray; and you don’t have time to study; and you always make an excuse to God, then think about this for a minute: What if in very dire needs, you get on your knees and you pray to God and ask God to intervene and help you.

- What if God sent you the same message that you send to God many times?—‘I don’t have time.’
- What if God said to you, ‘I don’t have time’?

You need to think about that! Don’t lose the things that you have already done:

“...but *that* we may receive a full reward. Anyone who transgresses and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ **does not have God**... [the teachings of Christ] ...*But* the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.... [When we come to *extreme* cases, the way we *love* our enemy is to have him leave us.] ...If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your* house, and do

not say to him, 'Welcome!' For anyone who says, 'Welcome!' to him is partaking in his evil works" (vs 8-11). Now, he was living in a time, which was very difficult.

Verse 12: "I have many things to write, but I do not wish to *convey these things to you* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face in order that our joy may be *completely full*." Couldn't even write it!

Some of the people that we serve in some of these foreign countries, we have to make sure that we send it in a small package. We have to make sure that the address is the address of an *individual* and not a church, because they will take it, they will confiscate it. We've also learned that those who need a little help financially, that we never send the money directly, we send it bank-to-bank so that we keep everything honest. There have been a lot of 'rip-off' artists out there in these other countries. I don't think, brethren, we fully understand or appreciate what it's like to live in some of these, these countries. It's something!

So, we have those doctrinal things; now let's come back to John 15. Here are some other problems that we'll be confronted with. This is why it's so important that we 'love one another.'

John 15:17: "These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you... [That's also another problem we're going to be confronted with—right?] ...you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this" (vs 17-19).

That's another problem we're going to be facing. I'm talking with some people who have lost their jobs because of religious discrimination. and also age, age discrimination. Most corporations, if you're getting close to 50, want you out. They can't say, 'You're getting close to 50 so we want you out.' They can't say, 'We hate your religion, we want you out.' They legally create a dossier of trumped up charges and have that on file. Then comes the time to let you loose and they've got it documented and they have illegally used the law to get rid of you—and the stated reason for getting rid of you is not the one that's in the file, but really because of what you believe in God (i.e. what they look at as your religion) or your age!

"...the world hates you for this. Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also..." (vs 19-20). Think of it, brethren, why should we persecute one another within the Church of God? ***Love one another!*** That doesn't mean that we have to agree with false

doctrines. *No!* That has nothing to do with false doctrines.

"...If they kept My word, they will keep your *word* also. But they will do all these things to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now they have nothing... [that is an excuse] ...to cover their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without *a* cause.' But when the Comforter has come, the Spirit of Truth" (vs 20-26)—and *it* will guide you and comfort you..

John 16:1: "I have spoken these things to you so that you will not be offended.... [We already covered there are a lot of offenses out there in the world, but *we* should not be offended.] ...They shall cast you out of the synagogues... [They sure did back then—didn't they? The day is coming, they're going to put us out of where we meet—no doubt about it.] ...furthermore, the time is coming that everyone who kills you will think that he is rendering service to God" (vs 1-2). Those things are just ahead of us. That's why we need to love each other.

Let's see another area where we're going to have troubles. We've got the problems in the world. We have problems within the Church. We had doctrinal problems. All those things come along—don't they? Who is behind all of it? *Satan the devil!* We are living this age of the greatest deception. The deception is so great that people don't even know they're deceived. How's that for a deception? Huh? *That is slick!*

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down...' (vs 9-10).

There's Satan who's 'the prince of the power of the air' accusing us before God's Throne all the time. That's what was the difficulty that happened in Galatia. They were backbiting and devouring one another and doing Satan's work for him! Can that happen because of carnal nature in a human? *Yes!*

- That's why you need to come back to the love of God.

- That's why you need to ask for the love of God.
- That's why you need to grow in it.
- That's why you're going to have trials and difficulties so you can learn how to apply it.

But, brethren, we need to love each other. He accuses us:

"...who accuses them day and night before our God. But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb... [That is through having your sins forgiven before God and you forgiving the other person for their sins.] ...and through the word of their testimony ... [they stood for the truth at all times] ...and they loved not their lives unto death" (vs 10-11). So, here's Satan.

Now let's look at our own individual problems. Those are the forces *without*, which we have to be on guard that they don't come *within*. Now, let's come to 1-Corinthians 1 and let's see the things that take place *within*. The reason that these things take place *within* is because God has called us. I would absolutely guarantee, with no shadow of doubt, that if God had not brought us together we would not choose each other as friends. If we ran our own country club, we would not allow the different ones to be members of our country club. But, **God is the One Who does the choosing**. And here are the problems that come because of this:

Verse 26: "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh..." Do we find brethren doing stupid things? *Yes!* Why? *Because we lack wisdom!* Why did God call us? *So we can grow in wisdom!* He didn't call many, many *wise*—did He? *No!*

"...not many who are powerful...[*No!* Most of us are weak] ...not many who are high-born among you, Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world..." (vs 26-27). That's why sometimes a congregation of God has to go through different things of foolishness.

I want you to stop and think: From whatever church you come out of, or whatever church you are still in—which hopefully is *Christian Biblical Church of God*—do we give understanding to people who do things that are not wise? *God has called the foolish!*

"...so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things." (v 27). This is a mix of individuals, wherever you go with the Churches of God that is an inherent difficult problem in overcoming human nature. This is why we need to learn to love each other and love God. We have a lot of things we need to put with. We

have a lot of things that we need to 'forebear.' Forbearance is a very important thing.

Verse 28: "And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.... [We come to have the love of God and love each other that we don't glorify in ourselves. That's the whole purpose of it.] ...But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (vs 28-30).

We need to understand, as you think and believe and know that God loves you, *also know and understand that God loves all of those that He has called*. As you look and ask God to help you overcome your problems and give you forbearance for your faults and mistakes, *so you need to understand that God also has called and is giving forbearance and understanding to other people that He has called with their problems and difficulties*.

How do we overcome this? *We don't get into a judgmental mode*—in a carnal way. We ask God for His love and His Spirit and His understanding, so that *through love* we get at the cause of it, rather than through carnality get to the *effect* of it. You can eliminate a lot of effects. It's kind of like this: leaving the house open with all the screens off and you go around and every fly that comes in you get a flyswatter and you kill it. You've gotten rid of the 'effect' but the 'cause' is you have the windows open with no screens. Is that foolish? *Yes!* So likewise, if you just go after the problem and not go after the cause, which then, the cause is needing more of Christ in you, needing more of the Holy Spirit in you, the cause is your human nature running rampant when it ought not. Then we can solve the problem.

Even Christ said this, Matthew 18:7: "Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is necessary that offenses come... [that's just the nature of life]...yet, woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" He doesn't want this to be literal and that you literally do it, because unless you get to the cause of the problem of offenses—which is the lack of love—cutting off your hand or your foot will do no good. Because as I have said before, you can cut off both hands, both arms, clear up to the shoulder, both feet, both legs, clear up to your thighs, and you can lay there as a torso in bed, even having your eyes out *and still have hate*.

But, the effort you need to make to grow in the love of God is going to be *the same as*, v 8: "And if your hand or your foot causes you to offend, cut it off and cast *it* from you..." In other words, what are you doing? What is your hand and foot?

That's part of yourself—isn't it? *So, you're giving up yourself* is what He's talking about here.

“...cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed... [this is true in the physical sense, but let's apply it spiritually]: ...than to have two hands or two feet *and* be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to offend, pluck it out and throw *it* away; for it is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than to have two eyes *and* be cast into the fire of Gehenna. Take heed *that* you do not despise one of these little ones...” (vs 8-10). That's why it's so important that we love each other.

In coming out of the world, and in coming out of the problems within whatever religious denomination in the world, or whatever denomination of the Church of God, *we automatically bring the baggage with us!* We've got to get rid of that, too. And lots of times, even though we've been in the Church of God a long time, what do we do? *We accumulate other baggage*—don't we? Our lives are just like garages. You always gotta straighten it up! Why? *Because the garage is where you let the baggage accumulate!* We have to get rid of it.

“...for I tell you that their angels in heaven continually look upon the face of My Father, Who is in heaven. For the Son of man has come to save those who are lost.... [That's why He's called us, because we were lost. Now, we're saved in that particular situation.] ...What do you think?...” (vs 10-12)—the man had a hundred sheep.

Here's the effort we need to make: “...If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, *does he* not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and search for the one that went astray?.... [Yes!] ...And if he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.... [That's how important it is that we have the love of God to overcome these problems] ...Likewise, it is not *the* will of your Father Who *is* in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” (vs 12-14).

Let's talk a little bit about offences again. What did James say? ‘Not many of you desire to become teachers because know you not that we shall receive the sterner judgment. And in many things we offend many’ (James 3).

I've offended people. Sometimes just my presence offends them. Sometimes what I say to them offends them. If it's my fault, I gotta do some things to change. If they're offended with the Truth, then it becomes their fault. But, nevertheless, we all have a tongue—don't we? Didn't James say, ‘the tongue is just like a wildfire thing, it just rages and burns!’ And he says, ‘even ships have just a little

teeny rudder, but they can turn the whole thing around' with that little bit of rudder. But no man can tame the tongue.' Not hard to do, not hard to tame the tongue? *Yesssss! Especially when you're right!* It says, ‘if you can tame your tongue it's the same is a perfect man,’ and ‘brethren, does fresh water and salt water come out of the same fountain? No! Even so these things are not from God.’

Here's how you solve the problem:

- 1) you go ask God for love
- 2) You ask God to help you see it in the right perspective.
- 3) then if someone comes to you and says, ‘I've got something I need to talk to you about’ perk up both ears, let your antenna come up, let your radar come up full strength so your going to be receptive.

Handle it this way, one-to-one. The reason is because this is the most loving way to solve it. You can talk back and forth, one to another and it's not exposed to anybody else.

Verse 15: “*So* then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him alone....” That's where to start. This should solve almost all the problems. This is the wisdom of God on how to solve the problems.

Now, there's a right way to use Matt. 18. I've had people use Matt. 18 the wrong way to come to execute their carnal judgment. There's a right and a wrong way. *Has to be with love and humility!*

“...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother” (v 15). Who knows, whatever the difficulty may be: maybe a misunderstanding, or maybe it's because of somebody suffering something. or maybe just the person's carnality got out of hand—could be!

Verse 16: “But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” Generally, that should solve it.

But the third step is, v 17: “And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the church....” In other words, it has to become a whole church thing—where you get the wisdom of the whole church involved. And the church here *does not mean the ministry*, it means the church—it means local congregation, wherever it is. The only thing a minister should do in that case is to help mediate it and maybe set the time when the meeting should be.

“...But if he also fails to listen to the church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven...”(vs 17-18).

So, if you have a problem and you come to each other, and you resolve it and you, as we say in the world: 'kiss and make up'—even in the Church—give each other a hug, give a handshake, and say, 'Boy, I'm glad that's solved and I'm going to resolve that this is going to be the solution.' It is **'bound in heaven, by your word.'** You are *obligated* to God! That's what this is talking about. This is not just church decisions. If you two agree on anything on earth and you say, 'I will,' it's bound in heaven. If you borrow \$500 and say I'll pay it back—you *will* pay it back! That's bound in heaven. Now, if you can't pay it back, then you go to the person. You don't move out of town and leave them high and dry. And many problems have been in the church because of that.

"...whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request [anything that you agree to], it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them" (vs 18-20).

That's not only in assembling for the Church, that is if you are resolving a problem and difficulty. Christ is in the midst of you. Is Christ in you by begetting through the Holy Spirit? *Yes!* Then exercise the love of God to solve the problem. Many times, things take place where you don't even know that, and someone comes along and says, 'Hey, don't you know that you're doing this?' And it comes out in the form of correction—and you get all uptight about it. Don't do that! Just assess the problem, 'O boy, if that's really true, you know, I gotta go pray about this. I really have to apply myself with it.' Whatever it may be. And don't think of the other person: 'Well, you're just picky, you're coming after me.'

- Maybe they prayed about it before they even came to you.
- Maybe they see something you don't see.
- Can you see your faults and problems all the time? *No, verily.*
- Can I see mine all the time? *No! Especially when I think I'm right.*

That applies to everybody. Yes, indeed it does, you see.

Now what do we do? Here's what we need to do: First of all, we need to set aside all of our carnalities. That's easier said than done. We'll have to keep working on that.

Ephesians 4:1: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called." Here's how to do

it with the love of God—because Eph 3 talks about the love of God which 'exceeds all knowledge' and everything.

Verse 2: "With all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, **forbearing one another in love.**"

- because we're weak
- because we're foolish
- because we're stupid
- because we do dumb things
- because our carnal nature hangs out there sometimes

—we need to be *forbearing* of one another rather than judgmental and picky. That's what was happening in Galatia. They were fighting and backbiting against each other. And we can't have that in our congregations, brethren—nowhere. We are going to have it from time-to-time and what do we need to do? *We need to use God's Spirit to change and grow and overcome!*

And remember this: Psalm 119:165 says: "**Great peace** have those who love Your Law, and there is no stumbling block for them [nothing shall offend them (*KJV*)]." If you have forbearance then you're going to have understanding. And if you see something that happens, instead of running off and going after someone saying, 'Aha, I see a mistake you have!'—which is easy to do. ***Especially if it gives you power!***

Instead, pray about it. Ask God to open that person's mind to change. Who can change the person better? You or God? *God can!* Sometimes maybe you have to bring it to their attention. But, I've seen many, many times when I've just taken it to God, and confessed my sins and my faults and asked God to help me have the love and help me understand, and help me to get myself out of the way. You know the big self: *me, myself and I.* That's what needs to be done. And with Christ in us and the love of God in us, ***then*** we are going to have the love of God as the thing which is going to get at the ***cause***. Rather than just be problem solvers and work on the ***effects***. Christ within you is going to make the change.

Here's what it needs to be. Here's how God wants all the fellowship groups to grow, Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love..." That's what has to happen, by applying the love of God to overcome and change and love each other and forbear one another.

"...if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions... [giving you deep understanding] ...fulfill my joy, that you

be of the same mind, having the same love... [the love of God] ...being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory...*" (vs 1-3). If there are offences and they come, don't try and solve it with *strife and vainglory*—get to the *cause*, apply the love of God, because it will never, never fail.

"...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things..." (vs 3-4). Others have needs. Others have difficulties. If you think you have a problem, maybe the one you go to has got problems of their own. Why don't you, when you're done discussing the difficulty, resolve to pray for one another. Will that not heal the breach? Will that not solve the problem? *Yes, because then you can pray in love!* Then you will grow in the mind of Christ.

Verse 5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus." We'll cover with the book of Hebrews right where this leaves off. The greatest thing that God ever did was send Christ, because that's what mankind wanted, and God did do it. He did accomplish it.

Now, let's come to 1-Corinthians 13, and let's see the nuts and bolts of how to apply it. I won't have the time to go ahead and expound everything as we go through, but what this does, this shows us the more excellent way of love to overcome:

1-Corinthians 13:1: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.... [Not *as* but you *become* one. So, here's all our carnality hanging out—right? *Yes!*] ...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" (vs 1-2).

If we don't have the love of God, we're ***nothing!*** You may be something in the world. You may be great to the world. You may be a minister, an elder or a deacon—something great in the former church you were in, but unless you have the love of God, you're ***nothing!***

Verse 3: "And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing." You can go out and serve people, help people and give to them and all that—and if you do it without the love of God—you're nothing. It doesn't matter how dedicated you are. Doesn't matter if you do it 20 hours a day and deprive yourself—you're ***nothing!***

Here's what works, v 4: "Love is patient [suffers long]... [that's why we talked about forbearance] ...*and* is kind; love envies not, does not

brag about itself... [doesn't put itself forward, 'how great thou art'] ...is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully... [and being weak and called of the world that way, and sometimes we act that way and it's hard to overcome] ...does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil" (vs 4-5).

That's very important because if you impute motives and think evil of the person and you suppose you read the other person's mind and know what's in their heart, then the whole premise of your difficulty is ***you're*** thinking evil.

Verse 6: "Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things... [regardless of the difficulties with one another] ...believes all things... [of Truth and righteousness] ...hopes all things... [that there will be changes] ...endures all things. Love never fails" (vs 6-8).

Brethren, that's how we need to love one another!

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8, 13
- 2) Mark 12:28-34
- 3) Matthew 9:10-13
- 4) Matthew 5:43-48
- 5) Matthew 7:7-12
- 6) John 13:34
- 7) John 15:7-13
- 8) Matthew 24:10-12
- 9) Acts 6:1-4
- 10) 2 John 1-12
- 11) John 15:17-26
- 12) John 16:1-2
- 13) Revelation 12:9-11
- 14) 1 Corinthians 1:26-30
- 15) Matthew 18:7-20
- 16) Ephesians 4:1-2
- 17) Psalms 119:165
- 18) Philippians 2:1-5
- 19) 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 5:22-23
- James 3

Also referenced: Book:

A Harmony of the Gospels by Fred R. Coulter

How to Make the Love of God Work

Fred R. Coulter

How does love work? Because sometimes, wouldn't you just like to have it just working a hundred percent *all* the time, with everything going great! We realize that it can't go that way all the time. None of us feel fantastic all the time—do we?

I mean, you just take the cycle of the day: you wake up in the morning. I don't know how you feel when you wake up, but I generally feel pretty good and then you start going through your day. And there's always a down part of the day—do you always have a down part of the day? Some part of the day when you're a little tired, and you always have something that you're going to do to try and compensate for it. Or if you feel too tired you go take a nap, if you can do that. Same way with trying to operate in living and carrying out the things that we need to do.

It is good to say, 'Yes, we need to love God, we need to love each other' and all these things are fine and they're all well and good, but *how* do you make it work? There are times that it's hard to make it work. So, let's go to 1-Corinthians 13 and let's see *how* we can get it to working. What do you do when it breaks down a little bit? It's bound to break down a little bit from time-to-time. Let's notice this one statement, because I think it's very interesting, just this one statement right in the middle of:

1-Corinthians 13:2: "...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."

Verse 13: "And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love..." So, when it says *if I have all faith and have not love, I am nothing*, what it really is saying in a sense—if you take it the other way around since faith, hope and love all go together—faith and no love you're really talking about two extremes and contradictions that hardly work.

If you have love, you're also going to have a certain amount of faith. If you have a certain amount of faith, you're going to have a certain amount of love. So, he's using a contradictory statement here. *Though* or *if*—he's using a *supposing* statement here. "...if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (v 2).

I got an interesting call from a man the other evening, and we got to talking and he said, 'Mercy is based upon law. Without law there's no mercy.' And I said, 'No, you're wrong, because God is merciful, God is also Lawgiver, but He also extends mercy to some who have never even repented.'

- Didn't He say that if He found ten righteous in Sodom that He would not destroy it?
- That He would be merciful to the whole city?
- Did those people repent? *No!*
- Doesn't God say that He sends the rain on the just and on the unjust?

There's no repentance involved either way. So, it's the same way here, with this thing concerning faith.

I just want to expand this a little bit from last week. Galatians 5:6 "...rather, *it is the* inner working of faith through love." Now, that's a very interesting statement: *faith works through love!* So, if you have love, you're going to have a certain amount of faith. If you have a certain amount of faith, then you're also going to acquire the love.

It's not that you have something over here in one stack and you have something over here in another stack and you have a third thing over here in a third stack. Remember how we talked about things in a circle? That's what love is. Love has many facets that are all tied together and you have to have one and also the other—we're going to see the other things that we need to do with it.

Let's go to 1-John, the fifth chapter; this is one that will always be brought up. Those who believe in commandment-keeping will always bring this up, which is a true statement, but we'll see how it's based here and how these things are put together. This is the beginning of *how we can make love work*, because there are going to be times when you have to get out and make it work. It doesn't happen automatic.

1-John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments."

I got into a very interesting discussion with this gentleman concerning 'grace,' and he took the posture that if you have grace you do away with commandment-keeping. That is not so at all! It's just like it is here, you can have commandment-keeping without love, and you have seen how that has worked. What happens? *Then you become all focused in on the little physical things!* My wife and I were watching this Jerusalem thing a couple Friday nights ago, and they are commandment-keepers there. Boy, they are commandment-keepers! Where it says they should *tremble* before God's Word, you'll see that they actually make themselves tremble! When the Torah comes by, they'll actually

just make themselves shake all over. Because the Scripture says that we are to ‘tremble’ at the Word of God. They are commandment-keepers! They won’t trim their beard; they let their locks grow; they start preparing for the Sabbath at noon.

I imagine that, to the letter of the Law, they are far better Sabbath-keepers than we are. When they get down to the Wailing Wall and are praying, they put on these—by the law—special little things that are on their heads. It’s the first time I’ve seen it. It’s some sort of little prayer thing they write and put in there. Then they have on their shawl—all the men put on the little shawl—and a little beanie on the back of their head. And they’re all rocking back and forth at the Wailing Wall—praying. They’re commandment-keepers.

Notice what it says *how to make it work* when we love God and love the children of God. It’s right back to all the commandments hang upon what? *To love God and your neighbor!* But here it says, “...we love the children of God: when we **love God** and **keep His commandments**” (v 2). This is part of the string, part of the circle, part of a continuum. That if you love God you will keep His commandments—and keep them how?

Verse 3: “For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” It’s very difficult for people to understand about God’s grace. We need to understand, and I need to emphasize it just a little bit more.

Jesus Christ was sent while we are all sinners—correct? Even before we were born. God did not wait till we were perfect to send Christ. God *loves* us even as sinners! But, that doesn’t mean He loves them to bring them into a *family* relationship; but He still *loves* the world. When we understand, once God calls us and brings us *into* His Church, and *into* His relationship, then with God’s grace *we enter into a different standing with God.*

This is a hard one for the commandment-keepers to understand when they don’t understand about grace. It’s just as hard as the Protestants who believe in grace but not law-keeping. It’s just as hard for them to understand about law-keeping as it is for law-keepers to understand what I’m going to tell you here, and how this love of God can begin to flow even more.

Obviously the way anything works is that it has to work beginning with God. We had a little discussion concerning *works* and *faith*, and it’s amazing how many people do not understand that the incident spoken of in Rom. 4, and the incident spoken of in James 2 are two different things. The one here in the fourth chapter of the book of Romans

has to do when God took them out and showed them the stars and said, ‘Abraham, your seed is going to be like all the stars, without number, if you can number them.’ *And Abraham believed!*

The account in James 2 was, ‘Abraham, take your son.’ *He obeyed!* He did what he was told; he had *works* in the obedience. So, they’re two different instances. When you are told to do something, you should obey. ‘Remember the Sabbath, keep it Holy. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.’ You are to *do* those. But, when we believe as we found through the book of John, God puts us into a completely different status.

Romans 4:6: “Even as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God **imputes righteousness** separate from works.” That’s the whole key to loving God and loving each other. When you are secure with God then you’re more secure with your fellow neighbors, your friends, your husband, your wife, your brethren.

What makes people very insecure? And reacting? *When you’re not sure how you stand!* If you get into a situation where you’re not sure how you stand before God, how does that leave you? *That leaves you unsure! It leaves you anxious!* Then it results in—and I’ve done it, so I’ll be the first one to raise my hand—you take it out on others—correct? We’ve seen it with the Church.

One of the worst things in the world that can happen is—and we’ve lived through that, and we’ve sat through these sermons—hellfire and brimstone, blood, guts and gore, and ‘brethren, if you don’t overcome God is going to reject you!’ So, you get up there and walk out of there thinking, ‘O God, I’m going to be rejected.’

What do you do? *You go out there and you try and make yourself be perfect—right?* You do really good; you get, a few days and a few weeks guess what happens? *You sin!* Then you remember that hellfire and brimstone and blood, guts and gore, and you go, ‘O God, how am I going to make it?’ You get all frustrated because you don’t understand your status with God.

Granted, we’re not to go out and sin! How many here *planned* to sin this last week? Sat down and said Sunday, ‘Boy, on Monday I’m going to sin this; and on Tuesday I’m going to....’ NO! Not one of you did! But how many of us sinned? Every one of us sinned one way or the other: in our minds or sometimes our attitude, and then we would say, ‘O God, forgive me’ or you think, ‘Whew, that’s a terrible thought’ and get rid of it.

God *imputes* His righteousness. Imputing means that He *transfers to you*, because God is the One Who has to do it. God is the One Who has something that He has to do for us, because, as

human beings, aren't we all helpless. Aren't we told in Isa. 58 that all of our righteousness is as 'filthy rags'? I've never understood that in the past. I think I understand it now. But I'll tell you, when I first read that I thought, *God, that is tough*, because I didn't understand about this one thing.

God *imputes* to us the righteousness of Christ. He *transfers* the righteousness of Christ *to us* in our stead. Here's where the Protestants go 'off the deep end': They say because God transfers that righteousness to you then you don't have to keep the commandments, because you're always righteous before God. No! That's not the reason He does it. He gives it to us *out of love* so that we stand before Him *perfect*—at all times, though we sin. Remember that! That's why, when you sin, *repent*. That's how you keep love working.

You're going to find that once you really grasp this that it's going to help you and encourage you an awful lot. *Imputes* righteousness without works. What could you do to work the works of Jesus Christ? *By yourself you can't do it!* Christ in you can do a certain degree of it, but you only have a portion of God's Spirit.

Verse 7: **"Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."** Are our sins forgiven? *He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins (1-John 1)!*—if we confess our sins—right?

"...and whose sins are covered.... [How are our sins covered? *By the blood of Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice!*] ...Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute *any sin*" (vs 7-8). God does not calculate sin toward us. The Protestants would say, 'Well if God doesn't calculate sin toward us, then we can go sin.' No, that's not true.

Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law." The proper way it should work is this: Since God has called us and has brought us into the relationship what is called *God's grace*; and since God has *transferred* to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and since God does *not calculate* our sins toward us. He will if we turn our back on God. You can be guaranteed He's going to. But, what is this supposed to do for us? *This is supposed to help us keep the commandments of God from a willing heart, rather than:* 'Well, God, I wonder why we have this commandment?' *rather* 'Yes, Lord.' You see the difference? It is made to be an encouragement *for* us and *to* us. That way then you know God is always on your side. With that in mind let's go back to the book of Jude.

Once you understand this and really think about it, this will help you understand about Job. I think I'm learning more about Job by studying the

New Testament—after having studied Job—than I knew when I first read it. I know when I was in Ambassador College and I read the book of Job, it took me a long time to even say, 'Okay, God, I don't understand it, but help me to understand it,' because first time I read it I thought God was wrong. I mean I really did!

You read the book of Job and you think: *how good he was!* I really thought God was wrong. Here, I was there at college, I'm trying, working hard. They tell you to 'pray an hour a day'—yes, pray an hour a day! 'Study an hour a day'—yes, study an hour a day in addition to studying for your classes. If you don't do it you know you're going to be rejected and God is going to spit you out of His mouth, and all this sort of thing. Then I read the book of Job and how great Job was, what he did, and I thought 'God, You must be wrong.' That's not true, because I did not understand the situation that God has put us in.

Jude, v 1: "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to the called *saints*, sanctified by God *the Father* and kept in Jesus Christ." That says an awful lot—doesn't it? That is a tremendous opening—isn't it?

- ...sanctified by God *the Father*..." That means *set aside, blessed, having God's Spirit*.
- ...and **kept in Jesus Christ**"—*and called!* That's something! And that's where we all stand before God.

Verse 2: "Mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you." Now we're going to see that they had a little problem there—they had some problems. You must make love work. You must make faith work. You must make everything work *by Christ in you!* Of course, you have your efforts, you have your attitude and you have the way that you ought to do it.

Verse 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints." This tells us that they had the same problem that all Christians have. Christian growth and life runs in curves—they go up and down, you have highs and you have lows. There're times when you may have an extended *low* like they did.

"...fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints." I just submit that if he wrote this before the end of the first century and he was saying "...fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered..." It kind of puts us way down the road, 1900 years removed from that. So, we have a long way to go.

Verse 4: “For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- then he goes through with his ‘hellfire and brimstone’
- he talks about coming out of Egypt
- he talks about the angels that left their ‘first estate’
- talks about Sodom and Gomorrah
- he talks about Michael and Satan disputing over the body of Moses
- he talks about the ‘way of Cain’
- he talks about the ‘way of Baal’
- he talks about the ‘way of Korah’

All of those things! So, they were really getting way down the road from God—weren’t they?

Verse 16: “These are complainers *and* critics, who are walking after their own personal lusts...”

Then he tells us what we need to do, v 20: But you, beloved, *be* building up yourselves on your most Holy faith... [We saw that *faith* works by love. That’s how it works. That’s the fuel that glues it together.] ...praying in *the* Holy Spirit... [the activating power from God] ...*so that you keep yourselves in the love of God...*” (vs 20-21). What does this tell us? This is a command: “...keep yourselves in *the* love of God...” That tells us that *we have to work at it!*

Now, we’ve seen some of the things that make love work:

- loving God
- loving the children of God
- faith in the Holy Spirit

“...keep yourselves in *the* love of God...” He’s also praying have *faith!* We have *prayer*, and all of these work together. ***They all go together!*** It’s not just a matter of when praying, that you set aside a certain time and you pray, there should be times when you pray and do that—‘instant in prayer’ (1-Thess. 5). Regardless of where you are. If you need to pray, *you pray!*

“...keep yourselves in *the* love of God *while* you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (v 21). Here’s quite an admonition that we need to keep up and keep doing these kinds of things, here, that He wants us to do.

Verse 22 “Now, on one hand, show mercy to those individuals who are doubting... [he’s talking

about the different problems that they were coming across] ...but on the other hand, save others with fear, snatching *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment *that has been* defiled by the flesh” (vs 22-23). There are some people that need that kind of discipline. It keeps them from going out and sinning.

Verse 24: “Now to Him Who is able to keep them from falling...” That’s quite an interesting statement—isn’t it? That He is able to *keep you from falling*. Remember, he said to ‘contend for the faith once delivered, *and*, keep yourselves in the love of God.’ There’s something that we always need to be doing. Isn’t it interesting, whenever you go along and become complacent about something, something happens—doesn’t it? Sooner or later, something’s going to happen, *always does!*

Like the man who worked up here at Kennacott Copper Mines. I don’t know if you know anything about Kennacott Copper Mines and mining up there; I’ve been up there and they’ve got a huge mountain that they have dug the top of it off, not just leveled, but they have dug it down and when you’re up there it’s a mile straight down to the bottom of that pit. You can go up there and they have these railroad cars. And they have a lot of engineers that drive the electric railroad and they lay the track and blow out parts of it. They lay dynamite and blasting all day long, ‘fire in the hole’ and POW! Then they take these great big huge boulders they they’ve blown out—and some of them are almost as big around as the size of this room, enough to put in these great big, 100 ton dump cars. Each dump car carries a hundred tons—that’s 2,000 pounds_(per ton).

Then they would take them from the mountain, run them on down to the processing mill. And the first thing they would do, they would run these cars in and they would secure them on this track so, they could turn it upside down and empty all the ore, by turning the car upside down and drop the 100 tons of ore out. They would do this with each car that came down. Then they would have a great big thing where they would start moving all the rocks and the different sizes and they would start breaking them down. They would have huge, gigantic things that had big, huge metal prongs that would come and they would take these big boulders and crush them down. I’m sure you heard of these rock-crushers—they make all kinds of noise.

Well, anyway, there was this man who worked there for 22 years. And he was a good worker and had done all kinds of things and he was working in this place where they were crushing these big rocks. Every once in a while when they would be too big, there would be a little pulley-gear that would slip. You have to have some sort of clutch device otherwise everything breaks if it sticks down.

So this was kind of a clutch device, and the pulley thing was coming off. So, for years, he would just reach over and he, with his hand, would push that belt back on and everything would be going. This one time he reached to put it back on and his hand got caught in the crusher and that was the end of his life.

I know it's kind of a long way around and it's kind of a gruesome story. But, when you become complacent and stop working at certain things and violate certain things, you know you shouldn't do, you can become complacent and then the next thing you know, WHAM! So, here this poor guy got it. He worked there for 22 years! All the workers said that he knew better.

Now, none of us has done anything that disastrous. We're all still alive. We're all here. But, it's just to show that when you get complacent things can happen. That's why he says, "...**keep yourselves in the love of God...**" (v 21). That's something we need to do.

Let's see how we can do that, shows us how to do that. Galatians 5:1: "Therefore, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free..." He's freed us from sin—correct? We're told that we've been freed or justified from 'the law of sin and death.' We still have it in us—God does not condemn us for it, because He hasn't removed it—but have been justified from it, and that gives us freedom.

- Do we have free access to God the Father? *Yes!*
- Do we have free access for God's mercy? *Yes!*
- Do we stand before God with no sins imputed to us? *Yes!*
- Do we stand before God with the righteousness of Christ? *Yes!*

That's the liberty that Christ has made us free.

"...and do not be held again in a yoke of bondage" (v 1). When you're watching some of these television shows, just keep your eyes on anything having to do with Orthodox Judaism and you'll understand what a bondage that that is. Or if you want a very light version of it, see the *Fiddler on the Roof*—that'll tell you about their traditions and everything.

Verse 2: "Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing!" We can put it in other phraseology today: If we do those things that are just fleshly ordinances to do—do this, that and the other thing—rather than Christ, it'll 'profit you nothing.'

Verse 3: "Again, I am personally testifying to every man who is being circumcised that he is a

debtor to do the whole law.... [there's no one who can do the whole law] ...You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law*, you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ...." (vs 3-4). Justification is to put you in right standing with God. Once you have the righteousness of Christ imputed to you, what other righteousness can you do that's greater? *None!*

"...You have fallen from grace! For we through *the Spirit* are waiting for *the hope of righteousness by faith...* [What is the *hope of righteousness*? *That is to be as Christ is, eternal life!*] ...Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; rather, *it is the inner working of **faith through love***" (vs 4-6).

That's a tremendous thing having that kind of faith, You have to *believe* those things that Christ is showing you. Not that I can say, 'Okay, now you must believe it.' No, because I can stand up here and I can say, 'You must do this, you must do that, you must do the other thing.' A good example of *works by law*.

The current thing: all 78 of the top leading people in the Reagan administration will have *drug tests!* That's a *work of law* to make them 'righteous.' *No drugs!* Is it going to stop anybody from taking drugs who wants to take drugs? *No!* The conservatives on the one hand say, 'Everybody ought to take a drug test to show how righteous they are—how good they are.' The liberals on the other hand, say, 'It's an intrusion into my privacy. What I do in my private time is my own.'

I can't tell you to believe this, believe that, believe the other thing, but unless, before God, you *believe it* can I create a law to make you believe it? *NO!* Can I force you to believe it? *NO!* That's what the Inquisition was all about—right? Catholics are going to make the world Catholic if they all die—right? *Didn't work!* Put out Martin Luther, and he said, 'How dare these people.' So, he goes out and he nails his '95 thesis on the wall and he turns around and creates his own little thing over here.

But, they still haven't controlled human nature. So, I can say, 'Brethren, you have to believe these things'—which is true, it's a true statement. But, on our own before God, with God's Spirit, *do we believe it?* We're all in the same situation. I can look back and I remember when we were told by the Superintendent of Ministers, 'Once a year you've got to give a slam-bam really corrective.' *Boy, I did!* I tell you it was something else. It took me a long, long time to overcome just that one, and I'm not so genteel just by nature, and that made it even worse. *Didn't change them! Did not change them!*

It has to be “*the* inner working of faith through love. Verse 7: “You were running well. Who hindered you, *persuading* you not to obey the Truth? This persuasion *is* not coming from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I am persuaded concerning you in *the* Lord that you will be otherwise minded; and he who troubles you shall bear the judgment, whoever he may be” (vs 7-10). That’s interesting, Paul didn’t take them out and say, ‘string them up, bring them before the board of inquisition here, cut off his hands and his toenails and all this sort of thing.’ **No!**

Verse 11: “But I, brethren, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I yet being persecuted? Then the offense of the cross has been taken away. I would *that* they would even make themselves eunuchs—those who are throwing you into confusion” (vs 11-12). So, he said that God’s going to take care of them. This was quite a statement, it’s there in the Bible. He was saying, very clearly, ‘Instead of circumcision, I wish they were completely cut off!’

Verse 13: “For you have been called unto freedom, brethren; only do not *use* this freedom for an occasion to the flesh; rather, **serve one another with love.**” There’s the whole key. See how it comes right back to that again? What if someone comes along and does something that kind of offends you? Christ said offenses are going to come. Well, is it against Christ? *If it isn’t, then pass over it. Serve one another with love!*

Verse 14: “For the whole Law is fulfilled in this *commandment*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.... [That doesn’t mean that you don’t have to keep the Law.] ...But if you bite and devour one another, watch out *lest* you be consumed by one another” (vs 14-15). That’s what destroys everything that comes along. There are people—I have seen this in groups in the Church—that start talking a little group over here and have a little group over there within the congregation.

I remember down in Pasadena we’d have almost 1200 there every week. After church what happens is this little group gets over here and they fellowship together; and this little group over here and this little group over here and this little group, so pretty soon that happens—*chew, chew*—and they devour one another—they’re consumed.

Verse 16: “Now, *this* I say... [here’s how you’re going to make love work]: ...walk by *the* Spirit... [In other words, let God’s Spirit direct *your walk!* And that means how you live day-to-day, *your walk!*] ...and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

I don’t know what kind of a problem they had there in the Church in Galatia, but, I tell you, I

would hate to pastor that church. Poor Paul! He really had it between Corinth and Galatia; he said to the Philippians, ‘Oh, thank God for you. You’re the only ones who communicated to me in my trouble, thank you, bless you.’

Verse 17: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit... [There’s going to be that pull. Just look at the end result of the things of the flesh]: ...and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things you wish to do.” That sounds an awful lot like Rom. 7—doesn’t it? The good that you want to do, you can’t do. The evil that you don’t want to do, you do it. And you feel wretched when you do it.

Even though this struggle is going on, v 18: “But if you are led by *the* Spirit, you are not under law.” I’m sure that in that particular case, it means you are not under *the penalty* of the law for sinning, because you’re in a situation where *God does not impute sin to you.* You’re in a situation where *you have the righteousness of Christ given to you.*]

Verse 19: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*...” We don’t want to be like the, the Pharisee vs the publican. Obviously, none of us are doing these things. But, it’s no great credit to us because human nature is the same. I tell you, this world is just getting so wretched out there, that it’s almost impossible to even just be loyal and faithful from the point of view of trying to tell someone else. If you told some of these people, ‘I just believe in just marrying one wife,’ now polygamy is making a comeback through the Mormons. I don’t know if you saw that on some of those special reports. Your polygamy’s working good. All these women can marry one man and we can have all our careers. Believe it or not it’s the women are the ones who are pushing it. **Blew my mind! It just blew my mind!** ‘Oh, this is not adultery.’

“...adultery, fornication...” (v 19). I tell you, I don’t know what’s going to happen in these schools, but stand back, because one of these days some parent’s going to go down there with a gun to some school somewhere and **blow some heads off** for what they’re doing in these schools to cause the students to commit fornication. I’m not saying, that, I’m the great prophet, now it’s going to happen. But, one of these days some irate parent is going to go down there and do it.

“...uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, divisions, sects, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past...” (vs 19-21).

What a crowd he had to deal with! I mean, I have never encountered a situation like that in counseling people. "...that those who do such things shall not inherit *the* kingdom of God" (v 21).

Now, hopefully, we're a long way removed from that—right? Even to read this it sounds *strange* that Paul would have to write to the church and say, 'Folks, don't do these things that I've told you twice before!'

(go to the next track)

Verse 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23). Who's going to create a law against that? You can't do it! There is no law made against anything like that.

Verse 24: "But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit... [the Spirit of Christ in us] ...we should also be **walking by the Spirit**.... [That's how love works. *We walk in the Spirit!*] ...We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another" (vs 24-26). So, if we are *in* the Spirit, let us *walk* in the Spirit.

Here's something else to do with the Spirit. It all gets down to a spiritual thing—doesn't it? Spiritual application for us; everything that we do. That's why God has the Sabbath every week. I look back and think, 'Where would I be without the Sabbath every week?' God has it just right. It's not every sixth day. It's not every tenth day. It's not once a month. **It is once every seven days.** I think that that's just fantastic! I don't know about you, but I sure see the value of the Sabbath.

Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you now with all joy and peace in believing..." All these things that I've talked to you about, mentioned here right in the Scriptures, it comes from God. He's the God of all.

- "...**fill you now with all joy**..." This doesn't mean that you're going to be running around just joyful all the time and you run across those who do that—every time you see them, 'praise the Lord, hallelujah!' But it's all **put-on**. That isn't what it means. Joy is also, can be *quiet contentment*.
- "...**and peace in believing**..." That brings us to the whole thing of the peace of God. But when you **really believe** what we have just covered, that brings "...**peace** in believing..."

It brings what kind of 'peace'? What is the most important *peace* that God's Spirit brings? **Peace of mind!** That's the only place where peace is going to

count. You have to keep coming back to that, because all the traumas of the week will wear it thin, it just will.

"...peace in believing that you may abound in hope... [How?] ...*and* in *the* power of *the* Holy Spirit" (v 13). Just remember and keep that in mind, that the Great Creator God, Who has made everything that there is, **EVERYTHING**, took upon Himself 'the law of sin and death' and came to this earth to be the sacrifice **for you, for me**. That's a fantastic thing to really just keep in mind.

When we come to God, we are not coming to just a mental illusion—as the psychologists say: 'Well, now if you believe—and there again is that goodness of the human nature? 'If all good people everywhere that all do good and work together we'd have peace'—right? **Wrong!** We are coming to Christ Who has all power—right? He sits at the right hand of God—doesn't He? **Yes, He does!** He is treating us **this way** and that's fantastic! How are we going to make love work?

- We have to 'walk in the Spirit'
- We have to be loving God, loving the children of God, keeping the commandments of God
- We have to have faith in the Holy Spirit building up that love, building up each other.

Let's see how all of this can be done. It can't be done any other way! There is no human being that's going to come to God and say: 'God, I am finally good enough for you to be accepted of me.' Why? **Because then God owes it to you!** God does not owe anything to anyone. You stop and think about that for a minute. That statement: 'God, I'm finally good enough to be accepted by You.' You are obligating God to your works. That's why it was said, 'that if it is of works it is of a debt!' God owes you something. God doesn't owe anybody anything. Here's the only way it's going to be done.

Colossians 1:27: "To whom God did will to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles..." This is a tremendous thing, brethren. Remember what Paul told Timothy, he said, 'stir up the Spirit that is in you.' There are times when we do need to come to God and let Him **stir up** His Spirit within us—**walk in the Spirit**.

"...the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ **in** you, the hope of glory" (v 27). **Christ in you**—God's Spirit **in you!** What happens with that human mind? It is warring against the human mind, and the human mind against the Spirit. It is there and that's just the way that it is. I'm sure you have those mental battles. Do you have those? **Sure you do!**

Ephesians 4 gives us some very practical **how to make the love of God work**. God doesn't give us something that's impractical. God doesn't give us just some ethereal thing that we all become contemplators and go sit out here on a rock someplace and just think about God. God gives us something that is practical in our lives that we do.

Ephesians 4:1: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called." What is this telling us?

- we are called
- we are to work *worthily*

How do we walk worthily? *By Christ in us!* There is no other worth, is there? *No, of course not!* You talk about the real thing. Once you have had as it were, however you want to describe it, something fantastic to eat; something fantastic that you own; something that you hold—maybe absolutely pure gold—once you've had the *real thing* nothing else will work. For example: once you have had the best cut of meat you can possibly have, cooked just the way it should be, what do you do? You compare everything else to that—right? *That becomes the standard!*

It says, "...walk worthily of the calling..." What does this mean? What is a 'vocation' (KJV)? A vocation is a **life's work!** There are such things as *avocations*, which is secondary kinds of work and recreation. This is called 'a vocation'; *the main important thing in your life*. I know it is for me always there! The most important thing! I have to work to live, and for my family to live. But, that's not the most important thing. God says He'll provide. So, we **"...walk worthily of the calling to which you were called."** How do we 'walk worthily'?

- we have *our part to do*
- we have to *update with love*
- we have to *walk in the Spirit*
- we have to have *faith and hope*

But here it tells us **how**, v 2: "With all humility and meekness... [remember, we're not all strutting around in vanity] ...with long-suffering..." There are times when our patience may wear a little thin. Well, if it wear a little thin, go back and get some padding over it, that's all. Very simple, that padding comes from God.

"...forbearing one another in love..." One of the best ways to make love work is to *forebear*. What is the opposite of forbearing? *Picking! Overlooking!* And I've seen it in myself, when I pick on someone or something, I don't give any rest for anything. **Nothing** pleases me when I'm 'picking.'

Nothing! Haven't you found yourself that way? When you get into a 'picking' attitude there is **nothing** that that person can do to satisfy you, though they're trying their hardest.

Forbearance is the opposite. *Forbearance* is saying, 'Okay, there are certain things that I don't like, but I can't change them. So, I might as well learn to put it out away from me and not let it bother me. Lot's of times we let things bother us because **we want to let it bother us**. I've done that. I heard on Dr. Dean Edell, that 20% of all operations are because people want the operation and they go to the doctor and they will reject him if they don't get that operation from that doctor. Believe it or not! They **want something!** That's why God says about gossip-mongers—they can't go without. It's not a matter of passing on information. But, you can't sit down and have just a conversation with gossip-mongers without some kind of gossip coming across somewhere. You can't talk about the weather, or a friend. It's almost an incredible thing.

Then you have the others that are so self-centered all they can do is talk about themselves and their pleasures and what they're doing, where they're going. Everybody else doesn't count. So, what you have to do is just back up and say, "Whoa!" A little long-suffering here. Back away!

"...forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 2-3). I've done this, I've gotten people upset, and you know what happens? *People are upset back at me!* Then while I'm all over getting upset, I look at them and I wonder: 'What are you upset for?' Then I look back and I see ***I'm the one*** who started it! My wife said, 'Well, you started it, let me finish it a little bit.' All right, that's the way it goes. Everything was fine until you came barging in. Everyone of us has got it—haven't we?

Verse 3: "Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." There is one body. Where are we going to go, folks? We've been cast out, spit upon, rejected and run over. There isn't any other place else we're going to go. We're it! We're kind of stuck with each other here; that's the way it goes. But, if we **all** let Christ in us help, then there's no being 'stuck with each other.' We all look forward to it, because we're all in the way God wants us to be—right? *Right!*

Even if you're "...called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (vs 4-5). It can't be any other way.

I was talking to John Bennett the other night. He was saying he was looking forward to this Feast because it's going to be a 'no hassle' Feast. I told him that's the way we want to keep it. Why

have we had such good Feasts? *Because we all come with the proper attitude, because God is going to be there!*

There's "One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all.... [Good southern statement. 'Ya'll' They say it a little bit differently—'ya'll, ya'll'—remember that.] ...But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (vs 5-7).

God deals with each of us a little bit differently. That's what makes it so bad when someone has to get up there and start stomping around and correcting because it doesn't fit everyone. It just does not, it cannot, because we all have a little bit different situation with God.

About the perfecting of the saints, v 13: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man..." Perfect person—none of us have reached that, yet; none of us have. That's why, we go along and we think 'man, everything has been really good this week.' Hope and pray next week is good; it may not be quite as good.

Verse 13: "Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ." We all have along way to go to that—don't we? *Yes, we do!* So, let's strive for that.

Verse 14: "So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine... [well, we're not letting that happen] ...by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love..." (vs 14-15).

I think this is where more offenses come than anything else, because we get offended—I know I do. Someone comes along and says something to me, and if I just 'ain't' in the mood for seeing it, 'don't you dare bring it up.' You ever been in that mood? *Sure you have!* But what they say is *true!* Sometimes the worse thing to happen is to be in an argument and someone shout the truth, and you know it's true, and the only thing you can do is say, *shut up!* Isn't that your reaction?

Sometimes it may happen that way, and especially speaking the truth in picking. Have you ever had someone just pick away? What they're saying is true, but they just pick, pick, pick away. That's not in love. They need more forbearing. I've done this. I have done this myself. I know what it's like. I've had it done to me.

"...may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the body,

fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies... [everybody's got something to supply in the body and Church of Christ—*everybody!*—they have their own part in it] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (vs 15-16). That's how it's going to work—up-building!

Verse 22: "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts." That's still there. Ephesians is one of his best churches, folks. I mean, I think Philippians was his best church. Corinthians was his worst church. Oh, what a church, oh man! Then the churches in Galatia were next. This is his best church, but notice what he tells them:

Verse 23: "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 23-24). This whole thing in Spiritual creativity is what takes place. Wherever there's creation there's also a little bit of waste. That waste is called 'human nature'—right? You fix a dinner, you create a dinner, what do you have? *All the parts you don't want!* Cut off a little bit of the rotten, you cut off the wilted.

Sometimes you may create something that isn't too good. I remember one time we had pancakes, no milk, made out of water. And were they bad! I remember I was going to do something and it came out so bad you couldn't believe it. At that time when you're doing something and your wife comes over and says, 'don't you think this way' or 'oh leave me alone, it'll work just fine'—you know, and you get it all done; 'I told you so.' Isn't that the way it works? *Sure!*

So, it's *created!* Let Christ create in you. Get rid of all the waste and stuff. Here's the waste you put away, v 25: "Therefore, let each one put away lies..." Church members lying one to another? *They were!* I mean think about it for a minute. You think *a lie* is awful, liars! *True*, we should be abhorrent of it, but let's face reality. Church members were lied to and he says, 'put away lying.' He didn't say, 'Thank you, you have put away lying.' He said: 'Put away lying.'

"...and speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another. *When* you become angry, do not sin..." (vs 25-26). That's the hardest thing in the world to do. I have yet really to do that. When I'm angry I generally sin somehow. Then I've got to go back and patch it up. All of us have to say, if that happens to you, 'I'm sorry.'

"...Do not let the sun go down on your anger..." (v 26). Now, why does he say that? I tell

you, brooding over something—have you ever done that? Whine about that and brood over it. Think about it. Toss and turn and wake up and figure all the angles. What about this? What about that? So simple, someone comes, go get yourself a glass of wine, sit down, watch the sundown and say, ‘all the wrath for the day be gone.’ It’s not quite that simple, but if we would do that that would help a lot—wouldn’t it? That means that it comes back the other way. You don’t say, the next day, ‘Remember last night?’ That can happen. I’ve done that. Or here you’re going along, and you make some little mistake, and then someone says, ‘You know, I remember when you did that seven years ago.’ Have you ever had that happen to you? I’ve had that happen to me.

Now, verse 27 is one of the, the most important things to do to build up love: “Neither give place to the devil.” How do you give place to the devil? You don’t go off there and call him in—do you? You don’t go out and invite him in. I don’t know a Christian yet who goes out and says, like you would to your dog, (whistle) ‘Come here, fella.’ You don’t do that. No one’s doing that. How do you give place to the devil? *You let all these attitudes and everything build up in you and then there are temptations and missiles that come along!* But he doesn’t even have to get in close to you—just kind of like sending a radio wave—PING! That’s what it means. Don’t give him place.

Verse 28: “Let the one who stole, steal no more... [There are thieves in the Church, brethren!] ...rather, let him labor with *his* hands, working at what *is* good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need. Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth...” (vs 28-29). There are slur words and cuss words and things like that—‘corrupt communication’ which would cover everything; gossip and tongue-lashing and all that sort of thing.

“...but that which is good and needful for edification... [I wish that we could all do that all the time, that would be nice. Let’s see if we can try and do that.] ...that it may give grace to those who hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...” (vs 29-30). We can ‘grieve’ the Holy Spirit by doing stupid and foolish things. That’s what repentance is all about. When we do stupid and foolish things and we come to ourselves and we understand, ‘utt-oh, that was not a thing I should have done.’ Then you repent, heal the breach, repair the gap, whatever. Don’t grieve the Holy Spirit! I imagine there are times when God says, ‘Oh no, not again, really!’—for some of the things we do.

- God has committed Himself to *count no sin to us*.

- He’s committed Himself to *impute the righteousness of Christ to us*.

That’s fantastic! That’s encouraging!

“...by which you have been sealed for *the* day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice” (vs 30-31). ***Now, that says an awful lot!*** This shows that Christians always like to look at the ‘ideal’; and we always like to try and strive for that which is the greatest and the best and the perfect—right? The hard thing to take is when those things come along that are not.

Verse 31: “Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking, be removed from you, with all malice.” Here’s a good group of Christians who said what?

Verse 4: “*There is one body and one Spirit*, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all” (vs 4-6). And then he says, “Put away these things” over here. God has got to be merciful and kind and patient and loving. And with His Spirit, He understands that. We have our part to do. This is how we “walk” in love. We put it away.

Verse 32: “And be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another... [The last thing he says: the healing thing on ***how to make love work!***] ...forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you.”

There’s got to be that *balm* and that *salve* of forgiveness. Give it *time!* Many times it starts out, ‘I forgive you, I know I’m supposed to forgive you, God says to forgive you, all right, I forgive you.’ You haven’t quite got it a hundred percent, but at least you got the words out. I’ve done that, too. I’ve done that—‘okay, forgive you.’ But, what you do is you ask God for a right attitude.

Turn immediately, pray for your enemies, and say, ‘Oh God, bless this person who’s hitting me over the head with his club.’ First of all, you pray for a right attitude. And then what you do, you say, ‘God, you do with him as You see fit. Not my will, but Your will.’ Maybe my will might be I’m going to run down and do this dirty, no good in—umm! That may be my will, but that may not be God’s will. How would you feel if you were one of the relatives of those who Paul killed? You’d want to do Paul in—right? Next thing you know, he’s preaching in church! Now, ***we’ve never had anything quite that hard put upon us!*** But, God’s will is what should be done. There are certain things you have to work at. Notice, the contrast. Will these things be

there? What is the ‘balm’ that heals? ***Forgiving one another!***

Go back and read the first part of Matt. 18: He talks about offenses will come and your brother trespassing against you and how to handle that and so forth. Matthew 18:21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?’...” He did not say, ‘How often shall someone in the world sin against me and I forgive him.’ He said, ‘brother.’ What are the hardest fights in the world to stop? *Family feuds!* They are! They’re the hardest ones to stop. I look back on some the arguments my sister and I had growing up, and they were ***fierce***. He’s talking about ‘the brother’; so, in this case, it’s in the Church.

“...‘how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven’” (vs 21-22). Why would He say this? ***Because forgiveness is the ‘salve’ that makes love work over the hurts!*** That there has to be an extra effort made.

You can deal with people in the world. But you don’t have to live with them. You can always up and get away from them—right? Too many people do that in their own marriages. They’re not willing to work out their own problems. They’re too willing to, ‘I can’t live with you anymore I’m going to have to go away.’ Can’t do that. But seventy times seven! There may be a time when you have to go off by yourself and just say, ‘Just leave me alone, I don’t want to be bothered.’ Till you get things sorted out. Sure, there may be a time for that. But here’s the thing that makes it work, right here.

Ephesians 5:1: “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love...” (vs 1-2). We have to *walk*:

- we’re serving one another
- we’re walking in the Spirit
- we’re forgiving one another
- we’re up-building our love

—all these things are parts of overcoming.

“...even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (v 2). Then he goes on showing what we should do.

Ephesians 6 becomes the key focal point of what we need to do to put in the strength. There has to be the strength in what we’re doing. Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord... [you may be feeble physically, but]: ...be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength.”

There is ***nothing***, Christ said, that is impossible to do ***if we ask!*** And ***if we love!*** It will be

done, He said, ‘IF you love Me, keep My commandments, and whatsoever you ask, I will do.’ The power of His might. We’re coming to the Power, the whole Power of the universe—and that can be given unto us, and we can use that. There’s still something we need to do.

Verse 11: “Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...” You see what happens if we give a place for the devil, he’s going to come along and say, ‘Utt-oh, there’s something I can use to stir things up with.’ And he’ll be there. Doesn’t have to be there in person, but he can do it. “...the wiles of the devil...” So, we have to put on the ‘whole armor of God.’ We’re not sufficient unto ourselves, none of us. I’m not; you’re not. We have to make it work.

Verse 12: “Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood... [We’re just simply people. That would be one story!] ...but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*.”

Oh I know, sometimes you just get out there in the world and it’s just frustrating to even just function. We say, ‘I want to watch a good TV show tonight.’ So, you sit down there’s nothing but garbage—***just plain garbage!*** Where does that come from? ***Spiritual wickedness in high places!*** What has the power to put that on television, and it’s there?

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day...” Sometimes every day may feel like an evil day. Once in a while you go through that. Once in a while you come along and everyday you feel like an absolute dirge, a drag, a terrible, miserable thing. How many times I’ve have had days like that? How many times when we all have days like that? When I have to drive home in the heat and smog then it’s really a miserable day—the worst. And when I get home, yes, I’m filled with love and cheer and goodness and kindness and bounce out of the car and run in and tell my wife how much I love her.

No! I come walking in *rrrrrrrr*. She looks at me and says, ‘Have a rough day?’ *rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr* I don’t feel like talking, you know. Kind of hot and smoggy—*rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!* Yes, that’s right; go take a shower. That is not the time to bring up a problem. If I come home and I’m feeling pretty good and maybe she’s had rough day with the kids in the neighborhood—and, I tell you, sometimes our neighborhood can really do some things that would blow your mind! I come home, she’s all fed up with—that’s the last thing in the world to say, ‘Hey—those pancakes this morning were lousy!’ Sometimes every day feels like an evil day. Pray to

God and have Him take it away. Pray for sundown, have a glass of wine-go on and make the next day a better day.

“...having worked out all things, to stand.... [When you have days like that you have to go to God! Nothing else is going to solve it! Very simple!] ...Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [Which is of Christ. The devil can do *nothing* to Christ—correct?—*nothing!*] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace” (vs 13-15). In other words, always be walking in that way; walking in that love. That’s what’s going to make love work.

Verse 16: “Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith... [remember, it says that ‘*love that works by faith*’] ...with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Use it just like *missiles of passion*, that’s what it means in the Greek. Whatever it is. What is the button that is your weakest, that turns on your strongest negative type of personality thing? Huh? What do you think Satan’s going to be looking for? He’s going to look and see if that armor is slipping away enough, and he can push that button.

Verse 17: “And put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” That’s how you overcome it. You don’t prevent *any* of it. This says you go to battle. This doesn’t say you stay home in a bomb shelter. You go to battle. You go to overcome.

Verse 18: “Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” In other words, he’s saying, ‘Folks, we’re all in this together.’ We need to work with each other and pray for each other and help each other; and when a problem comes along, *all do their best to overcome it*.

It’s that simple. You can go to the best, most wonderful hotel in the world. They have some rooms here—I won’t say San Francisco, because I won’t go there, so we’ll take a good, clean city someplace—got a beautiful, fantastic penthouse—\$1200 a day! The best food you can have. Waiters and everything else.

- What if the electricity goes off?
- What if the waiters go on strike?
- What if you come there and you’re in a bad attitude?

This, brethren, is how the love of God can work!

It’s not just a thought and ethereal thing, we have to get down to practical things in life. It’s what they call ‘getting into the trenches.’ When you get into the trenches there are going to be all these things of human nature, our own and others mixed in, but we still have to keep walking in that way that God wants us to walk in. It can work! The biggest thing that is good is what has happened here, is where we can look back at incidents in our lives and we can laugh at them now, as being *silly!*

Hopefully we can learn so that when the next silly thing comes along, we can identify it for what it is. ‘Utt oh, let’s put a little forbearance between me and it; overlook it and go on. Sometimes it will just disappear of it’s own accord. That’s how we can make love work. Remember, we:

- have to be loving God
- loving the children of God
- love works by faith in the Holy Spirit
- you have to be up-building the love
- serving one another
- walking in the Spirit
- overcoming and forgiving one another

And that’s how the love of God is going to work!

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

Scripture References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:2, 13, 2
- Galatians 5:6
- 1 John 5:2-3
- Romans 4:6-8
- Romans 3:31
- Jude 1-4, 16, 20-24
- Galatians 5:1-26
- Romans 15:13
- Colossians 1:27
- Ephesians 4:1-7, 13-16, 22-31, 4-6, 32
- Matthew 18:21-22
- Ephesians 5:1-2
- Ephesians 6:10-18

Scriptures referenced but not quoted:

- James 2
- Isaiah 58
- 1 John 1
- 1 Thessalonians 5
- Romans 7

PASSOVER PREPARATION I

Fred R. Coulter

In this study of the words of the New Covenant, which we have agreed to live by, are contained in John 14, 15, 16, and 17. These are the words that Jesus spoke to His apostles on the night of the Passover. This becomes very important and also quite profound; because the night of the 14th is what you would call the covenant night for the New Covenant, but also it was the night that God began His covenant with Abraham.

Let's go back to Genesis 15 and let's review that. If you have *The Christian Passover* book you can go through in great detail that I have there, showing that the occasion in Gen. 14 is very important in relationship to the Passover; that this actually took place on the 14th day of the first month, on the night of the 14th day of the first month. I won't go through all of the proof of that, I will leave that up to you to read in *The Christian Passover* book. I also have a chart there that shows the timing of it.

Genesis 15:4: "And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, 'This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.' And He brought him... [God brought Abraham] ...outside... [that is, took him out at night] ...and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.'... [this had to be at night; you can't see the stars unless it's night] ...And He said to him, 'So shall your seed be'" (vs 4-5). What we have here are two promises:

1. *the promise of physical seed*, which would then be Isaac, and from which then later came the children of Israel
2. *the promise of spiritual seed*, a foretelling of the covenant that Abraham entered into, which God proposed to him; and this was a unilateral covenant.

God is the One Who gave all the information here. It is also a foretelling of the spiritual sons and daughters of God—who when they enter into the Kingdom of God—will shine as the sun. This was given on the night of the 14th.

He told him: "... 'So shall your seed be.' And **he believed** in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for **righteousness**" (vs 5-6). This kind of righteousness means that you are put into **right standing** with God **because you believe Him!** That's the righteousness that Paul is talking about when we come to the book of Romans. You can't have any greater righteousness than this, where then God counts it to you or imputes it to you so that you are

in right standing with God. This has nothing to do with relieving people from the obligation to keep the commandments of God.

Now then, on the day portion of the 14th—because the days begin in the Bible at sunset—sunset came, God talked with Abraham. God said, 'Eleazar of Damascus is not going to be your heir, but one that shall come forth from your own bowels shall be your heir.' God took him out and showed him the stars at night. Now then, on the day portion of that day, here's what took place:

Verse 8: "And he said, 'Lord GOD, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?'.... [because God said, 'You're going to have all this land'] ...And He said to him, 'Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon'" (vs 8-9).

Then was performed a very unusual sacrifice. This sacrifice and this offering was not an ordinary sacrifice. There was no altar built, there was nothing burned upon it, but rather this was done upon the ground. This was most unusual because what he had to do was to kill the animals and cut them down the middle. In other words, take an ax—and if you've done any butchering you know what I mean—you just cut down the middle of the spine. That would be a very bloody, sordid affair; and, of course, all the intestines would be there and everything. So, what he did, he laid them back-to-back with a path coming down between the animals. The reason he did that was because God was going to perform an oath to Him and a pledge of His death. This is actually a foretelling of the crucifixion of Christ on the 14th day of the first month.

Verse 10: "And he took all these to himself, and divided them in the middle... [cut them down the middle] ...and laid each piece opposite the other; but he did not divide the birds." He put one on one side and one on the other side. How long this took to do it, we don't know.

Verse 12: "And it came to pass, **as the sun was going down...**"—which then ends that day—does it not? If it begins at sunset the day before, then this begins to end the day with this.

"...that a deep sleep fell upon Abram. And, behold, a horror of great darkness fell upon him!" (v 12). This would have to be God showing Abraham the death that God Himself was going to experience as symbolized by this sacrifice. In *The Christian Passover* book I have it laid out that this probably

took place at the same time that Jesus died, at the ninth hour—3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Then with the great darkness coming upon him, that shows the literal death of Christ.

Verse 13: “And He said to Abram, ‘You must surely know that your seed shall be sojourners in a land *that is* not theirs, (and shall serve them and afflict them) four hundred years. And also I will judge that nation whom they shall serve. And afterward they shall come out with great substance. And you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.’ And it came to pass—when the sun went down and it was dark—...” (vs 13-17).

Notice: we have the *going down* of the sun, then we have the sun *went down*, and it was dark so we begin the 15th day of the 1st month. That’s why the Passover and the Night To Be Remembered and the day portion of the 15th day of the 1st month are all tied together in the events that God has laid out; that we understand the 14th is the Passover, and it’s the Passover night.

The day portion of the 14th—Christ was crucified, died at three in the afternoon, and was put into the tomb. When it says the ‘sun went down and it was dark,’ we’re dealing with the time that Christ was in the tomb. This also has significance for the children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt, because they came out on the 15th day.

Here God completes the covenant that He began on the night of the 14th. He completes that covenant on the night of the 15th and He guarantees this, v 18: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.’” Then He lists all of the Canaanite tribes.

Now let’s go to Exodus 12 and see the literal fulfillment of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt on the 15th day of the 1st month. That’s how we established that the first one was on the 14th day of the 1st month, because of what we find here in Exo. 12 on the 15th day. It’s easy to count one day backwards—isn’t it?

Exodus 12:40: “Now, the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt *was* four hundred and thirty years, and it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, it was even on that very same day...” (vs 40-41). What do you mean the ‘same day’? This is the same day that God passed through those parts, as Abraham was able to see, with the smoking furnace and the burning lamp, and He passed between the parts. That was the day that

He said that the children of Israel would be brought out from Egypt. So the ‘same day,’ being the 15th day of the 1st month, goes back 430 years before, and you are at the time of Abraham when this occurred. Then you go back one more day and you find the proposition of the covenant given to Abraham on the night of the 14th.

So, we will find the same thing for the New Testament. The words of the New Covenant that Christ gave to His apostles—and by the way, please understand this: ***The apostles were the only ones who kept the New Covenant Passover on that Passover because only the apostles were with Him!*** They had to teach the rest of the disciples for the next Passover what they should do. So likewise, the words of the New Covenant that Christ spoke to His apostles, to fulfill the promise given to Abraham, we find given on the same night, the night of the 14th.

Now let’s look a little bit concerning the New Covenant. The New Covenant is a *covenant of love and grace*, which is very important for us to understand. God pledged His death back there to Abraham. When Christ died on the cross, was put in the tomb, there were three days and three nights, that fulfilled the promise that God gave to Abraham. It was for us.

Romans 4:17 ties it all together: “(Exactly as it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’)... [physically and spiritually] ...before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are; *and* who against hope **believed** in hope...” (vs 17-18). Abraham believed God; we are to believe, and the very first thing that Jesus tells His disciples on the night of the 14th is to believe.

“...believed in hope, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah’s womb; and he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God” (vs 18-20).

That’s why it was counted as righteousness. ***If you believe God you will believe*** what He says and ***you will do what He commands***. It’s that simple.

Verse 20: “And he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God; for he was **fully persuaded...**” (vs 20-21). I gave a sermon on that one time: *Are You Fully Persuaded?* Like Festus or Felix, after Paul was talking to him, he said, ‘Paul, you almost persuade me to be a Christian.’ And

there are a lot of people who are almost persuaded. We need to be like Abraham, wholly, fully persuaded.

“...that what He has promised, He is also able to do” (v 21). That’s profound, because we’re dealing with **God Who cannot lie**:

- God of Truth
- God of love
- God of faith
- God of hope

Here is a very basic, profound thing to understand: **you cannot worship the God of Truth with lies**. And that one statement alone answers everything concerning Sunday and Christmas and Easter and anything else—doesn’t it? *Yes, it does!* That’s why he was ‘fully persuaded.’

Verse 22: “As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness.... [We just read that, didn’t we? *Yes!*] ...But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; rather *it was* also *written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—...” (vs 22-24). So, we are here because of the blessing of Abraham, and we’re here because of the calling of God. **If...**

The world has it backwards. The world has it: ‘Well, God, I’m going to do this **if** You will do so and so.’ It’s the other way around; God says, ‘I am here. I love you. I’m constant. I don’t lie. **If** you will love Me and keep My commandments...’ The **if** never applies to God, it always applies to us.

“...to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from *the* dead; Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification” (vs 24-25). This justification means *to be put in right standing with God the Father* in heaven above. That means on an individual, one-to-one basis. The series in the book of Hebrews will dovetail with this quite a bit because it talks about how we have access directly to God the Father in heaven above.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith... [not by offering, not by sacrifice, but belief in the sacrifice of Christ] ...**we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...** [We’re no longer fighting God. We are no longer telling God what to do. We’re no longer telling God, ‘Yeah, but...’] ...Through Whom we also have access **by faith into this grace...**” (vs 1-2).

I’ll explain a little bit more about grace, but I’ll just briefly summarize it here: *Grace is the first extension of God’s love toward His people*. Grace covers all lot of things.

- you are standing in this grace
- it gives you access to God the Father

- you receive the Holy Spirit of God
- you can trust God
- you can believe God
- you are in right standing with God, and all of that is grace

It even goes further than that. By the fact that you have the Holy Spirit of God in you and Christ is dwelling in you by faith, and with the Holy Spirit in you, then **God is dwelling in you and you are a temple of God**.

That summarizes quite a few other Scriptures in the New Testament. That’s why we don’t ‘go to church,’ though we assemble together. We **are the Church**, the Body of Christ, and there’s a distinct difference. There are a lot of people who ‘go to church.’ But as I gave in the sermon, *Christianity Without Christ*, they don’t find Christ there because they’re ‘going to church.’ Christ goes where there are those who are His,

- that He has called
- that He has chosen
- that He has selected.

God is not going to make any mistakes in saving the world. He’s got a time plan, which most of the world doesn’t know. But right now we stand in this grace. We have the Spirit of God as a begettal in us. That’s a tremendous thing, brethren; and with that, **God puts us in this right standing with Him**, the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith.

“...we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God” (v 2). What is this ‘hope of the glory of God’? *This is the hope of the resurrection*—isn’t it? *We are going to share in the glory of Jesus Christ at the resurrection*—aren’t we? That’s why God told Abraham, ‘Look at the stars, number them if you are able. So shall your seed be’—*the glory of God!* With this hope, then, though we have difficulties and troubles and trials, which he speaks of next. I haven’t come to the point that the Apostle Paul did, because obviously he was taught directly of Christ. But hopefully we are inching closer toward this position.

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...” I don’t know anyone of us who glory in tribulation today. But he understood it. What we need to do is understand the purpose of trials and difficulties that come, and to realize that there are things that only God can work out. God will work them out, provided we have faith, provided we hold to that hope.

“...realizing that tribulation brings forth [patience] endurance, and endurance *brings forth* [experience] character, and character *brings forth*

hope... [hope comes full circle then—doesn't it? This shows the whole process of hope.] ...And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 3-5).

With this background let's go ahead and begin to study the words of the New Covenant and see how they apply to us and see what we agree to.

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled. You **believe** in God; **believe** also in Me." There are two believes there—right? *Yes!* In Greek the verb for *to believe* is 'pisteo'—and the noun is 'pistos.' The noun really means *to faithize*.

To show you how important this is, just in the Gospel of John alone, he uses the word *believe* 77 times; and *believe* with *believe not* 24 times. In this very first verse of the words of the New Covenant it starts out with *belief* or *faith*—doesn't it? What we're going to do as we go through this study we are going to see the progression of John 14, 15, 16 and 17. The first part of John 14 you could write it out this way: *faith and love*. Later we will see that we will get to *hope and love*; and then later when we come to John 17 you could have that *love and love*. Put it all together so you have *faith and love, hope and love, love and love*. You have to start out with belief. That's why the Word of God is so profound. That's why God did not leave the canonization of the Bible to other people 400 years later that never knew Christ. Now then, He begins telling you some very important things.

Verse 2: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places..." There is a reward for you. There is a place for you. You need to understand that God's plan is so profound and important that **He is making a place for you**. When you have all of these things together it really makes the plan of God, the purpose of God and our covenant with God all that much greater.

"...if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you..." (v 2). Isn't that something? **Christ is preparing a place for you!** What is that going to be like? *I don't know, but I want to make it to the first resurrection so I'll be able to see what it's like!*

Verse 3: "And if I go and prepare place for you, I will come again and receive to Myself...[Christ is coming again] ...so that where I am, you may be also." We know that's going to be on the earth. This is quite a way to open the covenant— isn't it? This is quite a thing!

Now let's look at some other things concerning the belief of God, how important that is. Let's look at some things in the Gospel of John. When you read the words of Christ, it's quite

interesting what He says here to the Pharisees. Just like it is today, remember, Jesus said many times, 'Have you never read?' And they were the ones who *had* the Bible. Those who have the Bible don't read it. So He says to them:

John 5:39: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.... [you've got to come to God] ...I do not receive glory from men" (vs 39-41). We could also put that another way: **you never worship God by men's devices**, because that's man's honor to God. **You worship God with His devices in Spirit and in Truth!**

Verse 42: "But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves." Let's understand something, brethren: the New Covenant is based upon the love of God. The New Covenant shows the verse that is often quoted:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life." This shows it; and the whole covenant that we are dealing with in the New Covenant is based upon the love of God.

Did the Pharisees understand about law? *Oh yes! Yes!*—and made thousands more. If you don't have love then all the law in the world will do no good, because it will be used for destructive purposes. But you must have the love of God in such a way that it is, as Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, being and strength; and your neighbor as yourself. And on these two commandments hang **all** the Law and the Prophets.' You have to see the love of God **through** those laws. If you have law without love you end up with the dictatorial, *letter of the Law*, killing society. That's what it does. That's why it says *the letter of the Law* kills, because it does. We're under grace, but we will show you how we're to keep the commandments a little later on.

John 5:42: "But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; *but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God?" (vs 42-44). What is that honor that comes only from God? How do you receive that honor? **You receive that from repentance and baptism and the Holy Spirit!** That's the honor that comes from God. It doesn't come any other way.

Verse 45: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is *one* who accuses you, *even* Moses, in whom you have hope [trust]. But **if**

you believed Moses, you would have believed Me; for he wrote about Me....” (vs 5-46). Here’s a key. This is Jesus’ own teaching. This adds to the other Scripture that Jesus said, ‘Think not that I’ve come to destroy the law.’ This adds right to it. {put in your margin there John 5:17-18.}

Speaking of Moses, v 47: “And if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?” Very interesting! There’s a key to understanding the New Testament. You can’t understand the New Testament unless you believe Moses, and unless you believe the Prophets. That’s quite a thing there—isn’t it?

The covenant that God has called us to is a *covenant of eternal life* based upon love, faith and hope. People always like to do things though—don’t they? John 6:26: “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied.’”

I tell you one thing, if you want to get a real good following today, you go somewhere and you feed 5,000 people from that little bit of fish and little bit of bread. Of course, they saw that every time the disciples broke the bread it grew. Every time they broke a fish, it grew. They kept taking from these little fish and these little loaves and they fed 5,000. So they said, ‘This is what we really want.’ Jesus said, ‘That’s why you’re seeking Me.’ And they did all this chasing around to try and find Him.

Verse 27: “Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed.’ Therefore, they said to Him... [notice very carefully and maybe you can let these words kind of ring in your ear a little bit]: ...‘What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?’” (vs 27-28). Have you ever heard “...the works of God?” The Work, the Work, the Work? Everyone wants to do *a work*. But let me tell you something, you can’t do anything unless you believe in Christ.

Now hold your place here, and let’s just show you an example in Matt. 7. There are people who did work, and they did a lot of work. This is the result of using the name of Christ and doing a work, but *not believing in Christ*. You can never say that you believe in Christ *if you don’t obey Him*. You can profess belief, but that is not belief in Truth and in deed, but *that is a profession*. There are a lot of people who ask, ‘You believe in Christ?’ *Yes, I believe*. I’ll show you what Jesus did to some people who believed in Him.

Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the Kingdom of

Heaven; but **the one who is doing...**” That’s a very interesting word; *it is a present tense participle*. You don’t need the parts of speech to understand it, it means, *the one who is doing*. So every time you read in your *King James Bible* and you see the ‘eth’ just let your mind translate that into ‘ing,’ the one who is *doing*; the one who is *believing*; the one who is *hoping*, and so forth. What is the will of the Father in heaven?

1. to believe in Christ
2. to keep His commandments.

That’s the will. You can do a lot of things.

Verse 22: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness’” (vs 22-23). There are a lot of people that have ‘works,’ but they don’t believe.

John 6:29, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God: that you believe **in** Him Whom He has sent.’” Very interesting. The Greek word for *in* is ‘eis’—means *into*. Your belief goes out from you and toward God, and God’s Spirit and faith comes back into you. So, it is a continuous exchange, **from you to God, and God to you**. That’s the kind of faith and belief that He wants. You are to believe on Him. Then He explains about the bread that came down from heaven. Our whole commitment, faith and trust to God is that we *believe in Jesus Christ and everything about Him!*

Now look at a belief that is superficial and *not conversional*. There is a belief unto conversion; there is a belief in seeing something happen, that you saw it happen, but you don’t believe in the way that is unto salvation, or *conversional*.

John 2:23: “Now, when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the Feast, many believed on His name, as they observed the miracles that He was doing. But **Jesus did not entrust Himself to them...** [It’s very interesting, because the root of this verb is ‘believe,’ which really means]: ...that Jesus did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all *men*; And He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man” (vs 23-25).

There is even a belief without obedience. And this is the kind of belief that many, many people have. I was talking to a man one time and we were talking about Sabbath/Sunday, and he was a Sunday-keeper. I said, ‘Well, I go to church on the Sabbath.’ He says, ‘Oh, I know that the Sabbath is the seventh day. I go to church on Sunday, and the

Lord knows my heart.' Let's understand, as I told him: ***Sincerity does not necessarily equal Truth!***

James 2:17: "In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself.... [Faith is the word which means *faithize* or *believe*.] ...faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself. But someone is going to say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works" (vs 17-18). What it really means in the Greek is this: *You show me your faith with your works, and I will show you my faith by my works!*

(go to the next track)

In other words, if you don't have works, you don't have faith. We'll see that as we go along. Here's a kind of belief coupled with disobedience:

Verse 19: "Do you believe that God is one? You do well..." A lot of people say, 'I believe in God.' The truth is, God expects every human on earth to believe that He is Creator. You have done nothing if you say, 'I believe in God.' Maybe you've taken a step away from atheism.

"...you believe that God is one? You do well to *believe this*. Even the demons believe—and tremble in fear...." (v 19). Why do they tremble? *Because they were disobedient and sinned and were cast down!* So, here is a kind of empty belief that results in death, not the kind of belief that results in conversion.

Verse 20: "But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that ***faith without works is dead***?" He talks about Abraham here. And the key is this: there are two instances that are being referred to. The one we covered in John 4 relates to Gen. 15 where God said, 'Count the number of stars,' which he couldn't. He believed God; that was imputed to him for righteousness.

This account that James is talking about is when God said, 'Abraham, you take your son, your only beloved son, and you take him to one of the mountains I will show you, and you offer him for a burnt offering there.' He believed God; *he obeyed God!* He took Isaac, he took the wood, he took the coals for the fire, he took a couple other men to help them go to one of the mountains of Moriah; and there he offered Isaac for the burnt offering. Of course, God provided the ram as a substitutionary sacrifice. Where it requires works—believe God, and it requires works—you do what God says. God told Abraham to 'take your son'—he believed Him.

James says, v 21: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and ***by***

works his faith was perfected" (vs 21-22).

If you believe and don't have the works and obedience to God which show that belief, you only have half the formula. Now then, if you only have half of it, how are you ever going to get the whole? Here's an example: if you have one-half of water, which is oxygen, and the other half of water which is hydrogen, separate, you have gases which go off into the atmosphere, and both of them are very flammable. You put them together and have H₂O—water. Now you've got the whole thing, and that puts out fire. So, can you imagine that God is so absolutely magnificent and profound that He can take two flammable materials, combine them together and have one that puts out fire—water? So likewise:

- If you don't have faith and works, your faith is dead.
- If you have works and have no faith, your works are dead.

You have to have both!

Now let's come back to John 14:15 "***If*** you love Me... [we know God unconditionally has loved the world: 'For God so loved the world...' He's already shown and expressed His love.]: ...***If*** you love Me, keep the commandments—... [and I've given the correct translation from the Greek] ...namely, My commandments." If you love God you are going to keep His commandments, the two go hand in hand.

Verse 3: "...so that where I am, you may be also. And where I am going you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going; how then can we know the way?' [Then He gives them the answer. And this is one of the very basic, absolute, fundamental belief verses in the whole Bible]: ...Jesus said to him, 'I am ***the Way***, and ***the Truth***, and ***the Life***; ***no one comes to the Father except through Me***'" (vs 3-6). And that's why all other religions hate true Christianity because they must give up theirs in order to get to God.

It's very profound when He says, ***I am the Way!*** There is no other way. This whole thing, which is comforting to world, 'There are many ways to God. We're all just traveling different paths.' ***NO!*** The Way can actually also mean *the road, the path*.

He is the Truth. There's no such thing as truth of Hinduism, or the truth of Mohammedism. What they call the truth of what they believe is only the apparent reality of what *they* have created. It is not ***the*** Truth because it rejects Christ. In the covenant that we have with God and the words that He spoke of the New Covenant for us, we understand that we are to live *the way of God*; Christ is ***the Truth***

He is the Life! There is no other way! You can't come around some other way. There are not many doors, there are not many ways, there is ***one way!***

Let's see what Jesus said about this in John 10. He makes it very clear. And again, we see over and over again why God does not want to have a hierarchy imposed upon His people. This is a very importance section of Scripture here.

John 10:1: "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up some other way, that one is a thief and a robber.... [If you go any other way, coming in through another door is a thief and a robber.] ...But the one who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, ***and the sheep hear his voice...***" (vs 1-3).

How do you *hear* the voice of God? How do you *know* the voice of Christ? *By knowing the Scriptures, by understanding what He said!* If someone else comes along and says, 'Thus saith the Lord,' and you know the Lord did not 'thus saith,' then you know that's not the voice of Christ. That's why anyone who is going to be teaching has to teach the Word of God. ***Any other teaching then is another voice!*** We could all take comfort in the fact that none of us created the Word of God. *God did!* It's His Word. We *hear* His voice.

"...and he calls his own sheep by name..." (v 3). God has a new name that He is going to give you at the resurrection. The thing that we need to understand in our faith and our hope and our love toward God is that He knows us, He loves us, He's called us, He's chosen us. Calls them all by name.

"...and ***leads*** them out.... [you are to be led by the Holy Spirit of God] ...When he brings the sheep out, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him because they know his voice, but they will never follow a stranger for they will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers" (vs 3-5).

That's what happens when churches split. When they're infiltrated by a stranger and starts speaking strange doctrines, and you say, 'I'm out of here.' That's how God keeps His Church pure. Just always remember this: ***correction always begins with God's own people!*** God destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and corrects His own Church in our day; He has destroyed the Worldwide Church of God, taken away the campuses, the colleges, everything that it owns because they didn't obey His voice. That's how profound it is to obey the voice of God. So all the words that we have, all the words that we have learned, everything that we study, we are accountable for—to *believe, to understand, to act upon*—in our relationship with God and each

other. They will flee. It talks about the hireling that flees when the wolf comes, and so forth.

Verse 14. "I am the good Shepherd, and I know those who *are* Mine, and am known of those who *are* Mine. Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." So, any time you get discouraged, any time you get down, any time that you worry, and any time that you begin to waver in faith—like Peter, when he was out there on the water, Christ had to rescue him—remember this:

- God loves you
- God has called you
- God cannot lie
- God will hear you,

He has promised *if you come to Him in repentance and yieldedness to God!*

When you're dealing with things that you don't understand, or things that are coming upon you that are too much for you to bear, you tell God, 'I just don't understand. Help me to understand. Help me to realize, help me to grasp what You want me to learn.' Sometimes that answer won't come right away. Sometimes it will come later; then it will dawn on you that God has answered that prayer. God will because *He knows you*. He has laid His life down for you.

If you get clear down to the bottom of 'the valley of the shadow of the death' that you have to walk through, remember this: ***Christ laid His life down for you, individually and particularly!*** And ***God the Father imputes that sacrifice of Jesus Christ to you for the forgiveness of your sins!*** Consider this: it was not just a man who died. It was *God who became flesh*, the Creator Who ***made you, died for you to give you eternal life!*** Brethren, there can't be anything greater in anyone's life than to know that kind of love that God has for you. That's why when He makes the covenant here He makes it this way.

Verse 16: "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring those also, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock *and* one Shepherd. On account of this, the Father loves Me: because I lay down My life, that I may receive it back again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down and authority to receive it back again. This commandment I received from My Father" (vs 16-18).

What He's talking about here is the agreement that He and Christ had. They had a covenant with each other before Christ came in the flesh. That covenant is expressed right here, that He

had authority to lay His life down and authority to receive it back. This commandment He received from His Father. So, when we are brought into this New Covenant of God it brings us into a **new standing**. It brings us into a **new relationship**. That's why Christ said on the Passover night, when He said of the bread, 'Take and eat this. This is My body which is broken for you' and, 'Drink of the wine; this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for the remission of the sins of many.'

Now let's come back to John 14:6—such a profound verse: "...I am **the Way**, and **the Truth**, and **the Life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me." No one goes to Jesus unless the Father calls them; it works both ways. Let's see that.

When God truly begins to deal in someone's life, once you come to the knowledge of some Truth you must act upon it, otherwise you will lose it—because unless you act upon it, it's of no value. But if you act upon that Truth, believe that Truth, accept that Truth and understand that Truth, then God will add more. Then it's a building process from there. He will add more and more, and as He does that, you have to understand that God is the One Who is dealing with you. And, of course, He deals through your mind, which He created and gave to you. He deals with the Spirit to *lead* you.

So, we have not only can no one come to the Father except through Christ, we also have, John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..." It's a joint decision by both—isn't it? That is a very humbling thought indeed—isn't it? If you have an opportunity to watch any videos or anything showing the universe, I want you to look at those and to understand that God the Father and Jesus Christ, Who have created the universe and everything that there is, and in Their special plan has **called you!**

- He didn't call the mighty
- He didn't call the rich
- He didn't call the intelligent
- He didn't call the leaders of the world

—because *God doesn't do things the way men do!*

We're the most unlikely group of people to rule the world that you'd ever want to look at. But we're not going to rule the world as we are. We're going to rule the world as spirit beings, with a spirit body and a spirit mind. *Know and understand* this: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..."

- What compels you to want to understand Word of God? *God the Father!*
- Who gives you that desire?
- Why doesn't someone else down the street, or your neighbor next door to you,

or, yea, even your husband and your wife may not have that same desire?

Because there is a special spiritual something that has taken place. There is a special action of God the Father, the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, has done something in your life. He has begun to draw you, and He says, "...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).

How is it that you understand anything of the Word of God? *You're taught of God the Father through the Spirit!* You can read the words, but why do those words have the impression upon you that they do not on someone who God is not dealing with? *Because they are not being taught of God!*

There needs to be teachers in the Church, but what should they do? *They should teach the words of God* so that you are *taught of God!* That's why when you read and study the Bible and you go along and all of a sudden **you know**, you have a spiritual understanding and a spiritual connection with the words of God, what is said and whatever you are reading or studying, and you get a tremendous value out of it, **that is the Father teaching you through His Word!** Now that's something!

"...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me" (v 45). That's quite a spiritual operation. Then He calls you into covenant. Isn't that something?

John 14:7: "If you had known Me..." They were with Him three and half years and they still didn't *know* Christ. Of course, He's talking to Thomas here—isn't He? *'Doubting' Thomas!*

"...If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you know Him and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him" (v 7). Phillip was one of the first ones to see Christ, because Philip was one of the disciples of John.

Verse 8: "Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long a time, and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, "Show us the Father"?' (vs 8-9).

Now we've got a very interesting little four page article called *90 Facts About God*. As I mentioned, the very first thing they try and do when they have false prophets and false doctrines is they change the nature of God. To believe in God the Father—Who has bodily form—is anathema to 'Christians' in this world. When you read the Bible you find God has a head, He has a face, He has eyes,

He has a nose, He has a mouth, He has hands, He has feet, He has a body. If you've seen Christ... Was Christ there in a body? Did He have a body? *Yes, He did!* He looked just like His Father. So, "...The one who has seen Me has seen the Father..."

I did a sermon, *Is Your God a Glob?* when they began to change the doctrine within the Worldwide Church of God, where it says, 'God doesn't need ears, and God doesn't need hands, and God doesn't need a nose. God is everywhere and in everything.' That's pantheism, 'God is in everything.' That's not the way God is.

God is a personal being. You can't have love with a glob—can you? If you've got a great big, huge pillow at home, just grab it and see if you can have a relationship with it. No you can't. It's just a glob. *We're made in the image of God so that we can become like He is!* That's the whole plan and the whole purpose.

"... 'The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, "Show us the Father"? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Who dwells in Me does the works'" (vs 9-10). These are the kinds of works that we need to have that are inspired of God.

Let's see how Jesus fulfilled the will of God, John 5:19: "Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner.'" Jesus did the will of God the way God wanted the will of God done. That also sets us an example of how we need to fulfill the will of God—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 20: "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder." Then He talks about the resurrection.

Verse 30: "I have no power to do anything of Myself..." That didn't mean He was not capable of doing something. Every human being is capable of doing something on their own—aren't they? *Yes!* But this means that He did nothing from Himself. In other words, whatever He did, did not come from Him as a human being, but it was inspired and motivated and according to the commandments of God.

"...but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father, Who sent Me" (vs 30-31). ***The will of the Father is that we enter into the Kingdom of God!*** That's how Jesus did it. So, when He said, 'I don't speak of My own; I don't speak My own

words, but it's the Father Who dwells in Me, He does the works.'

John 12:42. "But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him... [here comes a little bit of politics mixed in with belief]: ...but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue... [they didn't want to lose their standing] ...for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (vs 42-43).

There are a lot of people that are that way. That's why we have a very unique thing with those who are truly converted and have the Spirit of God:

1. they must stand on their own two feet before God alone
2. when we assemble together and love each other it's because we love God the Father ***first***

And that being the relationship that we have with God the Father and Jesus Christ, then we ought to love one another even that much more when we come together. That's why God does not like politics within His Church.

Jesus made it even more clear, v 44: "Then Jesus called out and said, 'The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me... [your true belief, you believe in Christ, that's in the Father] ...I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day'" (vs 44-48).

Isn't that a profound judgment? Those who come along and reject the words of Christ, those are the very words that are going to judge them. Likewise, if you believe the words of God—and you love God, and you have faith in God—then the very words that God has spoken that He gives you eternal life will come to pass. Tremendous thing!

Verse 49: "For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has told Me" (vs 49-50). So, the bottom line is this: if anyone rejects Jesus Christ, they're rejecting God the Father.

There's another way that He told the apostles to believe. He says, John 14:11: "**Believe**

Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, **believe** Me because of the works themselves.” All the works that He did: the healings, the raising from the dead, the preaching of the Gospel, the feeding of the 4,000, the feeding of the 5,000 and all of that. He’s talking to His apostles that very night. These words are recorded so that we can have them as the words of the New Covenant by which then we live.

Verse 12: “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father.”

Now let’s look and see some of the greater works that were being done after He ascended to the Father and they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Here’s a summary of it. And we have never seen the demonstration like this with an outpouring of the Spirit of God. And remember that it was to the Jew first, because God promised.

Acts 5:12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; And none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them; And believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women)” (vs 12-14). They literally turned Jerusalem upside down. Paul caused a riot every time he went into a synagogue, they totally destroyed the power base of the scribes and Pharisees and priests, and everything.

Verse 15: “Insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.... [be healed] ...And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were **all** healed.... [notice the reaction]: ...Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him...” (vs 15-17)—which is the sect of the Sadducees—and ran out and were baptized and believed. NO! They were filled with indignation!

“...being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they were filled with anger.... [they were losing their power base; losing their authority] ...And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold [prison]. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, ‘Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught. Now when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought”

(vs 17-21). So, they opened the door and they weren’t there.

Verse 22: “But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying...[now we know] ...‘We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.’ And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to.... [right when they were thinking on this] ...But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people’” (vs 22-25).

So, they did greater works—didn’t they? *Yes, they did!* And I tell you, brethren, those greater works will return to the Church at the end again when God is ready and determined to do them. Let me tell you, you don’t have to worry about persecution coming upon you. ***It’s going to come!*** Be ready! How it will come, we don’t know. When it will come, we don’t know. But we should not do as others do and play politics if it comes. We do need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But when it comes to stand for Jesus and the Truth, that we are to do, regardless of the cost.

John 14:12: “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father. And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*” (vs 12-14)—***it must be according to the will of God!*** That’s something we can claim. That’s a promise we can claim. God said He would! Of course, ***it needs to be according to His will!***

Not every prayer we pray is an automatic yes. Many of them are no. Some of them are yes, but... However, when you go back and you really examine it you will find that all the prayers that you really pray and have prayed in faith. Some of our prayers are of our own self and kind of in vanity and things like that, because that’s the way we are as human beings. Those things enter into it. But what we really ask in faith, you go back and see all those prayers were answered—weren’t they? The very prayer that you prayed the first time that there was heresy that you came across and said, ‘Oh God, what will I do?’ That prayer has been answered over and over again, and you are here this day. That’s part of the answer of that prayer.

- God has called you
- God loves you

- God cares for you
- God watches over you
- you stand in the grace of God
- He hears your prayers
- He wants to give you eternal life

And that's what the covenant is all about.

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

Scripture References:

- 1) Genesis 15:4-6, 8-10, 12-18
- 2) Exodus 12:40-41
- 3) Romans 4:17-25
- 4) Romans 5:1-5
- 5) John 14:1-3
- 6) John 5:39-41
- 7) John 3:16
- 8) John 5:42-47
- 9) John 6:26-28
- 10) Matthew 7:21-23
- 11) John 6:29
- 12) John 2:23-25
- 13) James 2:17-22
- 14) John 14:15; 3-6
- 15) John 10:1-5, 14, 16-18
- 16) John 6:44-45
- 17) John 14:7-10
- 18) John 5:19-20, 30-31
- 19) John 12:42-50
- 20) John 14:11-12
- 21) Acts 5:12-25
- 22) John 14:12-14

Scripture referenced, not quoted: John 15:17-18

Also referenced:

Sermons/Series:

- *Are You Fully Persuaded*
- *Christianity Without Christ*
- *Is Your God a Glob?*
- Hebrew Series

Article: *90 Facts About God*

Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

PASSOVER PREPARATION II

Fred Coulter

We are going through, verse-by-verse, John 14, 15, 16, and 17 because these contain the words of the New Covenant. We will see that the whole basis of these chapters is based upon the love of God, plus faith, hope, and then the intense love of God is found in John 17 in the Lord's prayer.

Let's go back and review just a few things concerning faith. As we saw last time in John 17:1 the word *believe* is used twice. *Believe* is the verb of the noun *faith*. So, *to believe* actually means *to faithize*. And we're going to see that this belief and faith is also based upon love, as we get down a little further into it.

- v 10: we find the word *believe*
- v 11 there are two *believe*
- v 12 *believe*

This is exactly as it is when we are beginning our relationship with God—we are *to believe*. Then we will see how this is to develop.

Now let's look at a couple of Scriptures to help us understand this a little bit more. Romans 1 talks about faith and belief you can just equate as the same thing. *Faith* is the noun; *belief* is the verb.

Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is *the* power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes—..." As I've mentioned before, the Greek language is full of prepositions and whenever you see that in the *King James* just realize that's a *present tense preposition*.

"...both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek. For therein... [now 'therein' means *contained in the Gospel*] ...*the* righteousness of God is revealed..." (vs 16-17). That's not only God's righteousness—that *He* is righteous, which we are to understand—but also the righteousness of God, which puts us in right standing with Him. That's the kind of righteousness it's talking about, which the words of the New Covenant do to put us in right standing with Him and renew the New Covenant.

"...is revealed from **faith unto faith**..." (v 17). The English word 'to' is translated from the Greek word 'eis'—which means *to* or *into*. What we can see here is this: ***faith ultimately is a gift of the Holy Spirit***. We have our part to believe. But *to believe unto salvation* has got to be the gift of God, ***a faith that God gives!*** It is the faith that comes ***from God to the individual, and from the individual back to God***. So, it's faith *into* faith.

"...according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'" (v 17).

That's how we are to live. We live by absolute belief in God the Father and Jesus Christ. That's why after reading this thing on the apostolic constitution, which was written in the 300s and how they established the Catholic Church, you can surely see that a hierarchy cuts people off from God in the most unsavory way. ***The just shall live by faith!*** That's how we are to live our lives, and that's how we begin our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ—***we believe!***

Jesus also said, 'If you don't believe Me that I'm in the Father, believe the works themselves,' that He did. We can say today: if you don't believe in the way that you feel you ought to, then what you should do is study in-depth the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and learn what Jesus taught, see the miracles that He did so that you can believe. ***Belief comes by the hearing of the Word***. The more you hear, the more you learn substantiates what you believe. The hearing by the Word of God is why we have the Sabbath every week. This is why we have the Holy Days year-by-year. And the Passover is a very key fundamental beginning of all of our relationship with God.

Romans 10:8: "But what does it say? 'The Word is near to you...'" That is in answer to:

- Who's going to go to heaven for us?
- Who's going to go down to the depths of the water for us?
- To get the Word of God that we can hear it and do it?

God has made it available in every language to almost the entirety of the whole world.

"...is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart.'..." Obviously not in carnal-minded people is it there. But this has to do with that it is in such a language that you can understand it.

"...This is the word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth *the* Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from *the* dead, you shall be saved" (vs 8-9). This is a summary of the whole process of repenting, being baptized, receiving the Holy Spirit, walking in the way of God and so forth.

Verse 10: "For with *the* heart one believes unto righteousness, and with *the* mouth one confesses unto salvation... [that is confession of sins]. ...because the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed.' For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, because the

same Lord of all *is* rich toward all who call upon Him” (vs 10-12).

God is no respecter of persons. And even people in the world, if they call upon Christ, He’s going to hear and answer their prayers. Maybe it’s not going to be a thing for salvation for them, but at least it would be a first step. If they would go beyond that and say, ‘Well, I prayed in the name of Jesus and my prayer was answered. Boy, I better find out more about this.’ No! People generally are relieved from their distress and get up and go on and don’t pray again until another disaster comes upon them.

Verse 13: “For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?” (vs 13-14). There’s got to be preachers and teachers who go out and preach and teach and explain the Word of God to people.

Verse 15: “And how shall they preach, unless they be sent?... [That’s interesting. It’s not that they self-appoint themselves as too many do today.] ...Accordingly, it is written, ‘How beautiful *are* the feet of those who announce the Gospel of Peace, and those who announce the good news of good things!’ But all have not obeyed the Gospel because as Isaiah said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’” (vs 15-16). He’s also showing here that even though there are those who are sent, even though the Word is preached, that people are out there and they don’t believe. They reject it!

Verse 17: “So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word of God.” This operates in two ways:

1. We have the Word of God—that is what must be preached and taught.
2. Whenever you read the Word of God and you read it you are talking to yourself—are you not?

And when you read these words Who is actually doing the teaching? **God is!** So, *it builds the faith*, and that’s what Christ wants us to do with the New Covenant.

Now let’s come back to the Gospel of John and let’s look at *belief* just a little bit more. This tells why he wrote the Gospel, and also, when you understand that in the Gospel of John the word *believe* is used 77 times! The words *believe not* is used 24 times. That’s 111 times. In the Epistle of 1-John *believe* is used 7 times and *believe not* is used twice.

John 20:30: “Now then, Jesus did many

other miracles in *the* presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these have been written, **so that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life through His name” (vs 30-31). This may be the very place where he finished the Gospel of John the first time. All you have to do is put an ‘Amen’ there and it sounds like the end of it—doesn’t it? He probably added chapter 21 later, which I explain in the commentary/footnote.

Now let’s just kind of review what we didn’t cover last time in part one of *Passover Preparation*. John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life...’” The truth is this: true Christianity, though the call goes out to all, *many are called but few are chosen*, and few are chosen because few repent. It is an absolutely *exclusive* way of life. It doesn’t mean that you exclude other people, it means that God has not called them at this particular time.

But those that He has called there is no ecumenism, there is no combining with Judaism, there is no combining with Protestantism, there is no combining with humanism or any of those things because the ultimate will come of it—*the truth is omitted, or obfuscated in most churches*, because they don’t believe v 6: “...‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

- Jews cannot say, ‘We pray to the Father,’ because they don’t even have the Father and they can’t get to Him since they reject Jesus Christ.
- Protestants come about halfway because they believe in Jesus and grace but they don’t believe in commandment-keeping.
- Catholics come about 3%. They use the name of Christ but they have all the pagan nonsense that they add to it.
- Muslims don’t even get to 0%, neither do the Hindus.

But what is happening in the Protestant churches is really quite a fantastic thing. This is an excerpt from a book entitled *Can Christianity Survive the Organized Church?*:

Let us list why the truth is omitted or obfuscated in most churches today. Replacing Biblical absolutes are:

We just read an absolute—didn’t we? This is an absolute statement: “I am **the Way**, and **the Truth**, and **the Life**; **no one comes** to the Father **except through Me**.” Here’s what replaces it:

Psychology, sociology, guilt manipulation, praise songs (repetition ad nauseam)

We could put in there swaying back and forth and all that sort of thing.

...entertainment, drama, soloists, dead elders, dead pastors, over-educated pastors, ecumenical spirit, acceptance of any movement like Promise Keepers... [which is Jesuit backed, by the way] ...The Emerging Church, or Purpose Driven Church, idolizing of famous preachers, modern bible versions with their attacks on Christ, salvation message neutralized to make it palatable to the unsaved big givers in the church, pastors and elders who belong to esoteric organizations like the Masons, acceptance of Roman Catholics as Christians, the unsaved Jews are God's chosen people, the modern nation of Israel is preached from the pulpit as if we must genuflect before it for salvation, charismatic theology, signs, wonders and tongues accepted, women preachers, unqualified Sunday School teachers, etc. Do you get the point?

I believe it is too late to save the organized church from Satan's deceptions because too many seminary trained pastors and leaders are spiritual dolts and can no longer discern anymore, since the Bible is no longer their standard.

Nor is Christ their Savior. That's why he made this.

Now let's see what Peter said. Let's understand something very profound to show that once you have repented and have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit of God you are in *the Way* and *the Truth*, and the only way you receive *life* is *through Christ*.

They arrested them, they put them in jail, they brought Peter and John forth and arrested the apostles, Acts 4:5: "Now, it came to pass in the morning *that* their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled together in Jerusalem, And Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John..." (vs 5-6). Remember, these were the ones who condemned Jesus to be crucified. Remember, the high priest knew John—didn't he? Remember that Peter was there when he denied Christ three times—wasn't he? So, they knew the apostles.

"...and Alexander, and as many as were of *the* high priest's lineage. And after placing them in the midst, they inquired, 'By what power or in what name did you do this?' Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power*

he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole. This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved.' Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men..." (vs 5-13).

That means that they didn't go through any of their seminaries, if we could put it that way. They were not taught by any of the leading rabbis; they weren't at any of the religious schools; and they surely weren't ignorant, but that's how they looked at them. So, they couldn't deny it. There he was standing right there, and they said, 'What are we going to do?'

John 14:7: "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you know Him and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long a time, and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, "Show us the Father"?' " (vs 7-9).

With what we just read in mind let's read Hebrews the first chapter, because in God sending His Son, and God becoming a fleshly human being to bring the Gospel to show the way to the Father, to open the way of salvation, this was a fantastic and marvelous thing, which the book of Hebrews, as we have been going through, really shows what a great and marvelous undertaking that God has done.

Hebrews 1:1: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets..." Of course, that was a tremendous thing that God never left them alone. He always sent them a prophet—didn't He?

"...has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son... [now it's greater—far greater] ...Whom He has appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory... [compare this to any prophet; compare this even to Moses, which it does later in the book of Hebrews] ...Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person..." (vs 1-3).

That's why Jesus said to Philip, 'If you've seen Me, you have seen the Father.' Yet, most of the religions today believe in a pantheistic god, that God is in everything. God is in the wall, God is in the floor, the ceiling, all animals, and so forth. And

that's why it's so easy for a lot of people to get involved in Hinduism and reincarnation. **No!** God is a person. He is a being, just like Christ—the *image of His person*.

“...and upholding all things by the word of His own power...” (v 3). You can't get any higher authority. You cannot have any greater when we see here, *cleansing of sin*. You cannot, when we go through the words of the New Testament, have any greater covenant to be in than the one that Christ has given.

“...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high” (v 3). That's whom we're dealing with.

John 14:11: “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father” (vs 11-12).

As we covered in part one of *Passover Preparation*, in Acts 5, it was a phenomenal thing that people were healed even at the shadow of Peter just passed over them.

Verse 13: “And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*” (vs 13-14). This becomes a very important part of faith. We have faith coupled with prayer. We have faith coupled with asking Christ and asking the Father—don't we? **Yes!** Notice, it doesn't say: if you ask an apostle, or if you ask a pastor, or you ask a priest.

“...whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.” Now there is one major thing concerning that, which is this: ***it must be according to the will of God!*** That's the basic prayer in Matt. 6: ‘Your will be done in heaven as it is on earth.’ If you ask anything according to the will of God *He will do it!*

Now let's come to Mark 11, and this is really quite an interesting section here. Stop and think about it for just a minute, as I mentioned on the first one. Nearly every prayer that you pray God answers in the affirmative—doesn't He? However, please understand this: if you are praying and asking and you get up from your knees and say, ‘I wonder if God will answer this prayer?’ *or* ‘I don't expect God to answer this prayer,’ you have just destroyed the prayer because you don't believe. ***Expect an answer!*** When and how and under what circumstances then becomes God's timing? Know for sure if you don't ask according to the will of God you're not going to get that prayer answered because

that's based upon lust and covetousness. That's your own will.

Mark 11:20: “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, ‘Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed... [which He cursed in the evening on the way out] ...has dried up.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have faith *from* God’” (vs 20-22).

If you have a marginal reference it can read, ‘have the faith of God.’ It is even more profound than that. It means ***have God's faith***. Now, there are some people who say, ‘Well, God doesn't need faith.’ ***God has faith*** because He can't give a gift of faith unless He has it—right? **Yes!** This shows where we need to come to in our prayers. In other words if God has said so we can believe it, trust in it, claim it, and pray for it.

Now notice, He takes it clear to the extreme: Verse 23: “For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, ‘Be taken away and be cast into the sea,’ and shall not doubt in his heart... [there's the big problem that most people have—doubting in your heart] ...but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say.” God is not going to do this so people can go around and show *their* power and begin removing mountains here and there wherever they want to just to show off to the world. If it's necessary God will do that. If it is His will He will do that, but you have to believe.

Verse 24: “For this reason I say to you, all *the* things that you ask... [it goes from the impossible down to the more possible] ...*when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given* to you.” They will be answered. I've seen prayers that I've prayed that have taken years to answer.

Since I do a lot of driving and so forth, many times this occurs while I'm driving. I'll be driving down the road and I'll say to myself, *that prayer was answered*. This also helps us to, when we are praying, not to be frivolous in our prayers, but to ask for things realistic. If you are 90-years-old God is not going to hear or answer, nor is it His will to make you 16-years-old. It is God's will that you die and He's going to answer that prayer even greater by giving you a spiritual body and a spiritual mind. Wouldn't you rather have that than going back to being a 16-year-old and having to live life all over again in the flesh? That's an unrealistic, unwilling prayer of God.

Now notice, there is another caveat that is here. Since we are in a love relationship with God, since we have the faith of God, He wants us also to develop the character of God and be as God in this particular sense.

Verse 25: “But when you stand praying...”—which shows you don’t always have to be kneeling. What if you are walking along beside a well and all of a sudden something happened. You stepped into the loop in the rope and the spring was activated, it pulled you up and threw you down in the well and there you are hanging upside down by an ankle caught in the rope? You pray and say, ‘God, save me.’ And God says, ‘You dummy. You’re not on your knees and you don’t have your hands in the right position.’ **Of course not!**

Here’s another quality: **forgive!** Everybody wants their sins forgiven—right? *Yes, indeed!* Everyone wants Jesus to be the advocate when they sin—don’t they? *Yes, indeed!* Then part of the covenant that we have with God is this: we are also to **forgive**. If you have anything against another and if it’s in such a way that you need to discuss it with them then you use Matt. 18—right? Go privately! Whatever Matt. 18 says you are to follow through.

Now, here’s the condition: *if you don’t forgive*—it’s not ‘Lord, I’ll forgive him when he’s straightens up. Lord, I will forgive when she changes her attitude.’ Maybe your forgiveness will inspire God to help them see and to change if **you** have a forgiving attitude.

“...if you have anything against anyone, forgive... [it means *so that* or *in order that*] ...so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses. For if you do not forgive [even though you pray], neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses” (vs 25-26). These are some of the conditions of prayer—correct? But we are to grow to have the **faith of God**.

Now let’s look some other conditions for answered prayer, 1-John 3:18: “My little children... [when John wrote this he was pretty old, so he could say, ‘My little children’] ...we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in truth. And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him” (vs 18-19).

I might mention here, if you want a very interesting word study get *The Seven General Epistles* where we go through every place where it is ‘to know’ and ‘to understand’ in the Epistle of 1-John and I think you will be surprised how much we are *to know*. This epistle, though it is very simple, is written to those who know, who understand.

Verse 19: “And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him... [God wants you to have confidence, faith, and assurance. Not in the sense of arrogant pride of human nature, but in the sense of total belief in God.] ...that if our hearts condemn us...” (vs 19-

20). When do our hearts condemn us? *When we sin and haven’t repented!* A lot of people hold back and have a guilt complex and don’t go to God.

So, John says, to remind them: “...God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things” (v 20). Therefore, if you know you’ve sinned *God knows you’ve sinned*. That means go repent, get rid of the condemnation, get rid of the guilty conscience, let the blood of Christ cover it through the grace of God and then you will have confidence again. This is all part of the attitude of prayer of coming to have the faith of God as Jesus said.

Verse 21: “Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him... [now the conditions]: ...**because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**” (vs 21-22). So, a person who is living in sin and doesn’t repent and doesn’t come out of sin cannot expect to have his prayers to be continually answered—correct?

Verse 23: “And this is His commandment: that we believe... [there we go: prayer and belief ties right in with John 14] ...on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us.” That’s the whole beginning relationship that we need to have with each other. Not only beginning, but enduring relationship. It’s difficult at times and the reason being is that it’s because God has called different people from different walks of life that under normal circumstances we would never meet, we would never associate with, and we all have our problems hanging out—don’t we? So therefore, we are indeed of all people most difficult to love.

That’s why he mentions this, v 24: “And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him [Christ], and He [Christ] in him... [by the Spirit of God] ...and by this we know... [this is something God does not want us in doubt concerning]: ...we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us.”

In other words, you come to a point in your life that *you know* that you have the Spirit of God, *you know* that it is in you, *you know* that Christ is in you and *you have no doubt* of that at all.

- That doesn’t mean that you’re not fighting sin.
- That doesn’t mean that you don’t get discouraged from time to time.
- That doesn’t mean that you don’t have problems and difficulties because we all do.
- *It means that with the Spirit of God you can go through all of these things and*

God eventually will resolve them according to His will if we do the things that are pleasing in His sight, keep His commandments, love God and love each other.

1-John 5:14: “And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him” (vs 14-15). There’s the assurance that we need. Based upon that then, that’s why Jesus said, ‘You believe in Me, believe also in the Father. And if you ask anything in My name this I will do that the Father may be glorified.’

There will be quite a few Scriptures that we can add to it. Keep your Bible open to 1-John because we’re going to go there. Here is a key verse that is just an amazing verse. John 14:

- v 2: “...**if** it were otherwise, I would have told you...”
- v 3: “...**If** I go to prepare a place, I will come again...”
- v 7: “**If** you had known Me...”
- v 11: “...**if** not, believe Me because of the works themselves.”
- v 14: “**If** you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

{see sermon series: *If Statements in the Bible.*} All the conditions are upon us because we are the variable factor, not God. That’s why here in v 15, He says: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments”—which is as literal of a translation as I could get. How many people say they love the Lord, they know the Lord, and don’t keep His commandments? Which means **if you don’t keep the commandments of God you don’t love Him!**

(go to the next track)

You know, it’s amazing. Just like we read off that thing there, most religions that use the Bible have their time worn paths, which they trod every Sunday. They like to have it in such a way that it’s pleasing to everybody. Do this: you show me which person that Jesus pleased just to please the person. **Not one!**

Matthew 22:34: “But after the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together *before Him*.” This must have been a sight—always gathering together to figure out how they’re going to answer it.

Verse 35: “And one of them, a doctor of the law... [Ok, we’ll trip Him up on this.] ...questioned *Him*, tempting Him, and saying, ‘Master, which

commandment is the great commandment in the Law?’ ... [They wanted to nail Him for changing the law—right?] ...And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’” (vs 35-37). Showing that our devotion to God is a full-time complete dedication and devotion.

Verse 38: “This is the first and greatest commandment.... [When we go through these I want you to keep in mind what we just read in John 14 and 15—‘If you love Me keep My commandments.’] ...And the second one is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (vs 38-40). When you have something that is used as the base point for hanging something on, all the Law and Prophets then is dependent upon what? *Loving God and loving your neighbor!*

Jesus said in another place, Matthew 7:12^[transcriber’s correction] “Therefore everything that you would have men do to you, so also do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Contrary to what most people think about harsh commandments and that you can’t keep them. That is completely an impossibility because if you have the Spirit of God you can keep the commandments—right? Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ Would He ask you to do something that is impossible to do? **No!**

- Do you have another God before you? **No!**
- Do you have any idols? **No!**
- Do you take God’s name in vain? **No!**
- Are you keeping the Sabbath? **Yes!**
- Can you keep those commandments? **Of course!**
 - ✓ Honor father and mother if they’re still living.
- Can you do that? **Yes!**
 - ✓ Do not kill
 - ✓ Do not commit adultery
 - ✓ Do not steal
 - ✓ Do not bear false witness
 - ✓ Do not covet
- Are those impossible to keep? **Of course not!**

So the argument, ‘God doesn’t expect you to keep the commandments today because no one can keep them,’ is really nonsense. The comment was made that these two commandments are considered the golden rule, so therefore, this is a Godly rule.

Now then, let’s come to 1-John 2. When you read James, 1st, 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, and Jude, you know you are to keep the commandments of God. However, when you go from Acts to

Romans and you start reading Romans, which is difficult to understand, you may begin to believe, because you do not understand it correctly or what the original really was, you may begin to believe that you shouldn't keep the commandments of God. That's not so!

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard we know* that we know Him..." God doesn't want us to be in doubt. 'Maybe I know Jesus. Where are You, Jesus? I *think* You are there.' *No!* Hereby we *know* that we know. That is the epitome of belief—isn't it? *You go from belief to knowing!* That's the whole purpose that we're going to see that God wants us to do.

"...*if* we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (vs 3-4). Those two verses are so basic and profound and powerful. What this does, it knocks into an absolute 'cocked hat' all the so-called Christian professing religions in the world that say you do not have to keep the commandments of God. You can label them, without a doubt, *they are liars!*

That's what it says. That's why John was one of the sons of thunder. Going back to the *IF*, it's conditional. In other words this way, just like it says not only a liar if you don't keep His commandments, you don't know Him.

Verse 4: "The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him." *IF* the Truth is not in you, you don't have the Spirit of Truth—do you? It's called the Spirit of Truth—isn't it? The Spirit of Truth is what's going to lead you into all Truth and going to lead you into keeping the commandments of God. It's all together, it can't be dissected. You can't have a perfect circle if you cut out half of it—can you? *An impossibility!*

He goes on and shows what is to happen, v 5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected..." So, this love of God then is perfected even more. It's something that is to grow, to be perfected. By this growing in grace and knowledge and love and commandment-keeping and so forth.

"...By this *means we know that we are in Him*" (v 5).

- no doubt of conversion
- no doubt of the Spirit of God
- no doubt of where you're going
- no doubt of what you're doing

Verse 6: "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked." You go back and you analyze what did Jesus do, keep, say, pray, think, as recorded in the Gospels and you have it.

Now let's look at something else concerning love. Here's part of loving God. You cannot have one foot in the world, though you live there. You can't cling to the ways of the world part of the time and cling to God's way part of the time.

Verse 15: "Do not love the world... [That's God's job. He can love the world because He has an overall plan. This means we are not to love the world.] ...nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." In other words, if you put the world and physical things before loving God—you *love the world*.

Verse 16: "Because everything that *is* in the world... [I tell you what, all you have to do is just turn on your TV and there it is.] ...the lust of the flesh... [you see a lot of that on TV] ...and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life is not from the Father, but is from the world." Who is 'the god of this world' and feeds on and inspires this kind of thing but none other than Satan the devil! *That's why you're not to love it!*

Verse 17: "And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever." There again is the contrast. That's how important the commandments of God are.

When we partake of the Passover every year and we come back and analyze all of these things and recommit ourselves to God through partaking of the Passover, what we do we go back to the very basic fundamentals and reassure ourselves that through Christ and the Word of God that what we are doing is the right thing and that we are in covenant with God. Can anyone be in covenant with God and live in sin? *No! That's a contradictory statement!* That's like saying turn on the water so I can stay dry. Turn off the lights so I can see.

Now here again is one of these *know* statements, 1-John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God... [Doesn't this sound an awful lot like Matt. 22? *Yes!*] ...when we love God and keep His commandments." In other words, if you don't keep His commandments you don't love God. It's that simple. It's like we covered here before.

Verse 3: "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments..." That is the beginning relationship. You're keeping His commandments, but as we develop concerning hope and concerning love even further, that the love of God will develop into a deep and profound spiritual relationship between you and God. This is the beginning of it.

"...and His commandments are not

burdensome” (vs 2-3). In other words, *it’s not a burden to keep the commandments of God!* What burden is it to keep the Sabbath? *It’s a great blessing* because God fellowships with you and you fellowship with God and you learn of His Word, and all of these things. It’s a great blessing.

2-John 4: “I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth... [Your Word is Truth] ...as we received commandment from the Father. And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but that which we have *observed from the beginning*, that we love one another. And this is the love *of God*: that we walk according to His commandments....” (vs 4-6).

When you put all these statements together and really line them up how can anyone possibly have the gall to say, in the name of Christ, that you don’t have to keep the commandments of God. It is just like it says, that person is a profound liar. And furthermore Jesus said ‘the Truth will set you free’—free from sin, free from doubt, free from worry, free from all of these things.

“...This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the beginning*, that you might walk in it, because many deceivers have entered into the world—those who do not confess *that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*. This is *the spirit of the deceiver and the antichrist*. Watch out for yourselves in order that we may not lose the things we have accomplished, but *that we may receive a full reward*. Anyone who transgresses and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. *But the one who continues in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son*” (vs 6-9). *Very profound!*

Now let’s look at just a couple of Scriptures in Revelation 12:17. This is important because these are prophecies concerning the end-time. This shows that there are going to be commandment-keepers in the end-time—this is right when the Great Tribulation begins:

Revelation 12:17: “Then the dragon [Satan the devil] was furious with the woman [the Church] and went to make war with the rest of her seed... [not limited to just a few but the rest] ...of her seed, who keep the commandments of God... [at the end-time there are people who keep the commandments of God—correct? *Right!*] ...and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Which means they preach salvation by faith. They preach what we are doing because what we are preaching is the testimony of Christ.

Right toward the end of the Tribulation, Revelation 14:12: “Here is *the patience of the saints*... [Now patience could also be translated ‘endurance’ because commandment-keeping involves enduring—doesn’t it?] ...here *are the ones*

who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” It gets right back to the same thing that Jesus said, have God’s faith, have Jesus’ faith. That’s what they have. If you keep the commandments of God you’ll be given the Holy Spirit of God, you will have the power to have the faith of Christ and of God.

Revelation 22:14, many translations have this: “Blessed are those who have cleansed their robes.” But that’s not what it is in the original Greek. That’s out of one of the spurious texts.

Revelation 22:14: “Blessed *are* those who keep His commandments...” Contrary to what most people say, most religionists say, ‘Oh you’re cursed when you try and keep the commandments.’ NO! You’re blessed if you do.

Notice what this does: “...that they may have the right to *eat of the tree of life*... [In other words if you don’t keep the commandments of God you’re not going to get eternal life. Do you think you’re going to live forever sinning in the universe? *Of course not!* That’s why Lucifer was cast down because of sin.] ...and may enter by the gates into the city.”

John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And... [Here’s a result of your doing the conditional thing—keeping the commandments of God, loving God] ...I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age” (vs 15-16).

I explained at the beginning of this about the proper translation of ‘Holy Spirit,’ that it is the power of God. It is not a third person. And understand this: *all Trinitarians are cults*. The Trinitarians call us a cult because we don’t believe in the Trinity.

Verse 17: “*Even the Spirit of the Truth*, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet, a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also. **In that day** [that means in the day when they would see the resurrected Christ] ...**you shall know**...” (vs 17-20). With this verse we go from belief into knowing just like we did there in 1-John.

“...you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.’ Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are

about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me. I have spoken these things to you while I am yet present with you'" (vs 20-25). Now then, we've got an awful lot here to reinforce what we've already studied—don't we?

Verse 16: "And I will ask the Father... [What we are going to see is that the giving of the Holy Spirit is a joint project of Jesus Christ and the Father.] ...and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive..." (vs 16-17). The world cannot receive it because of many reasons:

- 1) Satan is the god of the world and he is that spirit that is working in them
- 2) because they don't want to repent even though they hear the Word of God.

'...because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you... [there is a distinction. It dwells with you. All the time that Jesus was teaching them and training them, and all during His ministry the Spirit of God was dwelling *with* them.] (Then He says): ...and shall be **within** you' (v 17). Let's look at the first part here: *dwells with you*. Let's look at some Scriptures that show the operation of the Spirit to come to anyone.

There is one Holy Spirit of God, but God has seven Spirits that also do additional work for Him, which I think is a prelude to receiving the Holy Spirit within you.

We find here in Revelation 5:6: "Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, *was* standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are **the seven Spirits of God** that are sent into all the earth." What do these Spirits do?

Let's see again where Jesus is the One Who is in control of these seven Spirits, Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the Church in Sardis, write: These things says He Who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works..." etc. What do the seven Spirits do? *Jesus controls them!* They go forth into all the earth.

Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia: Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; and from **the seven Spirits** that are before His throne ..." How do the seven Spirits work?

Here's how I think that the seven Spirits work: They do the work of God in finding out those who are seeking Him. Because it said they are sent forth into *all* the earth. What do they do in all the earth? What is their activity? Could they be likened to what we might say satellites? I don't know, but we find here:

2-Chronicles 16:9: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro in all the whole earth..." We know that the eyeballs of God are not running to and fro in the earth. This has to describe the work of the seven Spirits going to and fro throughout the whole world. That's the only thing that we can connect with back there in the book of Revelation, the three places where it says the seven Spirits, and then there in Rev. 5:6 that they are sent forth into all the earth.

Here's what they do: "...to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart *is* perfect toward Him..." In other words, looking for those who are seeking God. Remember the account of Elijah? We mention this every once in a while to show that God is doing more with people that we don't even know of. Elijah was moaning and complaining to God that he was the only one left, and God said, 'Now, now Elijah. I have seven thousand that haven't bowed the knee to Baal.' How does God do that? *He has to do it through the seven Spirits, which are the eyes of the Lord sent forth and that run to and fro through all the earth!*

2-Chronicles 15:1: "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him, 'Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you'" (vs 1-2).

This has got to be how God finds out who on earth that there are who are seeking after Him. God obviously is not going to be busying Himself with that. He's going to let the seven Spirits do that. When there's someone who's of a repentant heart then I am sure that the Holy Spirit comes to be with that person. The seven Spirits are the eyes finding out where they are. That's not an operation of the Holy Spirit of God. These seven Spirits are separate and different from the Holy Spirit of God. But then after they find the one who is seeking God then God sends His Spirit to be *with* them just like Jesus told the disciples. The Spirit is with them. The best way I can explain it is this: *if you seek God...*

Here is a promise of God, which ties in with what we've been talking about earlier, Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you.... [There we're talking about prayer again—aren't we?] ...Seek, and you shall find..." We just read that these eyes of the Lord go to and fro through the earth to find those

who are seeking Him. This is how an ordinary person anywhere in the world, if they want to know about God, if they just ask and pray, 'Oh God where are you? I want to know about you'; the seven Spirits are the ones who do the work to then convey this to God.

If they are really repentant and really want to know about God then God will send the Spirit to be *with* them. That's the start of a calling. If they continue seeking—and lo and behold there is a Bible available to almost anyone who wants it in the world—and they start looking in the Bible and they start seeing there are things that they need to do. Everyone will have an experience similar to that.

For example, it was said that in trying to find God they went to different churches: Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and so forth. Finally went out to a park one afternoon and said, 'God, where are You? I want to know where You are.' At that point God did something. You may not have realized it, but He did. I can say the same story; you can say the same. Everyone of us can say the same thing.

Verse 8: "For everyone... [all inclusive; not eliminating anyone] ...who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened."

Now see what happened, because this is very profound. It also has to do with entering into a covenant with God, which is what we are studying here, the words of the New Covenant to eternal life that we are to follow.

2-Chronicles 15:3^[transcriber's correction] Azariah said to him: "And for a long time Israel *had been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law." You could apply that to individuals in the world. How many people are out there just in the same way? They don't have the true God. They don't have anyone to teach them, and they don't have the Law of God.

Verse 4: "And when they turned in their trouble to the LORD God of Israel... [That's why there's going to be a big harvest through the Tribulation. They're going to turn to the Lord.] ...and sought Him, He was found by them. And in those times *there was* no peace to him who went out, nor to him who came in, but great tumult *was* upon all the inhabitants of the lands. And nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. But you be strong and do not let your hands be weak..." (4-7) This is a call to repentance—isn't it? *Yes!* Now you respond to God.

"...for your work shall be rewarded.' And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and put away the

abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin... [That's repentance—isn't it? You destroy idols.] ...and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim. And he renewed the altar of the LORD before the porch of the LORD. And *he* gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they fell to him out of Israel in great numbers, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him. And they gathered at Jerusalem in the third month in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa" (v 7-10). This third month was probably somewhere around Pentecost, which goes back to the time that the Ten Commandments were given, and so forth. There's great meaning in all this as we go through.

Verse 11: "And *they* offered to the LORD in that day of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. And they entered into a covenant..." (vs 11-12). That's what we enter in to when we are baptized. And every year when we keep the Passover we renew it. We do so, so that we will not fall victim to what Asa did.

"...to seek the LORD God of their fathers **with all their heart and with all their soul**, and that whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death... [here in this case they had no choice about it] ...whether small or great, whether man or woman. And they swore to the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with silver trumpets, and with rams' horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with their whole desire. And He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around" (vs 12-15).

You could say in the New Testament 'and God gives you grace.' God gives you rest from your sins. God gives you rest from your enemies.

Verse 16: "And also *as to* Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from *being* queen mother because she had made an idol in a grove. And Asa cut down her idol and stamped it and burned *it* at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. And he brought into the house of God the things which his father had dedicated, and that which he himself had dedicated, silver and gold and vessels. And there was no war to the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa" (v 16-19). Then what did he do? *He entered into a covenant with Ben-hadad, the king of Syria!* When he did that then again another prophet came.

2-Chronicles 16:7: "And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him..." Notice what happens when you turn back.

Notice when we come over here and compare that with 2-Chron. 15:2, 'If you seek Him He will be found of you, if you forsake Him He will forsake you.' There's a lesson for us today, too.

"... 'Because you have relied on the king of Syria and have not relied on the LORD your God...' " (v 7). You can draw many parallels there, too, with our spiritual life, if we go back relying on physical things and so forth, going back into the world and not trusting in God.

"... therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped out of your hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand, for the eyes of the LORD run to and fro in all the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart *is* perfect toward Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore, from now on you shall have wars.' And Asa was angry with the seer..." (vs 7-10).

That happens lots of times when a person comes up and shows his sins to someone. He was mad.

"...and put him in a prison house. for *he* was in a rage against him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.... [then it shows what happened]: ...And behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa *was* diseased in his feet until his disease *was* very grievous. Yet in his disease he did not seek to the LORD, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers and died in the forty-first year of his reign" (vs 10-13).

Now you have the whole picture here with this from coming to the point of seeking God to the point of rejecting God!

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

Scripture References:

- 1) Romans 1:16-17
- 2) Romans 10:8-17
- 3) John 20:30-31
- 4) John 14:6
- 5) Acts 4:5-13
- 6) John 14:7-9
- 7) Hebrews 1:1-3
- 8) John 14:11-14
- 9) Mark 11:20-26
- 10) 1 John 3:18-24
- 11) 1 John 5:14-15
- 12) John 14:2-3, 7, 11, 14-15
- 13) Matthew 22:34-40

- 14) Matthew 7:12
- 15) 1 John 2:3-6, 15-17
- 16) 1 John 5:2-3
- 17) 2 John 4-9
- 18) Revelation 12:17
- 19) Revelation 14:12
- 20) Revelation 22:14
- 21) John 14:15-25, 16-17
- 22) Revelation 5:6
- 23) Revelation 3:1
- 24) Revelation 1:4
- 25) 2 Chronicles 16:9
- 26) 2 Chronicles 15:1-2
- 27) Matthew 7:7-8
- 28) 2 Chronicles 15:3-19
- 29) 2 Chronicles 16:7-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Matthew 6

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Can Christianity Survive the Organized Church?* by Ken Matto (scionofzion.com)
- *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series: *IF Statements in the Bible*

Passover Preparation III

Fred R. Coulter

We have covered about how the Holy Spirit works, and so forth. This may be just a little bit of review, John 14:18: “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet, a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. **Because I live, you shall live also....** [These are the words and the promises of eternal life. That’s why these are also the Word of the New Covenant. He is talking about that He is going to be living eternally] ...In that day... [that’s the day that they saw Christ resurrected] ...you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you” (vs 18-20).

Let’s go to Luke 24 and see what an astonishing event that was. This was the day that they knew from that would spring, ***You shall know that I am in the Father and you are in Me and I am in you.*** All the rest of the words of the New Covenant that we have to do with through John 17 are keyed on this sentence. That’s the whole key.

Luke 24:36: “Now as they were telling these things... [that is the two who came back from Emmaus and said, ‘We’ve seen the Lord.’] ...Jesus Himself stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be to you.’” I don’t know how they felt. I don’t know how excited they may have been. I don’t know how their adrenaline glands may have went *squish*, because when you see something startling that’s what happens.

But I can tell you this: as a kid when I was delivering newspapers I had to deliver to a mortuary, and also the apartments that were connected to the mortuary. During the week I would go up to the apartments and I would deliver the papers and come down and I would go into the front door of the mortuary and put the newspaper on the counter. But on Sunday they told me to go up around and down the stairs and down through the mortuary and then come and leave the newspaper on the front desk and walk out the front door and it would lock itself.

Well, you know it’s quiet in a mortuary, and I was curious. Here I am about 12-years-old, and I come down the steps and I see these various parlors with the coffins in it, and so forth. So, I look in one and I look in another and then I’d look at another, and just right at that time, and you know corpses will do this: they will groan and have muscle spasms—and that’s what happened. I looked in there and there was a groan and this corpse sat up. Man, did that scare me to death. That’s the only way I can relate how they must have felt when they saw Christ.

I ran down the stairs. I ran out into the

foyer. I took the Sunday paper with everything that is there and I threw it up on the counter and it scattered all over the office desk and everything, and I ran out the door scared to death! Can you imagine if you saw someone die and you knew he was dead, and you figured that even though Peter and John saw the grave clothes and everything, it was John who believed. The rest of the disciples didn’t even know. So’ here they’re all gathered together for fear of the Jews (John 20) and then Jesus stands in the midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’

Verse 37: “But they were terrified and filled with fear, thinking *that* they beheld a spirit.... [I guess! Totally astonished! This is ‘that day’ that Jesus was talking about.] ...Then He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I. Touch Me and see *for yourselves...*’” (vs 37-39). They did because in the first chapter of 1-John it says, ‘That which we have seen, that which we have gazed upon, that which our hands have handled, the Word of Life.’

“...for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see Me having.’ And after saying this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy, He said to them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ Then they gave Him part of a broiled fish and a *piece* of honeycomb. And He took these *and* ate in their presence” (vs 39-43). Then He must have spent most of that night opening their eyes to the Scriptures, going through it.

Verse 44: “And He said to them, ‘These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.’... [a complete endorsement of all three sections of the Old Testament] ...Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (vs 34-45).

The function of the Holy Spirit for us today is to do exactly the same thing. That’s why it is important that we understand John 14, 15, 16, and 17 is the basis of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father.

I will mention again as I did last time, in *The Seven General Epistles* book you can go through the special word study section and go through all the places concerning the things we are to know in the Epistle of 1-John. There are 47 things that we are to know as mature Christians. God does not want us ignorant. God wants our belief:

- based upon *knowledge*
- knowledge then gives us the *faith*
- faith gives us *understanding*
- understanding gives us *hope*
- hope gives us *love*

All together! That's why I believe today God has scattered the Church so He's going to put everyone on a one-to-one basis between Him and Jesus Christ—*every person*. This is the way that you can grow the most. This is the way that you can overcome the most, because now you can have that ***trusting relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father with no man in between!***

John 14:20: "In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me..." (vs 20-21). We covered last time there is no way that you can love God if you do not keep His commandments. You may have a fuzzy warm feeling in your heart, but a fuzzy warm feeling is not the kind of love that endures unto eternal life.

"...The one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father..." (v 21). ***God the Father Himself loves you!*** No doubt! No question about it! He says this several times. This is important for you to understand, especially when you have a trial that you're going through, or in the case that's going to happen with a lot of us because we are getting to be not just senior citizens, but senior, senior citizens.

God has given us extra time and we're going to have to face the trial of our lives, which will be looking for the place of rest in the grave. And when you are in those conditions, when you're old and gray-headed God says He won't forget you. When you're in pain and suffering because you are looking at death's door, ***God loves you, the Father loves you***. Never forget that. And with ***Christ in you He is likewise suffering with you***. That's important to understand. God has not abandoned you. He loves you.

Whenever you are in a trial and you come to a point where you are at the very bottom, and as I've mentioned before, all of us are going to come to that point. {see sermon (#1 this series) *When All Else Fails, Remember God Loves You*.} Men will fail you. The world will fail you. But **God will never fail you**.

John 16:26: "In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, **for the Father Himself loves you**, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (vs 26-27). That's why I have said that this whole section of the words of the covenant, John 14-17, is based upon faith/love,

hope/love, and then we will see in John 17, love/love.

John 14:21: "...shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." Not only does the Father love you, Jesus loves you. That's the very reason that He laid His life down for you.

Verse 22: "Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" At this time they didn't understand about the coming resurrection. But also this has to do with us. How does God manifest Himself to us and not to the world, because the world would say, 'Well, what right do you think that you have that you can say that God is with you and not with us?' Here's the secret. It's a very simple thing.

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him...'" We have it there three times at least. We'll probably see it again. But here we have three times the Father loves us—right? *Yes!* Keeping the Word of God is the key, because a spiritual something happens to anyone who begins keeping the Word of God. That doesn't necessarily mean that they are all called unto salvation. But God is no respecter of persons and those who follow His Word, to whatever extent they do, will receive the blessing for following His Word to that extent, whether or not they are called to salvation.

Those who are called unto salvation then come into a different category. We come into the category that the Father loves us, that Christ loves us, and now we have a unique thing take place when we receive the Spirit of God. Let's see it:

"...and My Father will love him, and **We** will come to him and make Our abode with him" (v 23). The abode is a dwelling place. Notice it is **We** and **Our** abode. Not *I* and *My* abode.

This is what God delights in: Those who are converted and receive the Holy Spirit (and we'll talk about the Holy Spirit here in just a bit because he explains then, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, how it is that both of them are going to dwell in you)—because the greatest of God's creation is mankind, and the purpose of mankind. That's why buildings are meaningless, temples are meaningless, rituals are meaningless, all of these things are meaningless. *God wants something greater than that!* He has prepared us to receive His Holy Spirit.

Isn't that interesting? If you want an interesting Bible study sometime, go through the different Epistles and Gospels and look up 3:16. They won't all hit right on, but John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only

begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.” 1-Timothy 3:16 says God was manifest in the flesh. 1-John 3:16 tells us how He loves us.

1-Corinthians 3:16: “Don’t you understand that **you are God’s temple**...” That’s where God wants to reside before you’re resurrected. This is a spiritual operation. This is part of the covenant. When we take the Passover this is what God is telling us and this is what we are telling God that, ‘Yes, we love You. We want to be in Your Family. Thank You for calling us. Thank You for forgiving our sins. Thank You for being gracious to us.’

“...**you are God’s temple**, and *that* the **Spirit of God is dwelling in you?**” (v 16). That’s where God desires to dwell, to have His laws written in our hearts and written in our minds, and that we come to have the mind of Christ. That’s what it’s all about, brethren. Everything else in the world, all the trials, all the difficulties, everything else is meaningless because unless you understand that all the prophecy in the world isn’t going to save you. All the physical things in the world will not save you. ***It’s the Spirit of God!*** That’s what God wants. That’s where He wants to dwell. That’s what He’s concerned about.

Verse 17: “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him...” We are down to the nitty-gritty—aren’t we? And from baptism forward for those who truly receive the Holy Spirit of God, it is either/or. That’s what He’s talking about here.

“...because the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God’s sight*” (vs 17-18). To truly understand the purpose of life and the purpose of God, that’s what’s important.

Let’s put into the equation Isaiah 66. I think, in view of the possible situation, which may happen in Pasadena; because I remember when a proposition first came up where Herbert Armstrong said, ‘We need to build a temple for God’—how many remember that?—‘and we all need to sacrifice, and we all need to give extra money.’

I think we can all learn the lesson from the Bible—can’t we? Whoever builds a temple for God gets himself in ***d-e-e-p*** trouble. God was willing and obliged Himself to honor David and let Solomon build the temple. He did put His presence in it, which is known by the Jews as the Shekinah. But that’s not the ultimate. As long as the people would obey God, He would keep His presence in the temple. But God is not interested in a temple on the earth. Notice what He says; He predicted the

destruction of the whole system, and this is only one of many.

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?... [Since God made us what is man going to do for God? That’s why God’s greatest delight is to dwell in us, because that’s why He made us, not in a building.] ...For all these things My hand has made...’” (vs 1-2).

All the gold, all the stones, all the silver, all of the whatever paraphernalia they made for the temple: all the ritual, all the altars and everything. God made everything to begin with, so you have all of that and you go back and read all the rituals. You’ve seen the video showing the tabernacle in the wilderness, which is quite a wonderful thing to look at and see the way that that was done. The temple, obviously, was a magnificent place, and so forth.

- unless there is the Spirit of God
- unless there is the love of God
- unless there is the belief in God

all of that is absolutely worthless and to be destroyed. *That’s why God destroyed the temple.*

“...‘But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word.... [That’s another way of saying, ‘You believe in God, believe in Me.’] ...He who kills an ox...” (vs 2-3). If you have a right attitude God would accept it, but that’s *not unto salvation* {see sermon series on *Hebrews*}

Verse 3: “He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man; he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog’s neck...” Isn’t that interesting? I wonder what these false lambs of God are to Christ?—nothing but dogs! You think about that. Is it not even a greater sin to take the Word of God and twist it and pervert it and use it for selfish, carnal ends and means? Is that not even a greater sin than building a temple and ignoring God? *Yes, it is!*

“...he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine’s blood...” (v 3). That’s what was the abomination that Antiochus Epiphanies did. And furthermore, more than that, more than offering swine’s blood on the altar and just walking out, they made that a place for harlotry; they took the temple of God and wrote graffiti all over it. God was saying, ‘You mistreat Me in My temple, I’m going to desecrate it because you’re desecrating Me.’

“...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations” (v 3). You go back and you read what Israel did to the temple of God and how they absolutely profaned it and blasphemed it and put in idols and all that sort of

thing.

So he's chosen a different way, v 4: "I also will choose their delusions, and I will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight.'.... [then it comes right back to what God delights in] ...Hear the Word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word, 'Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, "Let the LORD be glorified." But He will appear to your joy and they will be ashamed'" (vs 4-5). We've all experienced that—haven't we? Did this not happen with the apostles in relationship to the Jews? *Yes, it did!* Were they not chased asunder from the temple? *Yes, they were!* Quite a thing!

When it says 'We will make Our abode with him' (John 14:23) how are they going to do it? We're going to see it's by the Spirit of God. I'll just summarize that here. Through the power of the Holy Spirit there is the function of the Father. And we will see there is also the function of the Son because both: '**We** will make **Our** abode with you.'

Romans 8:9 tells us the two aspects of the Spirit of God: "However, you are not in *the* flesh..." Yes, you are. You're still here in the flesh—aren't you? But that is before God, because with the Spirit of God and your seeking after the things of the Spirit and not the things of the flesh, *you are not of the flesh*. God is looking at you as His Spirit sons and what you will be at the resurrection, because **He calls those things that are not as though they are!**

"...**if**... [God is the One Who knows—right?] ...*the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you.... [Remember, He said, '**We** will make **Our** abode with him.')] ...But **if** anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ..." (v 9). Notice the difference there. You have the Spirit of God *and* you have the Spirit of Christ. Since the Father and Christ are one, this is one Spirit that they send but two functions of the one Spirit.

"...But **if** anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But **if** Christ *be* within you...: (vs 9-10). Do not confuse this with the seven Spirits of God, as we covered last time. That's how God keeps track of what's going on in the world, and those who are seeking Him, He originally begins dealing with him with those. That has nothing to do with what we are talking about here: the Spirit of God, which is of the Father and is of the Son and is in us. The seven Spirits God uses to deal with the world. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ He uses to deal with us and in us so that He dwells in us.

"...But **if** anyone does not have *the* Spirit of

Christ, he does not belong to Him." God doesn't make any mistakes. There maybe some people who were baptized but never received the Spirit of God. That's God's decision because God knows the heart.

Verse 10: "But **if** Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin... [that's through the operation of baptism that you no longer serve sin] ...however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness"—because you are in right standing with God. **God imputes to you the righteousness of Christ!** That's a tremendous blessing to be in that position, brethren, that God the Father will do this for you. That's what's so profound.

If you can just see some of those pictures of the universe and how absolutely marvelous and great it is, and to understand that the ruling Sovereign God the Father of this universe loves you and has given His Spirit to you. There can be nothing greater in life. All the physical circumstances and things that we go through aside from that are to be counted as nothing, because in reality, they are nothing. They are just temporary.

Verse 11: "Now **if**... [There's that word again—go ahead and circle it.] ...Now, **if** the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you... [that's from the Father] ...He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken... [made alive] ...your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you."

That is the function of the Father—to beget you with the Holy Spirit so that you at the resurrection will become His literal, bona fide Spirit son and daughter. That's the function of the Holy Spirit from the Father to beget you for eternal life for the resurrection. The function of the Holy Spirit, being the Spirit of Christ, is that you have the mind of Christ. We have the two aspects of the function of the Holy Spirit within us that you have the mind of Christ. That's the whole purpose of what we will study in the book of Hebrews. That's what it's all about.

- Yes, we are going to have trials to overcome.
- Yes, we're going to have human nature to overcome.
- Yes, the world is going to be contrary to us.
- Yes, Christ promised us it would hate us.

And after all, who needs friends in the world if God is your friend. I mean think on that for a while.

This is why we are to grow in grace and knowledge: *so that the mind of Christ can be in us!* The way you do that, Philippians 2:1 "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ... [that is

considering all that Paul was going through as he wrote in the first chapter of Phil.] ...if any comfort of love..." It all gets back to love, and we're going to also see that the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, so the functions of the Holy Spirit are:

1. of the Father
2. of the mind of Christ
3. the Comforter

"...if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions... [deep inner affection. You are affected by things deeply] ...fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind..." (vs 1-2).

I tell you what, if he were resurrected today and looked at the Church I can imagine what the Apostle Paul would say. I imagine there would be a lot of strong and stout words from the Apostle Paul very similar to 1-Cor. where he would go through and many times he would say, 'WHAT?' *Yes, that you be likeminded!* That's the whole goal of what God wants, to be likeminded with each other and to have the mind of Christ.

"...having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself*" (vs 2-3). God has a purpose for each one. That's why we are not to go around judging, condemning, criticizing each other, and all that sort of thing.

Look, we all have enough problems ourselves we're all well aware of without someone else having to heap upon us all their criticisms from those that are to be our brethren. God has brought us all together, and really when you understand it, because of our backgrounds and where God has called us from, the toughest job is to love each other—isn't it? We're in a situation where we wouldn't normally love each other because everyone loves his own. That makes a difference.

So, in loving each other and coming to have the mind of Christ we all have a lot of work to do. As a matter of fact, it's a lifelong project—isn't it?

Verse 4: "Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus**" (vs 4-5). That's the function of the Spirit of Christ, to have the mind of Christ. It is to write His laws in our hearts and in our minds. If you want to follow-up on that you go through and study the whole Psa. 119. I tell you, if you study it the way you should it will take you a long time to get through Psa. 119, but I'll just summarize it this way:

I believe *Psa. 119 is prophetic of how Jesus Christ viewed the laws and commandments and*

statutes and judgments of God. How then, if they are to be written in our hearts and our minds we also ought to view the laws and commandments of God? If they're going to be written in our hearts and our minds by the Spirit of God—so that we have the mind of Christ, so that we function by those things, so that we think with the Word of God—then Psa. 119 gives us the completed task.

With that, let's just look at one verse there. This is my favorite verse in it, because this is the summary of the whole thing. It's kind of like Solomon said in the book of Ecclesiastes: 'Let us hear the conclusion of the matter—fear God and keep His commandments.' Let's look at the spiritual thing concerning the conclusion of the matter. As you go through it you will see that Psa. 119 is broken down in even sections of 8 verses according to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In Hebrew each verse begins with the Hebrew letter that is listed over the top of the 8-verse section. This was one of the songs of degrees that they would sing.

Psalms 119:127: "Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold. Therefore... [here's the conclusion of the matter] ...I esteem **all** Your precepts... [Not only just Your laws and commandments and statutes, but every precept of God. Since God is perfect and God is Holy and God is love everything that God does is right.] ...concerning all things to be right... [What happens when you begin to have the mind of Christ?] ...and I hate every false way" (vs 127-128). Not the person—**the way**. Every **false way!** Why? *Because that is sin!*

Now let's go to Hebrews 1 and see how that's carried over concerning Christ, and why He is going to inherit the kingdom as the King. Hebrews 1:8: "But on the other hand, of the Son *He says*, 'Your throne, O God, *is* into the ages of eternity; a scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom. You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness...' " (vs 8-9).

We will see during the Feast of Unleavened Bread that's why we get rid of leaven; *it pictures sin!* If we hate iniquity, we love God—don't we? Don't hate the person; Christ died for the person. And just remember when you were carnal you couldn't help it either—could you? *No!* So likewise, do not judge and criticize people in the world. You can judge and criticize their actions of iniquity and hate that. If it gets to the point that they are doing things which transgress the laws of the land, well then the authorities of the laws of the land have the responsibility from God to take care of the problem. God will work it out.

Those are the functions of the Holy Spirit, of the Father and of the Son. With that then another function takes place, but let's come here to John

14:24 because this is also a very definitive Scripture: “The one who does not love Me does not keep My words... [There is the standard. Up here He said, ‘If you love Me you will keep My Word. The one who does not love Me will not keep My words’—let alone believe Him.] ...and the word that you hear is not Mine...” This is why the New Testament is so astounding.

(go to the next track)

Verse 24: “The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.... [that’s what the New Testament is, and yet, the world considers it a collection of folklore and myths] ...I have spoken these things to you while I am yet present with you. But *when* the Comforter *comes*...” (vs 24-26).

That’s the other function of the Holy Spirit: *to comfort you*—comfort you in many ways and it will teach you—so there’s another function of it. But it’s actually the Father Who is teaching you, Christ Who is teaching you through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 26: “But *when* the Comforter *comes*, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name... [They do it together—‘We will make Our abode with you’—follows right along with it.] ...**that one shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you.**” Let’s understand something. You can be ever so intelligent, you can have ever so many credentials that you desire, but you will never understand the Word of God unless the Holy Spirit teaches you. And the Holy Spirit *will not* teach anyone who does not keep the Words of God.

That’s how God is able to teach His people. And yet, with the same book, the same words, without the Holy Spirit, to close the minds of those who consider themselves to be the experts. It’s a phenomenal thing that God has done. This is a promise: “...**that one shall teach you all things**...” That’s why when you study and you let God speak to you—because these are the words from God the Father. That’s why it’s important. That’s why it’s profound. Who’s speaking to you? *The Father is!* And He gives you the power through the Holy Spirit to be taught.

Let’s tie this in with another verse from John 6 and it goes right back to one of the very basic Scriptures that we have known and we’ve understood—John 6:44-45. Then we’ll see that John even repeats this again in 1-John 2. So, this is quite a phenomenal thing.

Even though someone can read the word and explain the words and teach them to you, it’s not

the operation of a teacher that really teaches you. *It’s the operation of God the Father* so that anyone who is doing the teaching is teaching the Words of God with the Spirit of God and you are hearing the Words of God, which builds your faith, and that it’s the Holy Spirit that is actually giving you the teaching. It is actually God the Father Who is the One Who is teaching you. Now, that is quite a phenomenal thing. If these are His words, which Jesus said they are, and if the Holy Spirit is going to teach you, *it’s going to teach you the Father’s words.*

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; 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).

Since God is not teaching the whole world yet, this applies to all those *that God has called*. They shall all be taught of God. That’s why Paul told Timothy, ‘Preach the Word,’ because that’s going to teach you God’s way. How are you ever going to have the Word of God written in your heart and in your mind unless you’re taught the Word of God? How is it going to stick there unless you have the Holy Spirit to put it there and put it in you? *It isn’t going to be!* That’s why the Protestants are forlorn over all of their great evangelistic campaigns and everything that they have. Six months after they have the people come forward and give their heart to the Lord they’re right back out in the world. So in order to retain those that they have, they have to say, ‘Well, you don’t have to keep the commandments of God,’ and that pleases the carnal person—doesn’t it? But Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ It’s just the opposite, because they’re not being taught of God.

“Therefore, everyone who has heard...” (v 45)—put in there Rom. 10:14: ‘How shall they hear without preaching’ Faith comes ‘by the hearing of the Word of God.’ The key to it is this: It’s not the man who is teaching, it is the one who is teaching using the Spirit of God and the Word of God to convey to you the Word of God, so God the Father likewise can teach you. That’s what it’s all about, and that is the covenant that God has made with us through Christ.

“...everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned... [not only learned information about Him, but learned *from* the Father] ...comes to Me” (v 45). That’s why for those who really want to know about God, and hunger and thirst after God,

- if they seek they shall find
- if they knock it will be opened
- Christ will deal with them
- Christ will lead them

Go back in your life and think: Why did one day the thing happen to me, which brought me into the Church of God? Why did that happen? Well, *because God chose you!* God sent part of the seven Spirits of God to be with you and lead you. **God leads you to repentance!** God leads you to baptism. God then gives you the begetting of the Holy Spirit from the Father and then you begin to develop the mind of Christ, you are taught of God the Father. That's a tremendous thing. Now in view of that, let's understand how important Sabbath services really are, and how important the Word of God really is.

Let's see what John wrote of concerning this very thing when confronted with the antichrist teachers. Some people misconstrue what he's written here, but it's all in light of the antichrist who were going out and teaching the things contrary to the Word of God. Isn't that amazing? You can take the Word of God and teach things contrary to the Word of God, even use the Word of God in the wrong way and be an antichrist. That's because they add to and take away from, and give their own interpretation thereof.

1-John 2:18: "Little children... [I suppose at about 90 years-plus of age he was allowed to do that to the rest—right?] ...it is *the* last time... [The last days began when Christ came.] ...and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have risen up... [they're multiplied over and over again from then] ...by which we know that it is *the* last time. They went out from among us, but they were not of us because if they were of us, they would have remained with us; nevertheless, *they left* that they might be exposed to show that *they* all were not of us. But you have *the* anointing..." (vs 18-20)—of the Holy Spirit. That's what he likens to it when you receive the Holy Spirit.

"...from the Holy One, and you have knowledge of all things *pertaining to salvation*" (v 20). Obviously, you don't know all things that there is to know in the world, but you know all the things concerning the things **necessary for salvation**. He's writing to those who have been in the Church for years and years.

- Do you know all the basic things concerning salvation? *Yes, you do!*
- Are there still more things to learn? *Yes!*

That's what he's talking about here, 21: "I did not write to you because you do not know the Truth, but because you know it, and *you understand* that not one lie comes from the Truth. Who is the liar if it is not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist—the one who denies the Father and the Son" (vs 18-22). Now when he goes through all of this he explains even more here.

Verse 26: "These things I have written to you concerning those who are leading you astray... [deceive you] ...But you yourselves have dwelling in you the anointing that you received from Him [God the Father] and you do not have need of anyone [meaning of the antichrists] to indoctrinate you... [What will they teach you? *They will teach you lies!*] ...for the same anointing instructs you in all *spiritual* things..." (vs 26-27). That's what we just read. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit will teach you all things. It's really God the Father Who's teaching you through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"...and is true, and is not a lie; and *if you do* exactly as it *has* taught you, you will be dwelling in Him [the Father]. And now, little children, dwell in Him, so that when He is manifested we may have boldness, and not be put to shame before Him at His coming" (vs 27-28). There is a special education that you go through. If you understand this, will you have incentive to study? *If you do the Holy Spirit is going to teach you!*

Now, there is a very interesting ad put out by the LDS^[transcriber's correction], which is quite clever, which has a note of Truth. It shows starting out a baby, and then they show it growing up into an adult. And they're advertising the *King James Bible* but the kicker is they also want to send you the *Book of Mormon*. There's the deception in it. What it does, it shows this person through life and it's projected. You know how they can do on computers and show the age of the person. This is what they did to this little baby clear up into the 70s. And the caption was, 'So, you've had no time to study My Word'—*showing a whole wasted life*.

But if you have the Spirit of God and understand that through the Spirit of God, *God the Father is going to teach you!*

- Do you not have great incentive to study?
- Do you not then desire to study?
- How silly then are our excuses that we didn't have time?
- Wouldn't we be upset if God said, 'I don't have time for you'?
- *Yes, indeed!*

With God dwelling in us through the power of the Holy Spirit, then when we tell God 'we don't have time to study Your Word,' when it's the most important word possible because it comes from God the Father. So, this will give us greater incentive.

All these things are important, because when we come to the Passover and when we read these words for the *Covenant of the Passover*, it's good that we understand them in the way that we are now so that we realize the whole meaning of the

covenant and being renewed in that covenant on the Passover.

John 14:26: "...and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you." That's how the New Testament was written. Since they're the words of God, God the Father inspired them to write the words that He wanted. As John said, maybe they could have recorded every miracle that Jesus did and the world wouldn't be able to contain all the books. So, we have everything that's essential here.

With this we shift from faith *into hope*. Now that we have the Holy Spirit of God *this gives us hope*. Therefore, he kind of repeats himself again in v 27: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give it to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear."

That's exactly how he started out in John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled...." God doesn't want you to have worry, and fret, and stew, even though you have difficulties. We need to be concerned enough to do something about it—to pray about it, to study about it, to take action concerning whatever it may be—but He doesn't want us to be in anxiety and fear and let these things keep bothering us. Remember, perfect love *casts out fear*.

If the Church of God is supposed to be teaching the love of God, which it should, can you now understand how a terrible thing it is in God's sight if an organization claiming to be the Church of God runs it by fear and not by love? *Yes, because you're squelching love!*

Verse 28: "You have heard Me say to you that I am going away, and *that* I will come to you *again*. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced that I said, 'I am going to the Father' because My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it comes to pass, you may believe. I will not speak with you much longer because the ruler of this world is coming..." (vs 28-30).

We're going to see that through the Passover and the crucifixion the ruler of this world was judged.

- he's also called Satan the devil that 'deceives the whole world' (Rev. 12:9)
- he's also called 'he god of this world' (2-Cor. 4:4)
- he's also called 'the prince of the power of the air; that spirit that is inner-working in the children of disobedience' (Eph. 2:2-3)

We have a promise. Though we have to fight and war against the principalities and spirits and wicked

spirits in high places, we need not fear, because it's much like what happened to Peter.

Luke 22:31 is right during the Passover. This is what He told Peter: "Then the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, listen *well*. Satan has demanded to have you, to sift *you* as wheat ... [He did give in to Satan a couple times—didn't he? *Yes, he did!*] ... But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren'" (vs 31-32). That was not enough. To prove the point that Satan was after him He said:

Verse 33: "And he [Peter] said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.'"

- Could you accomplish any greater work for the Lord than doing that?
- Is this not willing to give up everything and even your life? *Yes!*
- Are we not supposed to be willing to give up our lives? *That's true, yes!*

But this he was saying of himself. Anyone of his own self or her own self is not going to do anything for God *separately from what God desires the person to do*. What great work can we do for God? That's what it gets down to. If you go to prison because you've kept the commandments of God, that's one thing; but if you volunteer from a carnal point of view—"I'm ready to do this. I'm ready to do that. I'm ready to do the other thing"—much like the suicide bombers of the Palestinians and the terrorists today. So, what did Jesus say?

Verse 34: "But He said, 'I tell you, Peter, *the* cock shall in no wise crow today before you have denied knowing Me three times.'"

- Did he learn a lesson from it? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he do it? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he repent of it? *Yes, he did!*

Now then, even though he did that and even though he gave in to it, this was not a 'sin unto death' because he repented. However, we have a promise back here in 1-John 5, that if you yield to God and have the Spirit of God, Satan—though he may destroy the body—cannot touch you. Remember what Jesus said? 'Don't fear him who is able to kill the body but is not able to kill the life. *Fear Him Who is able to kill the body and the life in Gehenna.*'

So, even though we may go through the trials and troubles and tests and things even as Peter did and was prophesied by Jesus that he would, here's what we can count on, 1-John 5:18: "We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not *practice* sin; for the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself... [*in the way of the Lord*] ...by

the power of God, and the wicked one does not touch him.”

Though we have to fight against Satan, fight against the world, fight against all these things, Satan can never really get to us. He might tempt us, he might try us, he might even get us to do sin, but then if we are truly Christ’s and repent he can’t touch us. In other words, God has given us this assurance: ***Satan cannot take you from Him.*** That’s something to remember. That’s something to really know and understand and consider and realize that that’s the assurance that we have.

John 14:30: “...the ruler of this world is coming; but he does not have a single thing in Me.” I imagine that Satan and all the demons figured, ‘Man, when Christ died we have foiled God’s plan.’ But no, that which looked like utter defeat turned out to be the triumph over them because He was resurrected from the dead—correct? *Yes!* “...but he does not have a single thing in Me.”

With Christ and with God the Father, and Jesus Christ in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, *the wicked one doesn’t touch us.* If we are in right standing with God and in covenant with God, ***he doesn’t have a single thing in us.*** Remember the account of the children of Israel in the wilderness? How they provoked God? How many times did they provoke God?

Let’s look at an astounding thing here. Let’s come to the book of Numbers with the account of Balaam. You know that Balak hired Balaam to come and curse Israel. I am sure that we can look at the parallels here. He finally had to tell the truth to Balak. And Balak said, ‘After all this money I’ve given you, you can’t curse them?’ But Balaam did counsel him afterwards. ‘I can’t curse them but you can send all of your beautiful women over there and entice them to commit adultery and eat things sacrificed to idols, and then God will have to correct them, but I can’t curse them.’ You get that rest of the story in the book of Rev. 2.

Numbers 23:20: “Behold, I have received word to bless. And He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.... [That’s an operation of grace.] (after all that Israel did in sinning): ... He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, neither has He seen perverseness in Israel....” (vs 20-21).

When God forgives sin that’s the way He forgives it. Isn’t that something? That’s the way God deals with us in relationship to Satan the devil. ***When we stand in the grace and we are under the grace of God there is no sin that Satan can accuse us of.*** That’s why people who take grace and go out and make it lawlessness are going so contrary to God.

“...neither has He seen perverseness in

Israel... [That’s quite a statement after reading all the troubles they had up to that point—isn’t it?] ...The LORD his God *is* with him, and the shout of a King among them. God brought them out of Egypt. He has, as it were, the strength of an ox. Surely, *there is* no enchantment against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘What God has worked!’” (vs 21-23). We can also look at that as a prophecy of the Church—can’t we? *Yes, indeed!* Are we not the true Israel of God? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 24: “Behold, the people shall rise up like a great lion, and lift up himself like a young lion. He shall not lie down until he eats of the prey and drinks the blood of the slain.”

Just makes you wonder with physical Israel is that what is going to happen in Iraq? *Who knows!* It also says in another place concerning physical Israel and Joseph in particular, that though the archers have shot sorely at him they weren’t able to get him. It sounds like the world is ganging up on us to do that.

So, we have protection from Satan. ***Claim that protection! Ask God for that protection!*** How do we have the battle, and yet, we’re protected at the same time? *Very simply, God gives us the spiritual power to overcome it!* They will try and get us just like Balaam tried to curse Israel. And yes, we may go through difficulties.

Yes, we wrestle against wicked spirits in high places and so forth like that, but they can’t get us. We wrestle and fight back against them through the power and strength of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and that’s how they cannot touch us. Though we wrestle them, though we battle them, they can’t take us. ‘Touching’ doesn’t mean that we don’t wrestle and fight against them in that particular sense. I think that ‘touching’ there has from the point of view to have spiritual power and control over to nullify the Holy Spirit. That’s what that would have to mean, otherwise it would be a contradiction in itself.

John 14:31: “Yet, *he comes...*” Why?

- Did Satan get to Christ? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he kill Him? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he use human instrumentalities to do it? *Yes, he did!*
- Did he get to Him spiritually? *No, he didn’t!*

That’s the same example that we look to here. ***Satan cannot touch us spiritually.*** He can physically, but not spiritually. Yes, it may be a great trial to wrestle against wicked spirits in high places. But that’s so that we turn to God and look to Him and claim His promises, and ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to be with us, so that regardless of what Satan may

attempt to do—or people inspired by him may try to do, and yea, even in some ways succeed in doing some things—we know that ‘all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose’ God will see us through it.

I don’t mean to imply by that or mean by any sense of the word that we are going to live a blissful life of non-combativeness against the wicked spirits of this world. *No! We are in a spiritual battle!* As long as God is on our side and fighting for us and we use the tools of God and we use the sword of the Spirit, as it says there in Eph. 6, which is the Word of God, they will be defeated just as surely as Balaam was when he tried to curse Israel, though Israel had all their sins and difficulties.

So, we can say likewise Satan is not able to really get to us, though we have our weaknesses and our sins that we lay before the altar of God and covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, he is not able to bring accusation against us though he tries. It says he accuses them day and night before the throne of God, but does God listen to him? *No!* Who does God listen to? *To Christ who is advocating—correct? Yes!* If God the Father’s Spirit and Christ be in us *we shall overcome!* There can be no question, no doubt about that.

It may take some time. That’s why we have the experiences that we go through. That’s why God has given us the time that we have right now to go through the things that we are going through. Many times when we’re fighting these battles and wrestling with these problems and difficulties we don’t see the end.

But with trust and faith in Christ and the promises realize this: *God does not lie! We can claim His promises!* And when you come to a situation that you don’t understand and you can’t comprehend, you have to go to God and ask for understanding. You have to ask God to open your mind and give you understanding.

- What is the lesson?
- What am I to learn?
- How do these things apply in my life?

That’s an awful lot of my prayer right now personally:

- God, where are we?
- Where are we going?
- What are we doing?
- What do you want us to do?
- How do you want us to do?

Because one of the lessons that we have learned is this, we don’t say: ‘This is the work of God,’ and run down the road and say, ‘This is the work of God, and by the way, God, since it’s Your work You

better bless it.’ *No!* We have to make sure that we’re doing the will of God before we start down a road, and doing the things that please God. That’s why these things come upon us. It all fits together. One is not a contradiction of the other and that’s why we go through these things.

John 14:31: “Yet *he comes* so that the world may know that I love the Father... [Sometimes you have to prove your love by giving your life. Isn’t that the whole story, ‘Greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life for his friends’?] ...and that I do exactly as the Father has commanded Me. Arise, let us go out.” So, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

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

Scripture References:

- 1) John 14:18-20
- 2) Luke 24:36-45
- 3) John 14:20-21
- 4) John 16:26-27
- 5) John 14:21-23
- 6) John 3:16
- 7) 1 Corinthians 3:16-18
- 8) Isaiah 66:1-5
- 9) Romans 8:9-10, 9-11
- 10) Philippians 2:1-5
- 11) Psalm 119:127-128
- 12) Hebrews 1:8-9
- 13) John 14:24-26
- 14) John 6:44-45
- 15) 1 John 2:18-22, 26-28
- 16) John 14:26-27, 1, 28-30
- 17) Luke 22:31-34
- 18) 1 John 5:18
- 19) John 14:30
- 20) Numbers 23:20-24
- 21) John 14:31

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 20
- 1 Timothy 3:16
- 1 John 3:16
- Ecclesiastes
- Romans 10:14
- Revelation 12:9
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Ephesians 2:2-3
- Revelation 2
- Ephesians 6

Also referenced:

- Book: *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter
- Sermon Series: *Hebrews*
- Sermon: *When All Else Fails, Remember, God Loves You* (#1 Love Series)

Passover Preparation IV

Fred R. Coulter

This is *Passover Preparation #4* and we finished last time through John 14. We're going through John 14, 15, 16 and 17. In chapters 14 and 15 we'll go in much more detail than we will the others and in particularly John 17, because John 17 is Christ's prayer and there's not too much in the way of comment that you want to add to that, after all that is *His* prayer.

So, let's begin in John 15 and what we need to understand is this: *that God wants us to have a direct living relationship with Him through the power of the Spirit*. That's what God wants:

- based upon faith
- based upon hope
- based upon love

That's what God desires. He doesn't want 'religion' because 'religion' puts you into a corporate relationship with a church entity and puts you into a laity ecclesiastical hierarchical relationship with the church leaders. *God doesn't want that!* He wants a direct, living relationship with Him by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, through prayer, through study, through how you live, how you think, how you conduct your life in all of that. We are going to see as the Days of Unleavened Bread teach us that it is all a part of *being perfected*, and that's the important thing we need to understand.

John 15 1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.... [It is a collective work that they do together, as we showed last time, through the power of the Holy Spirit.] ...He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit..." (vs 1-2). With a living dynamic direct relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ you are going to be continually growing, continually overcoming. He does not want you to stagnate.

- God is the One Who handles all of these things and these problems.
- God is the One Who makes the decision, ultimately.

That's why that if someone is excommunicated out of a synagogue or out of a church that doesn't mean they're cut off from God. In some cases it may mean the opposite. God is the One Who does the final work. No man is going to do this work of God because Christ is the vine, the Father is the husbandman.

"...every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [He takes away.] ...but He cleanses each one

that bears fruit, in order that it may bear **more** fruit" (v 2). You might put there that is *the whole purpose and object of trials*.

Around here, living in wine country, you're very familiar with the vines. Every year they trim back the vines. You can tell how old the vineyard is by the size of the trunk of the grape plant. The bigger the trunk the older the vineyard, and probably the greater the quality of the grapes, and hence the quality of the wine. If you take a grapevine, of which we have one that we have for kind of an arbor over a little garden area that we have in our backyard. We just let it grow so we have shade and it covers so we have these 20-foot long vine branches going out. Well, every year *bingo*, here come all these new green grapes. But they never produce anything because the vine has not been pruned.

So, the pruning that God does is to get rid of human nature so that you can produce more spiritual fruit. It's so simple that He puts it in the terms of the vineyard. Now let's look at *our part* on cleansing. We have our part. He stirs us up with the Holy Spirit. He takes away our sins when we repent. And here's how we are cleansed. The cleansing is not a haphazard thing. It is not a partial thing. If your attitude is right and you're wholehearted toward God and you love God, it's going to be a complete work.

As we all need to realize we're all a work in progress. Every year, just like the husbandman goes out to the vineyard and he trims off all the old dead branches so that it can have new branches in the spring and hence new fruit, so likewise, every year we go through the same process with the Passover so that we renew the covenant and we have that standing before God. This becomes a very important thing in relationship to whether you have a personal one-to-one direct, living relationship with God, or whether you play church, or attend church, or have 'religion,' or whatever it may be.

1-John 1:6 "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth." Why? *Because if you walk in the light you're going to be doing something very profound!* There is something that you will always be doing regardless of your sin, regardless of your fault, regardless of your trial and difficulty that you are going through. Here is what you are always going to be doing: *you're not going to be walking in darkness.*

John 3:17_[transcriber's correction]: "For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the

world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” That’s the whole goal of what God wants. Ultimately the unrepentant sinners will have condemned themselves.

Verse 18: “The one who believes in Him is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: that the light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (vs 18-19).

You can’t be walking in darkness and saying that you have fellowship with God. You cannot be a Buddhist and have fellowship with God; you cannot be a Moslem and have fellowship with God; you cannot be a Catholic and have fellowship with God; and the Protestants probably have a half-hearted beginning fellowship with God, etc.—because Christ is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* and there is no other way. He also says, ‘*I am the Light of the world.*’

Verse 20: “For everyone who practices evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light so that his works may not be exposed.” He doesn’t want to change, or he does not want to discover that his human nature is inherently evil and poisonous by nature and that it needs to be changed.

Verse 21: “But the **one who practices the Truth comes to the Light...**” This shows it’s a continuous ongoing thing that you do. You are doing the Truth, you are practicing the Truth, you are coming to the Light, and Christ is the Light. You are continually coming to Him, and this is what it’s all about; this is what the New Covenant is all about, and this is what our relationship with God is all about.

“...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*” (v 21). In other words, the fruits of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22): love, hope, joy, peace, longsuffering, temperance, goodness, meekness, ‘against such there is no law.’

Let’s come back to 1-John 1 and finish this section here concerning cleansing and so forth and how God does this. It’s really a wonderful and marvelous thing. This is all a part of our relationship and standing with God.

1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light... [John 3, because we are coming to the Light] ...*then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.” That’s the whole purpose of the Passover, that’s the whole purpose of the words that Jesus is talking about—to cleanse you—but more important to keep you in a covenant

relationship with God so that you have opportunity to have your sins continually cleansed through Christ Who is our propitiation. That is the act of grace under which we live.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin... [a sinful nature] ...we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.” Isn’t it interesting that those people who believe that men are inherently good rather than inherently evil, they have no room for the Truth of God? These are living things. The Word of God is living; it applies everywhere, at all times, in all circumstances.

Verse 9: “If we confess our own sins... [and this does not mean to the priest, but to God] ...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” That’s how the relationship with God works. That’s why Jesus said, ‘Now you are clean through the words which I have spoken.’

- you believe them
- you act upon them
- you live with them
- it’s part of your being

That puts us in the standing with God that there is no condemnation of the fact that we have human nature. That’s the *individual work*.

There’s the also the *collective work*. Jesus said, ‘Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, teaching them whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you till the end of the age.’ It’s still being done through the Word of God. If we are preaching what God has spoken, then we are giving you what God would give you if He were to talk in your ear, and likewise with the words of Christ and the writings of the apostles, because He said, ‘You would be witnesses for Me to the ends of the earth.’

That could only be accomplished through having the New Testament written, because they didn’t get to the ends of the earth. They covered a gigantic area, but even they didn’t know until a few years before they died, with the exception of the Apostle John, that time was going to go on way beyond their lifetimes. They didn’t know that until the last few years.

This is why God does it. When you have a trial or you are overcoming human nature and you have this spiritual battle within, know that God is doing this to cleanse you. That’s why there is repentance, that’s why there is prayer, that’s why we ask everyday, ‘Forgive us our sins and our debts.’

John 15:3: “You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you.” How does that

work? How do the words cleanse you? *It's accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit!*

The Holy Spirit is likened unto water, John 7:37: "Now, in the last day, the great *day* of the Feast, Jesus stood and called out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in Him would soon receive; for *the* Holy Spirit was not yet *given* because Jesus was not yet glorified" (vs 37-39).

Now let's come to Ephesians 5 and see what the Holy Spirit and the words do together and how it's phrased here—very interesting expression. And he's talking concerning Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it... [Here's what Christ is doing to the Church: sanctifying her, or that is making it Holy] ...having cleansed it... [He said, 'Now you're clean through the words which I have spoken'] ...with the washing of water by *the* Word" (vs 25-26).

Very interesting process that takes place— isn't it. Why? *When you confess your sins and repent to God, you study the Word of God, you feel relieved!* Have you ever felt greatly relieved when you really know that you have repented? What is that relief? *That is a cleansing!* That's what that is. When Jesus said, 'You are clean through the words which I have spoken to you'; because of that then here is a direct, living relationship. All of this is building to what we find in John 17.

John 15:4. "Dwell in Me..." It's a living and dwelling relationship. It's direct because He is the vine and we are the branches and we are dwelling in Him. I mean, you can't get any more direct than that, can you? *No!*

"...and I in you.... [that's by the power of the Holy Spirit] ...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself... [means the impossibility of having the power to produce any spiritual fruit on your own; it can't do it of itself] ...but **only if it remains in the vine**... [Christ is the vine] ...neither *can* you bear fruit unless you are **dwelling** in Me" (v 4). The words: *dwell, remain, dwelling*, because all of those are reflective of the same Greek verbs.

Verse 5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches...." Many people never understand that and come up and proclaim that they are God. You know like Yahweh ben Yahweh, remember that down in Florida some 15 years ago? It ended up that he really thought he was God, and he authorized other people to kill people that he didn't like. *No!*

Verse 5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches...". The pope ought to learn that. He's not in place of Christ. As a matter of fact he's another plant. You might say the wild vine, not connected to Christ at all.

"...The one who is **dwelling** in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit... [all the fruits of the Spirit, all the things we need to do] ...because apart [severed] from Me you can do nothing" (v 5). That's why no one can do the work of God without Christ in him. Many have tried to do the work of God. Let God do the work in you, and then let Him do His work through you if that's what God wants.

Now let's look again at this situation concerning *dwelling in Christ*. Sometimes dwelling in Christ we find ourselves in a nonproductive way—don't we? That also fits into the parable of the ten virgins, they all slumbered and slept. This shows that there is sometimes need for a revival.

Luke 13:6: "And He spoke this parable: 'A certain *man* had planted a fig tree in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, but he did not find *any*. Then he said to the vinedresser, "Look *here!* For three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and have not found *any*. Cut it down. Why should it *continue* to waste *space* in the ground?" But he answered *and* said to him, "Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and put *in* manure'" (vs 6-8).

Sometimes we need some digging and dunging. God will inspire us to do that if we go astray from God for an extended period of time. It's three years he's been coming. But the digging and dunging also shows the mercy of God, that He doesn't want to give up on us.

You might say that the man who owned the fig tree in the vineyard was God the Father, and the man who was tending the garden was Christ. So, Christ says: 'No, don't cut this one off yet, don't dig it up yet. Let's dig and dung.' If you need a little 'd-n-d' in your life, dig out the sin and dung in the Word of God for a spiritual fertilizer to get you to produce some good things.

Verse 9: "And *see* if in fact it will bear fruit; but if not, after that you shall cut it down." This ties right in with the parable concerning God the Father, because when we started out here it says, 'Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away.' This is of God the Father.

John 15:6: "**If** anyone does not **dwell** in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up..." We've seen this operation take place within the Church of God—haven't we? *Yes, indeed!* The scattering can be likened unto the hoeing and dunging. How are the fruits going to be produced then? What is going to happen if you are not in Christ?

Verse 6: “If anyone does not **dwell** in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up...” We’ve seen that happen to people, too—haven’t we? In the history of the Church that I read in a book by Gipp. He is a staunch Baptist that believes that there is absolutely nothing wrong whatsoever with the translation of the *King James Version*.

He has a good insight into churches, which is this: Churches start out evangelical, that is, like going and preaching the Gospel to the world and so forth. Then they grow and they reach a certain stage of growth. Then they begin developing into institutions. That is, they begin building buildings and schools, and people are attracted to these things because it’s an institution.

Well, that happened to us, for those of you who were in Worldwide Church of God—correct? *Yes!* It became an institution and people were attracted to the institution rather than being called of God. You had a lot of branches hanging in there that weren’t rooted in Christ, but they were rooted in the institution and in the corporation. They were not only members but also ministers, because the ministry became a job *rather than a service* to the people. It was for the value of a living and paycheck rather than for the value of teaching people the way of God.

So, there has to be these prunings and trimmings. There has to be these hoeings and dungings because that’s the way we are going to be tested and tried and proved, or disproved. Sometimes when you meet people who have been cast off as a branch that has withered up, and you meet them and talk to them (maybe you meet them in the mall, you’re shopping, or in the grocery store) and it is just like talking to a dead branch—isn’t it? Sometimes even the comment has been made, by some who have known severe cases of this that, you look into their eyes and their eyes are virtually dead. These are living things that we are going through.

Verse 6: “**If** anyone does not **dwell** in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned. **If** you **dwell** in Me... [the branch and the vine] ...and My words **dwell** in you...” (vs 6-7). That’s where it has to be because that’s the whole purpose of the covenant—isn’t it? Isn’t that the whole purpose as to why God has called us? That’s the reason we renew the covenant so that the words of Christ can dwell in us, because humanly speaking *without the Spirit of God there is no place in our minds for the Word of God*, because our carnal nature is made of such a way that unless we are converted there is no room for God.

“...My words dwell in you....” (v 7). There’s a way that they get there. I’ll tell you one

thing, you never have the Word of God dwelling in you unless you study it—can you? How do you get what is in your mind unless you put it in there? I have not baptized anyone and attached a funnel hole so that after they are baptized we can stick a funnel there and just run it in. It doesn’t happen!

It’s a process! It is a perfecting! That’s why it is a living relationship. But here in Hebrews 10:16: “This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord: ‘I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.’” You might put: if you desire them. God isn’t going to force it upon anyone. He’s given that choice to us. If we choose to do so He will write them in our hearts and our minds.

Verse 17: “‘And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.’ Now, where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary to offer* [animal] sacrifices for sin.... [That’s the meaning of it because you have the sacrifice of Christ.] ...Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh)...” (vs 17-20).

This again shows a living relationship. And if the words of Christ are dwelling in us, or living in us, and they are written in our hearts and our minds by the washing of the water by the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit by prayer: by study, by faith, and by living God’s way! *That’s the whole process of what you call conversion*.

That’s different than belonging to a church where you zoom in and in 45 minutes all is said and done and you are out the door and that’s it until next week. That is distinctly playing church. It’s not what you *do* when you come into the assembly of the building called a church, because *you, as part of the vine, are the Church*. It’s what you do constantly with your life everyday. This is *quite profound!*

John 15:7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire...” That has to be according to the will of God.

- You don’t ask God to sin for you, if I could put it that way.
- You don’t ask God to do something, that if you did, would be sin. Y
- You don’t say, ‘God, kill my enemy.’
- You say, ‘God, I commit to you the judgment of my enemy.’

It’s a different thing—isn’t it? God will take care of your enemies. I’ve had enemies come after me. God has taken care of them *in His own way*. So, this ‘whatever you desire’ has to be according to God’s will. But the greatest desire that we need to have is

to be in the Kingdom of God—right? *That's the greatest desire above everything else!*

“...And it shall come to pass for you. In this... [or by this means] ...is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (vs 7-8). There's the individual fruit of personal growth and overcoming. There's the individual fruit of doing the work that God wants done by those who are teachers and leaders, and so forth.

Once the fruit has been produced let's not make a mistake. Here's the Laodicean mistake and it has disastrous results, Luke 12:15: “And He said to them, ‘Watch out, and keep yourselves from covetousness...’” That's something we need to be aware of today more than anything else, because there are more things out there you desire that can be had that you can get. If you have them don't set your heart on them. Be thankful, appreciate them, take care of them, thank God for them, but don't set your heart on them because they're all temporary.

“...for no one's life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses.'.... [Is that talking about our age or not? *Yes, it is!*] ...Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, ‘The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly’” (vs 15-16).

When we have an increase in fruits or growth or whatever, let's not do as the rich man did. Instead of giving credit to God and maybe perhaps giving it to those who had need, he became very selfish. It's like the one man that I related to you that I was riding in his car, which was a Rolls Royce, the big expensive model, and he looked at me and said, ‘I don't believe in tithing.’ I about fell on the floor. Very similar attitude here—isn't it?

Verse 17: “And he was reasoning within himself...” He didn't pray to God and ask for guidance—did he? We've all done it—haven't we? We've all thought within ourselves and made our own decisions without praying about it and what happens? It doesn't come out right—does it?

“...saying, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to lay up my fruit?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater ones, and there will I lay up all my produce and my good things. Then I will say to my soul... [you've got it made, buddy] ...“Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest, eat, drink, and be merry”’” (v 19).

We've seen that on the stock market recently—haven't we? Everybody poured their money into all of these things and it was all a lie, and all ballooned up, and many people said, ‘Hurray, I've got it made, I'm going to retire.’ And BAM! it's gone. A very similar thing.

Verse 20: “But God said to him, ‘Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?’” Who are they going to go to? A rich man never wants to leave it, but he can never take it. And even the Pharaoh's who figured: ‘Well, I'll take it with me in my pyramid.’ The thief figured out how to get in and take it anyway. At the funeral of a rich man someone said, ‘Well how much did he leave?’ And someone looked at him and said, ‘All of it.’

So then, here's the lesson, v 21: “So *shall it be* to the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” You have to be rich in faith. It doesn't matter what your personal wealth is. Personal wealth is not going to get anybody into the Kingdom of God. *Spiritual riches* will!

If you bear much fruit, give God all the credit because you couldn't do it without Him anyway. Besides, if we understand that we're just sojourners here in the earth, and that is we just have custodianship over what has been given. In other words we're just stewards. God owns it anyway. You can hold and possess gold and silver but God says, ‘All the gold and all the silver is Mine.’ You can own lands and properties and houses but God says, ‘The earth and the fullness thereof is Mine.’ If we produce fruit spiritually then that is a great and marvelous thing and so shall you be the disciples of Christ.

Notice how He gives us hope through His love, John 15 9: “As the Father has loved Me... [you can't have any greater love than that] ...I also have loved you; live in My love.” That has the same meaning as ‘dwells.’ We have *dwell, remain, dwelling, dwelling, dwell*, now we have *live*: “...live in My love.” That's the ultimate of what we are to do. That's what the perfection of things that we go through are to do.

When you go through sorrow and difficulty and problems and traumas and desperations, that is all to teach you the value of the love of God, because then you realize that the love of God is the only great and remaining and lasting thing that there is—isn't that true? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 10: “**If** you keep My commandments... [that goes right back to John 14:13, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’] ...you shall live in My love...” It's an ongoing thing. 1-John 5 says, ‘Herein is the love of God, that we love the children of God and keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’

“...**live** in My love...” (v 10). That's the hardest thing because we as human beings have a nature that is bent on carnality and hatred and sin,

and so this is a complete opposite thing that God is expecting us to do, which He knows that we can't do without His Spirit, and that we can't accomplish without living within Him and always remaining in the vine.

"...just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love.... [That's the relationship.] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you... [We're going to be dwelling in Him, His Spirit in us, His words in us, and now His joy in us.] ...and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you" (vs 10-12). He said that back in John 13:34. The commandments fall in this order:

- love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being
- love the brethren as Christ has loved them
- love your neighbor as yourself
- love your enemy

There are the four descending orders of love from God. **All of those require keeping the commandments of God.** That's to bring us the joy, that's to bring us the love. Here then becomes the epitome and the ultimate of it:

Verse 13: "**No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.**". He's talking about Himself and what He is going to do. How He is going to do it. Proverbs says 'a friend loves at all times.' Proverbs also says 'the wounds of a friend are to be desired rather than the kiss of the enemy' because it's to help you

Verse 14: "...You are My friends, **if** you do whatever I command you." I mean, this is a great and tremendous thing. We are the *friend* of Jesus Christ. Abraham was called the 'friend of God.' **We are the friends of God!** Why should you ever be discouraged and down to the point that you are ready to throw in the towel and give up when you realize that Christ is your friend. **No! Never!** And that's all a part of the New Covenant and the relationship that we have with God.

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What is so important is this, brethren: When we look at what Christ is teaching us here, if you as a branch remain in the vine, guess what? **No man can take you away!** The only one that takes away is the Father. And that's important. This also shows us something very profound, too. There is such a thing as a falling away or a drying up, and there is such a thing as a lake of fire because the branches are burned—correct? **Yes, indeed!** All of these are very profound and important in connection with our relationship with God, and in connection with how we respond to God and live in Christ and dwell in

His words, and His words in us, His Spirit in us, and all of this together.

Verse 15: "No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father." That is obviously all the things necessary for salvation.

Verse 16 is the key: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but **I have personally chosen you...**" This helps to end the argument about someone appointing himself to do the work of God. You don't choose God to do a work for Him. You don't choose God so that He must save you. God chooses you.

"...and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (v 16). Here's the fourth promise of answered prayer right within the chapters that we have. This becomes an essential and profound part of what we are doing in our relationship with God.

Now then, does this mean that no one can seek God? *No, it doesn't mean that at all!* Let's see some other things here that Christ has taught that we find here. Yes, we can seek God, and yes, He will hear us and answer us, and yes, if we repent and yield to God, He will choose us. We can't demand of God, we can't force upon God, we can't command of God, *but we can seek God.* We seek God on *His* terms, not on *our* terms. A lot of people like to seek God on *their* terms. 'God, if You'll do this for me, I'll repent.' That's backwards! Repent and then let God decide what He's going to do.

Here's the invitation, Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... [Christ is the living waters—isn't He? *Yes, He is!*] ...and he who *has* no money, come, buy and eat..." It costs nothing to do the things spiritually. The Holy Spirit of God is a gift. After all, the whole purpose and the whole meaning as we know of concerning the Passover is eating and drinking Christ—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* He said: 'I am the true bread, which came down from heaven. And any man that believes on Me shall never hunger and shall never thirst.' This is what it's talking about here. This is a prophecy of the Gospel.

"...Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (v 1). This is all spiritual. You have the strong meat and the strong drink—don't you? You also have the milk, the milk of the Word for babes.

Verse 2: "Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread?.... [That's for people chasing off

on religions that have nothing to do with God.] ...And your labor for *what* never satisfies?....”

How many have seen on some of these documentaries showing the Tibetan religion? There is a certain pilgrimage that different of the men do which is this: they put on certain garments and they have certain things to cover their hands and their knees, and they walk so many steps while they are praying. This prayer is just kind of a chant, you know, *mla-mla-mla-mla-mla*, and then they prostrate themselves on the ground and say another prayer. Then they get up and they take a few more steps, and they do this for mile after mile, which is labor. Wouldn't you say that is labor? Labor for something that profits not, and you finally end up at this big Tibetan temple.

Or, you can say the same thing even in churches that call themselves Christian. How many have been so busy with activities; and part of the psychology of keeping people locked into a status of playing church, or living church, or being part of a church is to give them work to do. Keep them busy, have this activity going, put so-and-so in charge of it, and do this and do that and do the other, and get them so busy that they forget about God even in a church that professes God.

That's why there is a great movement even among Protestant churches to stay at home. You can go on-line for Church at Home {churchathome.org} We're not going to be like the others. We're not going to talk about things that human beings relate to in griping and complaining about the church that they just left because they're almost as dead at home as they were when they were in this church that they are complaining about. We're going to tell them that at home what you need to do is right here: **seek God!** We'll show them what the Word of God is. We have to start out with the milk, but we're going to bring them up to speed as quickly as we can. We'll go from milk into chopped liver and then into steak, if I can put it that way.

Now notice, here is what you do to solve the problem of "...And your labor for *what* never satisfies? Harken diligently to Me... [**Listen to God!** That's the whole thing through the whole Bible—*If you will hear My voice.*] ...and eat *what is good*, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.... [the richness of the Word of God] ...Bow down your ear... [don't be hard-headed and unwilling and stubborn] ...and come to Me... [you have to come to God] ...hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (vs 2-3).

That's really a bargain—isn't it? God is saying, 'I'm going to give you eternal life and it's

not going to cost you a cent. It's going to cost you yourself.' That's what it's talking about.

Verse 4: “Behold, I have given Him *for* a witness to the people a Prince and Commander of people.... [who was also a type of Christ] ...Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know; a nation *that* did not know you shall run to you because of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you” (vs 4-5).

This goes into the glorification of Christ, preaching the Gospel and all of those things going out to the Gentiles who then become grafted in, etc., etc. All of those things are there in this verse.

Verse 6: “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.... [We can seek God. God is near. He's not way off.] (and here's how you do it): ...Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [showing repentance and conversion; change of mind and heart; that's what it's all about] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (vs 6-7). That's a great and fantastic promise—isn't it? This is not the way that people normally think. So that's why He says:

Verse 8: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD.” It's kind of foolish if we think we are going to do something for God *our* way—right? I mean, when you really get in and go through the Bible and understand it, it makes everything clear—doesn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 9: “‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” That's why the Word of God is **spiritually** understood. That's what's important.

There is no way, which they have tried to do in the *Contemporary Bible*, remember I brought that to you and read a little bit out of that. That contemporary message is absolutely blasphemous. But what they try and do in the translations is this: instead of faithfully translating the Word of God so that it conveys what God wants, what they do, they say, ‘We have all of these unbelievers out here that don't know the Word of God, so how can we convey it to them in a contemporary language that they will receive it?’

Well, what is happening when they do that then is that they are taking away the spiritual power and punch and meaning from the Word of God to try and make it comprehensible to someone who is antagonistic against the Word of God. The carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. That's why in translating, it needs to

be that the words are faithfully translated because the words that were originally given were given in such a way that it universally applies to all people at all times in all circumstances in any part of the history of the scope of man. Then let God do His work with His Spirit of calling people.

God is not going to be left out of the equation at all because He says v 10: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth...” (vs 10-11). That’s the whole point of anything concerning the Word of God. These are the Words of God that came out of His mouth that He inspired to be written, therefore, they should be translated in such a way that it still projects the Word of God.

“...it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do.” (v 11). God is going to make it happen.

Let’s talk about seeking God. Psa. 63 is how we are to seek God. This is the attitude—when we come to this understanding, which is very important and profound that we need to come to—which is this: *everyday is a new day*. Everything we did yesterday has already been spent and exhausted and there’s nothing more we can do. What we do today will affect what we do tomorrow, but you can’t wait until tomorrow to do everything. So, in relationship to God here’s the best way to do it: take each day as a new day, and each day, if possible, as if you’re waking up in the middle of a desert.

Psalms 63:1: “O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You!...” This needs to be the attitude. There is no person on earth who attempts to seek God in this manner that will not find Him. I don’t care where he is, what nationality he is, what the circumstances are in his life, if he truly does this, God will answer; because God *is* God. Remember how we showed how that the seven Spirits of God are going through the earth seeking those who are seeking Him? *Yes!*

“...My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.” You can tie that in with what we read there.

Let’s come to John 6 because here’s the answer of that. Christ is the answer. Billy Graham has said. ‘Christ is the answer.’ Then he tells you that the church of your choice you attend is the answer. Christ *is* the answer, but here is how this is fulfilled. John 6:35—you come to Christ: “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time.’”

So, if you are coming after God, as it says here in Psalm 63, as in a dry and thirsty land, you are going to be filled. Your thirst is going to be quenched. The satisfaction of God’s Spirit is going to fill you.

Psalms 63:1: “...where no water is.” That’s just the way this world is. It doesn’t have any of God’s Spirit. It’s out there just like a dry vast desert. But he wanted the eternal life. That was his driving force. And that’s what we need to have concerning the New Testament and renewal of the New Covenant when we take the Passover. The driving force behind it is eternal life. That comes through Christ. And that must always be in front of us, just like it is here.

Verse 2: “To see Your power and Your glory... [Rev. 22 says we’re going to see Him face-to-face] ...—as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your loving kindness is better than life...” (vs 2-3). It is better to know God, better to have the love of God, and to have the loving kindness of God than to live in the world. Or as it says there in the Proverbs concerning a poor man that has his bread, righteousness.

Verse 4: “Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness... [just talking about the depths of the understanding of the Word of God] ...and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips when I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches” (vs 4-6). Many times you will have tremendous spiritual experiences at night. That will happen.

Verse 7: “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You...” That’s how we need to follow God. Not in a lazy haphazard way. ‘If I pray, that’s ok. If I don’t pray, that’s ok. If I study, that’s ok. If I don’t study, that’s ok.’ **NO!**

Verse 8: “My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me.” That’s the attitude that we need to have.

See what this leads to, Psalm 62:5: “My soul, wait in silence for God alone... [Notice the single-mindedness. Notice the attitude toward God.] ...for from Him comes my hope. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; **I shall not be moved**.... [That’s something! Do you have your mind set that way, that you will not be moved? That’s what we need to have.] ...In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God” (vs 5-7).

Here’s where we need to come in our lives and our hearts and our minds toward God, Psalm

57:7: “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed...” You *believe God to the very depths of the marrow of your bones*. “My heart is fixed...”

When your heart is fixed then you have faith, and faith from God, you will do this, Psalm 62:8: “Trust in Him at all times... [that means *regardless of whatever the circumstances may be*] ...you people; pour out your heart before Him... [always go to prayer to God] ...God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.” When you do that then you will come to a situation that is most profound. You will understand the world. You will realize that the spiritual things of God are forever, and everything else doesn’t count.

Verse 9: “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie... [We’ve seen that—haven’t we? *Yes!*] ...when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity... [You’ll understand that’s the way the world is.] ...Trust not in oppression, and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them. God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God. Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work” (vs 9-12).

All of those things have to do with seeking God, and those are the ones that God is going to choose. Because as Christ told them, **‘I have chosen you, you have not chosen Me.’** This is how you seek God, and how God makes His choice. He does it because of this attitude and this seeking of God.

John 15:16: “You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain... [This is meaning ‘unto eternal life’ because if it doesn’t result in eternal life then it’s at the end whenever we pass on.] ...so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things I command you, that you **love one another**” (vs 16-17).

He said that because it’s not an easy thing to do with those that He calls. Why? *Because we’re all called from different backgrounds, different walks of life, different everything!* I hate to use the word ‘diverse’ because that is a politically acceptable word in the world today, but when you get a composite of many different people from many different backgrounds, with many different personalities, many different ages, experiences, types of work, it is difficult to love one another.

It’s easy to love your own flesh because they’re part of you. It’s difficult to love someone else that is not loveable. Many of us are not loveable. God called us because we are weak. That’s why we need to work on loving one another constantly. Love doesn’t come naturally, but God

has put us in a situation where that, according to the circumstances of the world and our natural inclinations, we’re going to be *in a very unnatural situation*—aren’t we?

It’s the Holy Spirit of God that gives us the love of God and also gives us the love of each other. What we need to do is constantly ask God to help us love Him and love each other. Part of that includes what is called the word ‘forbearance.’ Forbearance is putting up with the idiosyncrasies of someone else that you don’t particularly care for those idiosyncrasies because they don’t hit you just right. You know what I mean?

How do we handle it? *We have forbearance! We have understanding!* If we love each other maybe some of those things will change—won’t they? It’s like anything else, if you know you’re loved, your behavior is different—isn’t it? If you know you’re not loved, your behavior is also different—isn’t it? That’s why He told us to ‘Love one another. This I command you: love one another. Love one another as I have loved you.’ The reason He said it over and over again is because it’s a difficult proposition for the people of God to really do. We need to really take that to heart and really have the forbearance, and have the love, and have the understanding, and accept each other for what we are and let God do the changing for the things that need to be changed. God can do that.

Verse 18: **‘If** the world hates you... [which it will] ...you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own...” (vs 18-19). That is what is so blasphemous and damnable about the *Contemporary Message*, the new Bible just put out. They want to get it to a world where then the world will love what that says because it’s not really the Word of God.

“...the world will love it’s own...” (v 19) You need to understand this: *don’t go out of your way to offend people, but just realize that sooner or later differences and problems are going to come.* Like the first thing when people find out that you keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, what’s the first thing they ask you? If they find out about the Sabbath first they say, ‘Are you Seventh-Day Adventist?’ Then they find out about the Passover and the Holy Days and they say, ‘Are you a Jew?’ Then you tell them you’re not and they’re completely frustrated. They don’t know what to do because the world is used to hearing what it has been told. And you may lose some friendships over it, because the world will love it’s own.

“...However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this” (v 19). As long as they perceive us as nice and good and kind and that sort of thing, that’s fine. But when you go out

and start preaching the Truth of God there's going to be some hatred come along—is there not? *Yes, indeed!* When you stand for the Truth the world's going to hate you.

Isn't it something if the world hates us and we don't love each other, we're really in trouble—aren't we? Think about that! That's why He said to 'love one another.' And then He said, 'The world's going to hate you'; the world's not going to love you. So, the message is, is that if you don't love God and love each other, how much love is in your life? *None!* We've experienced trying to play church without love—haven't we? We've experienced trying to play church by law rather than grace—haven't we? It's manifest in *the letter of the Law kills, but the Spirit gives life*. That's what we're talking about in all of this here. This is so important.

Now let's see about the world loving it's own. If you want a message that is accepted by the world you've got to preach the way the world preaches. That's why when they heard Christ preach they were astounded because He spoke with authority, not as the scribes. Wherever the apostles went to preach the Word of God, what was it said of Paul? *'Here come these men that turn the world upside down.'* Yes, the world likes to hear what it wants to hear. But when someone comes along and says, 'God says, and this is what God means, and this is what you are commanded to do,' then the world hates you.

Now notice what the world likes, and it comes from false spirits, 1-John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God... [because Satan appears as an angel of light and all that sort of thing] ...because many false prophets have gone out into the world.... [Which says *false spirits come with false prophets*. That's why they have a spiritual impact.] ...By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the* flesh is from God. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist..." (vs 1-3)—which then is the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world is the spirit of antichrist.

"...which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them... [So if you have come out of the world, you've overcome them, don't go back.] ...because greater is He Who *is* in you... [that is Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit] ...than the one [Satan the devil] who *is* in the world. They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them.... [We're not of the world. That's why we're hated of the world.] ...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... [perceive and understand] ...the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (vs 1-6). That's how we understand.

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

Scripture References:

- 1) John 15:1-2
- 2) 1 John 1:6
- 3) John 3:17-21
- 4) 1 John 1:7-9
- 5) John 15:3
- 6) John 7:37-39
- 7) Ephesians 5:25-26
- 8) John 15:4-5
- 9) Luke 13:6-9
- 10) John 15:6-7
- 11) Hebrews 10:16-20
- 12) John 15:7-8
- 13) Luke 12:15-21
- 14) John 15:9-16
- 15) Isaiah 55:1-11
- 16) Psalm 63:1
- 17) John 6:35
- 18) Psalm 63:1-8
- 19) Psalm 62:5-7
- 20) Psalm 57:7
- 21) Psalm 62:8-12
- 22) John 15:62:16-19
- 23) 1 John 4:1-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Galatians 5:22
- Ephesians 5:4-11
- 1 John 5
- John 13:34
- Revelation 22

Passover Preparation V

Fred R. Coulter

We are covering the words of the New Covenant as found in John 14, 15, 16, and 17. You can also look at this as a letter from Christ. You can put it another way: this is a love letter from Christ, as well as instructions to us on how we are to live, because once we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, then we are to develop through prayer, study, and a direct living relationship with God. We have seen that this is hope and love.

He tells you to, John 15:9: "...live in My love. If you keep My commandments you shall live [abide and remain] in My love..." (vs 9-10) That's something you have to do. And you have to work at it. Love is not natural to the carnal mind. That's why the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, people can have a carnal love of family, of nation and so forth, but not the kind of spiritual love that God wants us to have; and we're to live in that love. What comes naturally, and the love that comes from the world then is all the things that come out of human nature. It talks about the works of the flesh, which are the things then we are to overcome in this living relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:19 "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, divisions, sects, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past, that those who do such things shall not inherit *the* Kingdom of God" (vs 19-21).

We need to understand that we cannot produce—in our lives without the Spirit of God, and without a direct living relationship—the love of God, unless we are constantly going to God, constantly yielding to Him, constantly repenting and changing and growing.

Verse 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love..." That can only come from God. That true love—love of the Father and love of each other—can only come from God.

1. **Love toward God.** You love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being.
2. **Love toward the brethren,** that you are to love them as Christ has loved them—which requires an awful lot of forbearance.

From the different backgrounds, and the fact that we are the weak of the world, it is difficult for us to have love—period—let alone love each other.

Because in the world it is more natural to judge, to criticize, and all these things; as Jesus said, 'Judge not, lest you be judged. For with what judgment you judge you're going to be judged.' That is all carnality. God wants us to have forbearance. If God has called someone with a problem, does God know it? *Of course!* How are we to handle it? *We are to have forbearance!*

Verse 22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering... [That's part of forbearance. We are to forebear each other in love.] ...kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts" (vs 22-24). That's a daily thing we need to do. Human nature is going to be there, and it's going to rear its ugly head and so forth, and it's going to keep coming. But we need to keep going to God in repentance and yieldedness to God: acknowledge our faults and our mistakes, and confess to God. He forgives them, and we need to do likewise with each other.

Verse 25: "If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit." That's why the relationship with God cannot be just study and prayer, but *it has to be living*. In the living comes the difficulty, the mental difficulties, because we all live between our ears in growing and overcoming, in 'bringing every thought into captivity to Christ,' and having 'the Word of God written in our hearts and our minds.'

John 15:17: "These things I command you, that you love one another." That's a command! If you think the Sabbath is a command, try this one. This is greater—is it not? If you think we ought to keep the Holy Days, this is greater—isn't it? *Yes!*

So, what do we need to do when we see someone who is a brother or sister in Christ that has a fault or a problem? Let's look at that. Here's what we are to do. Sometimes it will take a lot of prayer. Sometimes it will take quite a while to do it; things are not accomplished overnight. Everyone that God has called is *a work in progress*, in varying degrees or other. But God still loves us, because Jesus said that He loves us, and He said the Father loves us, and so that is where we retain our faith and our hope and our love, because it comes from God and is of God, and that's the whole purpose of our covenant, which the Passover pictures. This is why He gave these words on the Passover night:

1-John 5:16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death..." That's

anything but the unpardonable sin.

- What are you to do?
- Judge them?
- Criticize them?
- Talk behind their back?
- Talk to each other about it?
- Complain about it?
- Criticize it?
- What are you to do?

“...He shall ask...” (v 16). That means he shall pray for the individual. Perhaps not even let the person know that you’re praying for them. If they come to you and say, ‘Hey, I’ve got this problem, will you pray for me?’ *Well by all means do so!* It’s the hardest thing in the world to admit problems, to admit difficulties. We’ll see what the unloving attitude really does.

“...And He [God] will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make *any* supplication to God.... [No, that’s the unpardonable sin.] ...All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death. We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not *practice* sin; for the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself *by the power of God*, and the wicked one does not touch him” (vs 16-18).

We will talk about *the wicked one* here in a little bit and how that affects us. It means the wicked one cannot take you away from God. It doesn’t mean that there will not be problems and difficulties coming from Satan’s side, because there will. That is what we are to do.

- Why is self-righteousness so hard to see?
- Why is it so destructive to love?
- *It is destructive to love!*

Luke 18:11: “The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men... [First of all, there’s the comparison: ‘I’m better than the other person,’ look down on the other person.] ...—extortioners...” Of course, you shouldn’t do that. You can read the newspaper and condemn everyone in the world for all the things that they do—can’t you? *Sure you can!*

“...unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector” (v 11). There’s a comparison. It is a self-righteous thing in criticizing, condemning, and putting down, because that’s what this is. Christ wants us to overcome that. That’s why **He has commanded us to love one another**. That’s very profound and important. Also He makes it very clear that in loving you are also to forgive, because **He makes forgiveness of your sin contingent upon your forgiving others their sins!** That’s very important, and it’s easy to forget.

Here is this Pharisee. He pretty well figures that he’s doing right. Notice in comparing himself, he says: “...I fast twice in the week... [That’s a great religious sacrifice— isn’t it?] ...and I give a tithe *of* everything that I gain.” (vs 11-12). What is so important here is that you can be right without love, and that is self-righteous hate when you come to understand that. The publican, obviously to be condemned, and even he himself knew it. What this tells you is this: ***you can never read another person’s mind***. That is where we do get into trouble and difficulties— isn’t it? *Yes, we do!*

Verse 13: “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled... [we could just put in there, ‘over the criticized dead bodies of others’] ...and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted” (vs 13-14).

In our direct living relationship with God, love ought to bring us humility and loving each other rather than condemnation and all the other things that come out of human nature. That is a command! So, as we come in preparing for the Passover we need to ask ourselves: **Are we loving each other?**

John 15:18: “**If** the world hates you... [and the world will; you can’t please the world] ...you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own....” (vs 18-19). That’s why we’re not to be part of the world. That’s why it’s an impossibility, as we see with the experience of several of the churches in Rev. 2 and 3, it’s an impossibility to marry Satan’s way to God’s way in the case of Pergamos and eating things sacrificed to idols, and the Nicolaitans. Also, it’s impossible to have one foot in the world as the Laodiceans do and one foot in the Church—we need to understand that. The world, when it gets down to it, *will hate us!*

Verse 19: “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this.” Right now we live in a time when it’s not as manifest as it will be. But you can be guaranteed that it will be. The apostles and disciples lived it immediately— didn’t they? *Yes, they did!*

Verse 20: “Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master... [He said that ‘a servant is not greater than his master, neither a messenger greater than he who sent him.’] ...**If** they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also....” That will happen. Now on the other hand,

we cannot go out and be carnally instigating this kind of thing because He also said we need to be 'wise as serpents and harmless as doves.'—that's true. But the persecution will come.

Here's the other side of the coin: "...**If** they kept My word, they will keep your *word* also" (v 20). In talking to the apostles, meaning *what you would be teaching and preaching*. We now have that in the Scriptures so we know what we are doing.

Verse 21: "But they will do all these things to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. **If** I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now they have nothing to cover their sin" (vs 21-22). In other words, they have no excuse because Christ came, and particularly to that generation, and in particular to those that were promised to receive Christ first. Then they have no excuse for what they did. Likewise with us, once we have Christ our *cover* is with Christ. We do have that.

Verse 23: "The one who hates Me hates My Father also... [because you can't have one without the other] ...If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done..." (vs 23-24). John said at the very last that if everything that Jesus ever did were written in books, he said, 'I suppose that even the whole world couldn't contain it.'

"...they would not have had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause'" (vs 24-25). What we find here is hatred of the world, and hatred is against God, because you cannot love God and hate your brother. You are to grow in faith and hope and in love. He makes it very clear here.

Now here is how it's to be done, v 26: "But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of the Truth... [that's what we will have when we receive God's Spirit] ...which proceeds from the Father..." I've already covered concerning the facets of the Holy Spirit in previous sermons leading up to this. But this means that you have direct connection with God the Father and Jesus Christ in heaven above {see sermon series on *Hebrews*}.

"...that one shall bear witness of Me. Then you shall also bear witness, because you have been with Me from *the beginning*" (vs 26-27). What did they do? *They went out and they preached, and their writings were preserved!* They are bearing witness according to what Jesus said there, 'unto the ends of the earth,' still to this day. Isn't that an amazing thing? *That's why we have the Word of God!*

Here we're going to find part of this continues on hope, but you could put there, 'in the

midst of trouble.' John 16:1 "I have spoken these things to you so that you will not be offended.... [it's going to get rough]. ...They shall cast you out of the synagogues; furthermore, the time is coming that everyone who kills you will think that he is rendering service to God" (vs 1-2).

The highest *mass* in the Roman Catholic Church is the Inquisition Mass and the death of heretics, thinking they're doing service to God. When Saul was persecuting the Church, did he think he was doing service to God? *Yes!* When he killed them, did he think he was doing service to God? *Yes!* There is a prophecy of this in Isa. 66:5. Let's see how that happens. It will even happen to those **who claim to serve God; they will do it to you because they do not know God**. Either that or they have been so compromised with the Truth that they count you as *an enemy*.

Isaiah 66:5: "Hear the Word of the LORD, you who tremble at His Word, 'Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, "Let the LORD be glorified." But He will appear to your joy and they will be ashamed.'" It shows that not only is the world going to hate you, but those who claim they know God are going to go even further. Here you have the viciousness of religious persecution unto death.

John 16:3: "And they shall do these things to you because they do not know the Father, nor Me. But I have told you these things so that when the time comes, you may remember that I said *them* to you. However, I did not say these things to you at *the beginning* because I was with you.... [the whole thing is going to change] ...But now I am going to Him Who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have spoken these things to you, grief has filled your hearts. But I am telling you the truth. It is profitable for you that I go away; because if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. However, if I go, I will send it to you" (vs 3-7). This is the operation of the Holy Spirit. It does it in two ways:

1. to the world
2. to the Church

Verse 8 is a key: "And when that one has come, it will convict the world concerning **sin, and righteousness, and judgment**... [the three phases to this] ...**Concerning sin**, because they do not believe in Me... [That's quite astounding —isn't it? That if you don't believe in Christ *that is a sin* —isn't it? Never thought of it that way, but it is.] ...**Concerning righteousness**, because I am going to the Father and you no longer will see Me..." (vs 8-10). As we have covered and will cover on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we receive the blessing of this righteousness, which is right-

standing with God the Father in heaven above. Not just law-keeping in the world, or the laws of the world, but this is the righteousness of God, and the Holy Spirit has to bring that conviction.

Verse 11: "...And **concerning judgment**, because the ruler of this world has been judged." We know that he will be removed.

Now let's see the final act of this judgment coming. We will see that Satan is there to try and bother us and cause us difficulties and so forth. What we need to realize is *we are not of the world!* We overcome the world and overcome Satan the devil, even in spite of his accusations against us. Here's the final act of Satan the devil: He'll do the things of the Great Tribulation, but this is the final act as far as the final judgment coming upon him:.

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels [demons] were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down...' (vs 9-10). Remember, we said that the wicked one *doesn't touch you*. Doesn't say he can't bother you. But he can't take you away from God, even though he accuses you.

"...who accuses them day and night before our God. But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb... [through repentance and justification and righteousness that comes from God] ...and through the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death (vs 10-11). That ties right in with what Jesus was saying here on the Passover night.

The 'ruler of this world' has been judged. Satan was defeated when he tempted Christ, as we see in Matt. 4 and Luke 4, overcame him completely. He has been judged, and his judgment is going to be finished when Christ returns.

Now let's come back to John 16:12: "I have yet many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now. However, when that one has come, *even the Spirit of the truth, it will lead you into all Truth...*" (vs 12-13). What do we have revealed here in these chapters?

- John 14:6—Christ is the Way, the Life, and the Truth—***He is the Truth!***
- John 12:13—"...even the Spirit of Truth..."
- John 17:17—"...Your Word is the Truth."

Combine all of these things together and this gives you the understanding of:

- the Word of God
- the power of God
- your relationship with God
 - ✓ you can believe God
 - ✓ you can trust God
 - ✓ you can hope in His promises continuously

"...will lead you into all the Truth..." Not only is it to just lead the apostles, but it is to lead us and all things in our lives—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* It is a proof, an internal proof, having the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of God leads you.

That doesn't mean you're not going to make mistakes. That doesn't mean that your human nature is not going to rise up against you from time-to-time, which is all part of overcoming.

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God." Not only will the Spirit lead you into all Truth, ***it will lead you into all the Truth that is necessary for you to be saved and to enter into the Kingdom of God.*** It led the apostles into the Truth that needed to be preached and taught and written. It is a fantastic thing to be able to have the Spirit of God.

Verse 15: "Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear... [because that's the spirit of the world: to bind you in fear, bind you in superstition, hatred, malice, wickedness, all the things of the fruit of the flesh.] (But contrariwise): ...but **you have received the Spirit of sonship...**" (vs 14-15) That is the whole goal and key that we need to keep our mind focused on. If we have received the Holy Spirit and are led by the Holy Spirit, we are the begotten sons of God. In this life there can be absolutely nothing greater than that.

What Paul brings out here in the rest of the chapter is to *never let that get out of your thoughts*. Let that:

- inspire you
- give you faith
- give you hope
- give you understanding
- give you endurance in trial

—if you are led of the Holy Spirit; because you are. and have received the Spirit of sonship and are the son of God. So, we have the Spirit of Truth, the Word is Truth, and Christ is Truth. He sends the Holy Spirit:

John 16:13: "...because it shall not speak from itself... [We know it's the power of God, so whatever it does is the power of God; it's going to convey to you what God wants done.] ...but whatever it shall hear, shall it speak.... [just like sound going out, that's what it is] ...And it shall disclose to you the things to come..... [Which it did,

and in particular concerning the Apostle John with the book of Revelation.] ...That one shall glorify Me, because it shall disclose to you *the things that it receives from Me*" (vs 13-14). This is why a continuous, constant, living relationship with God and the covenant that we are in—which we renew every Passover—is so very important.

Verse 15: "Everything that the Father has is Mine; for this reason, I said that it shall receive from Me and shall disclose *these things* to you." That's necessary, because Christ would not be there any longer. He begins to explain that to them, and He says:

Verse 16: "'A little *while*, and you shall not see Me; and again a little *while*, and you shall see Me, because I am going to the Father.' Then *some* of His disciples said to one another, 'What is this that He is saying to us, "A little *while*, and you shall not see Me; and again a little *while*, and you shall see Me," and, "because I am going to the Father"?' Therefore they said, 'What is this that He is saying, the "little *while*"? We do not understand what He is saying.' Then Jesus, knowing that they desired to ask Him, said to them, 'Why are you inquiring among one another about this that I said, "A little *while*, and you shall not see Me; and again A little *while*, and you shall see Me"?''" (vs 16-19). They didn't understand about the resurrection that was going to come.

Verse 20: "'Truly, truly I tell you, you shall weep and lament... [when He's crucified and died] ...but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be grieved, but your grief shall be turned into joy." I imagine so. because they were to be the witnesses of the resurrection that He did, in fact, rise from the dead. Then He explains this joy:

Verse 21: "A woman when she is giving birth has grief, because her time *of travail* has come; but after she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. And likewise, you indeed have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one shall take your joy from you" (vs 21-22).

Let's look at what happened here. Remember, after Jesus was crucified they were hiding for fear of the Jews. They didn't know what to do. The only one who truly believed, when he saw the things at the tomb that Jesus had been raised from the dead, was John. The others didn't. Even Mary Magdalene said, when she saw Jesus and thought He was the gardener, said, 'Where have you taken His body that we may get it?' Never in the history of the world has anyone been resurrected from the dead to eternal life, except Christ.

He previewed some of this by resurrecting and raising from the dead the son of a widow, and a daughter of a leader of the synagogue, and Lazarus. Then after His crucifixion and resurrection then many who recently had died rose out of their graves and went into the city. None of them received eternal life; they were just resurrected back to a physical life. But Jesus was raised to *eternal life*. He could then, as one born of the Spirit, go wherever He desired. He could walk through walls, He could walk through doors, and all of that sort of thing.

Luke 24:36: "Now as they were telling these things... [that is, the two disciples that came back and said, 'We've seen the Lord'] ...Jesus Himself stood in their midst..." 'Now yet in a little while you shall not see Me, and yet in a little while you shall see Me.' Here it is fulfilled right here. He died on the Passover Day, was buried just right at sunset, and put in the tomb. He was in the tomb three days and three nights, resurrected at the end of the Sabbath, and ascended into heaven to be received of the Father. Then at the end of that Sabbath Day He came and appeared to the disciples who were assembled for fear the Jews. So, here is the 'little while' that they would see him.

"... and said to them, 'Peace *be* to you.' But they were terrified and filled with fear, thinking that they beheld a spirit [a demon] ...Then He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I. Touch Me and see *for yourselves*; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see Me having'" (vs 36-39).

So they did. Because John said, 'That which was from the beginning, that which we have seen, that which we have handled.' So John and the apostles did handle Him.

"...for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see Me having.' And after saying this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy..." (vs 30-41)

Now, didn't Jesus say, "You're going to grieve, but you'll see Me again and your joy shall be full"? There He fulfilled it right there.

Verse 41: "But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy... [I guess so] ...He said to them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' [or that is, any food to eat] ...Then they gave Him part of a broiled fish and a *piece* of honeycomb. And He took these *and* ate in their presence. And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me. in **the Law** of Moses and in **the Prophets** and in **the**

Psalms must be fulfilled” (vs 41-44). That shows the three divisions of the Old Testament.

I'm going to mention here that there is a big move to reinsert the Apocrypha books back into the Bible. As a matter fact, most of those that the American Bible Society are printing out now have the Apocrypha put back into it. So, what you really are getting is now a Catholic Bible without the name 'Catholic' on it. That is the Ecumenical Bible. But Jesus made it very clear that it was the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

Now v 45: “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” That is the key thing of the working of the Holy Spirit, to open your mind to understand. And since Christ is directing it, when you read and study the Bible and you understand it, He is opening your mind. As we read before, it is the Father Who is teaching you. So, these are very profound things, brethren, just tremendous.

Verse 46: “And said to them, “According as it is written, it was necessary... [obligatory] ...for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day... [Why not the second day? Why not the first day? You can read in *The Christian Passover* book why.] ...And in His name, repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.... [That's what it's all about, **repentance and remission of sin**, and your relationship with God—direct relationship. That's what it's all about.] ...For you are witnesses of these things” (vs 46-48).

In 1-Corinthians 15:3 we find out that more than just the apostles saw Christ. As a matter fact, it was really quite a contingent of people. “For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures... [both Old and New Testament at this point] ...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” (vs 3-5). Remember, He said, ‘Go into Galilee and meet Me there on the mountain that I appointed you.’

Verse 6: “Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time... [That was an astonishing meeting. This is the only place that we have it recorded that that meeting took place.] ...of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles... [all the apostles, again] ...and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage [or due season]” (vs 6-8).

Now let's come to Acts 1, and let's see not only this private meeting that He had with the apostles, and the public meeting He had with the five hundred, but He did other things, too.

(go to the next track)

This then fits right in with what we're talking about, Acts 1:1: “The first account I indeed have written, O Theophilus, concerning all things that Jesus began both to do and to teach, Until the day in which He was taken up, after giving command by *the* Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen; To whom also, by many infallible proofs, He presented Himself alive after He had suffered, being seen by them for forty days...” (vs 1-3). That's why their joy remained because Christ showed Himself for 40 days, did many things; gave them extra instructions—didn't He?

Because it said: “...and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God... [He gave them a lot of instruction during that 40 days.] ...And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to 'await the promise of the Father, which,' *He said*, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.' So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?'" (vs 3-6). That's what everyone has wanted to know from that time until this.

Verse 7: “And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority.’ That's not the important thing. Prophecy is always interesting. Prophecy is always titillating; and especially when you can see some of it fulfilled before your very eyes, which they did with Christ.

Here's the important thing, v 8: “But you yourselves shall receive **power**... ['dunamis'—*energetic power*] ...when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth.” Obviously, the apostles didn't get there—did they? *No!* That's why we have the written Word. The written Word has gotten there.

Now then, here was their last great experience before Pentecost, v 9: “And after saying these things, *as* they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now while they were gazing intently up into heaven as He was going up, two men... [who were angels] ...in white apparel suddenly stood by them, Who also said, ‘You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven” (vs 9-11).

The message was, ‘Go, get busy and do what He said.’ In other words, this was a graduation speech: ‘Now is the time.’ So, on Pentecost after

they received the Holy Spirit, that was the time; and they did the preaching, and that's why they had the joy. That's why they had the conviction. That's why they had the hope. That's why they had the faith and the love of God. So they went through unique experience because they were apostles.

Notice that all the way through we've seen the promises that God has given concerning prayer. That's why prayer is so profound and important. **Prayer is, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, that direct link between you and God the Father and Jesus Christ.** Now granted, it's easy to get discouraged; granted, it's easy to let human nature come along and drag you down, and so forth. But I want to emphasize how important that it is. And when you pray you need to understand the significance of it.

John 16:23: "And in that day... [the day that He ascended to heaven that we just read of] ...you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever **you shall ask the Father in My name**, He will give you." All you have to do is go through and read the first part of Acts and see what they did. Absolutely fantastic! But here is also a promise given to us. Whatever we ask, of course, *it has to be according to the will of God*, and it has to be *upon our repentance, and forgiveness of God to us*, and us to others. All of those things play into it. So, this is an over-all blanket statement where the other factors come into it.

"...Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you." Who answers prayer? The Father does. Isn't that amazing? That's something! That's why prayer is so significant.

Verse 24: "Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." That's the way God wants it to be. Overcoming human nature really is a joyful thing, though the struggle is difficult. That's why He brought out here about the woman having a child. There's pain and there's grief. But once you get through the trial, and once you get through the difficulty, and once you see the love of God, and everyone's going to go through that.

I guarantee that one thing that all Christians are going to do, they are going to come to the very bottom of the valley of the pit of despair. God will let you go there so that you can look up to Him and realize there's no way out but His. That's what God wants you to understand—"that your joy may be full." So remember, **the Father is directly involved in your life, and you are a brother and a friend of Christ!** That's all a part of the words of the covenant.

Verse 25: "These things I have spoken to you in allegories; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in allegories, but I will plainly disclose to you *the things* of the Father. In that day, you shall **ask in My name**... [He says it twice—you ask in His name] ...and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (vs 25-27).

That's quite contrary to the Catholic doctrine—isn't it? That supposedly the saints intercede, which they don't, because they are dead and buried. Christ does intercede for us as our High Priest, but supposedly Mary makes intercession for us because she supposedly knows Jesus better than we do. So therefore, she can have more influence with her son than your prayers. All of that is a bunch of gobbledygook nonsense and contrary to the Word of God. Jesus said you pray to the Father **in His name**, and the Father Himself loves you, and He's going to answer that prayer. However He does it, He will do it.

Verse 27: "For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God."

Now let's see another glimpse of that relationship and how we need to really keep that in the forefront of our minds always. Living in the world the way that it is, you have got to have something so firm in your mind with it there by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that nothing is going to move you from God. And this is it:

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!" When we, as it were, were led of the devil and out in the—right? *Yes! Now we're called the sons of God.* It's very profound here; the Greek word for *sons* is 'teknon'—meaning *own children*. Now granted, Jesus Christ was the only begotten, unique Son of God, born of the flesh and resurrected from the dead. But we are also the children of God *by begettal* for the Family of God. That's what God wants us to really grasp and understand. Never let that leave your mind and thought, *ever!* And especially when you get to the bottom of the 'valley of the shadow of death,' remember that.

"...the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us..." That means it cannot understand us:

- You're a Christian? *Yes!*
- You go to church on Sabbath? *Yes!*
- Are you a Jew? *No!*

- Why don't you keep Christmas? *Because it's pagan!*
- How could that be?
- You mean you don't keep Christmas or Easter? *No! I keep Passover and the Holy Days!*
- You've got to be a Jew. *No, I'm not a Jew!*
 - ✓ They don't know us!
 - ✓ They don't know what motivates us.
 - ✓ They don't understand these things

—and that's why eventually the world is going to hate us! You can be guaranteed that the laws are already on the books under the Patriot Act I and II, to where all they have to do is just redefine who the enemy and terrorist is. You wait and see, lo and behold, sooner or later we'll be entered in on the list. You can be guaranteed that. That's why you've got to keep this in mind.

Verse 2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be..." Just like when a woman is carrying a child, you don't know who it's going to look like. Even though you can do one of those ultrasounds and tell whether it's a boy or girl, you still don't know what it's going to look like.

Same way with us today; having the Spirit of God and growing and overcoming and having the physical body that we have, we still don't know what we're going to look like until the resurrection.

- What is it going to be like to be a spirit being?
- What is it going to be like to get rid of all the weaknesses of the physical body and the physical flesh?
- What is it going to be like to be resurrected as a spirit being, though you died in the ignominy of physical death?
- It's going to be something!

"...it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know... [we can count on this] ...that when He is manifested... [resurrected] ...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is"(v 2). And that's the whole purpose that God wants us to really keep right there in the forefront of our brain, and let the Holy Spirit lead us in that continuously. That's why He is our Father, and He gives us direct access to Him. That's why Paul said we cry, 'Abba, Father'—correct? *Yes!*

Now let's come back to John 16:28: "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and I am going to the Father." *Then* His disciples said to Him, 'Behold, now You are speaking plainly and are not

speaking *in* an allegory.... [We can understand this. That's different from, 'a little while.'] ...Now we know that You understand all things, and do not need to have someone ask You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.' Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe?'" (vs 28-31).

That's a good question—isn't it? Remember, Thomas said, 'I'll believe it when I see His hands and His feet and His side.' So, eight days later when Jesus appeared He said, 'Thomas, come here. Thomas says, 'Oh, my Lord, my God!' "...**'Do you now believe?'**" The truth is, until Christ was resurrected their belief was not complete. And He explains that:

Verse 32: "Listen, the time is coming, and has already come that you shall be scattered each to his own, and you shall leave Me alone... [and even Peter denied Him three times] ...and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that **in Me** you may have peace...." (vs 32-33).

You are not going to have peace any other way. You are never going to have peace without Christ. You are never going to have peace until you make peace with God through repentance, and prayer, and study, and yieldedness to God. But in Christ you may have peace.

"...In the world you shall have tribulation... [that is true; and they did] ...But be courageous! I have overcome the world" (v 33).

We do have tribulations in the world. And I'll tell you what, the difficulties and problems we're going through now I am sure are not to be compared to what they're going to be in the future. I mean, as we're going through this on this Sabbath right now the American forces are in Iraq along with some other contingencies of other nations with them, and look at what they are going through. You look at how the world is hating us more and more. You know the time is coming when they are going to be itching to carry out their plans to do to us the very same thing.

- And **we** will be the *cause* of it because **we** will not accept the beast and the false prophet.
- And **we** will not accept the false religions of this world.
- And **we** will not take the mark of the beast.
- And **we** will not submit to these things.

If you think you have difficulties now, stick around! These may be only kind of strengthening us and building us up for the things to come.

On the other hand, don't go out and ask for it. I walked into a local supermarket here, and as I

walked in, here is all this display of all the Easter things: little Easter bunnies, little baskets, and all this sort of thing. My human nature said: Boy, that would be so good to just get up there and just throw them all off, and break them to pieces and tell the world what an absolute deception this is.

Well, needless to say, I didn't do it because I'm here and not in jail. But when it comes time for that it will happen. How far down the road it will be, we don't know. But one thing for sure, they will have the ability to know where everybody is at all times—period! You can see that coming. It's going to be one of those things. There is no escaping the future when it comes to you. It will happen! Just look at the trials and tribulations you're going through now as very minuscule. ***He has overcome the world, and through Christ we can overcome the world!***

John 17 reflects not only faith and hope, but love; very profound love, because ***this is Jesus' personal prayer for us!*** Did you realize that? It's Jesus' personal prayer for us. This truly is the Lord's prayer, because this is the prayer that He prayed. The 'Lord's Prayer,' so called, in Matt. 6, is a sample given by Jesus on how we need to structure our prayers. That was not His prayer. This is His prayer. He was out in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed this prayer.

Luke 22:39: "Then He left *the house and* went, as He was accustomed to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He arrived at the place... [a particular place in the Garden of Gethsemane] ...He said to them, 'Pray *that you do not enter into temptation.*' And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw; and falling to *His* knees, He prayed, Saying, 'Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me—nevertheless, not My will, but Your *will* be done'" (vs 39-42). This is a perfect example of how we need to pray. It was God's will that He go through that. He's just reaffirming it.

Verse 43: "Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (vs 43-44). When we read this prayer in John 17, this is part of what He went through.

Now let's see the true Lord's prayer. This is what the Lord prayed. It's interesting that John was inspired to write this. No one else wrote this prayer, not even part of this prayer; only John, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

John 17:1: "Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come... [it's here] ...glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You; since

You have given Him authority over all flesh, in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send" (vs 1-3). That's the whole purpose of it, to know God and at the resurrection to see Him face-to-face. That's profound!

Verse 4: "I have glorified You on the earth.... [through the whole ministry, through His life, through never sinning, through overcoming the world, calling the apostles, everything that He did.] ...I have finished the work that You gave Me to do" Yet, He still had one part of the work that He still needed to finish—right? We're going to see that there are two finishes:

1. John 19:30, the next to last thing that He said: "And so, when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished.' And bowing His head, He yielded up *His* spirit" When it says in John 17 that He finish the work that He gave Him to do, He was also including the coming crucifixion, beginning with the trial that He was soon to have when He was arrested.

Now let's look at the other 'finished.' There are two phases to finishing the work:

- the work to provide a Redeemer, and the way of salvation;
 - and the other one to finish the whole plan of God.
2. Revelation 21:5, "And He Who sits on the throne said... [that's the Father] ...'Behold, I make all things new.' Then He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, '**It is done**.... [Or that is, it's finished. In the Greek it's the same]. ...I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (vs 5-7).

So we're looking for that second finishing line—aren't we?

Through the crucifixion redemption and salvation was opened, and *when it's all done*. It's finished! When that is finished, then the whole plan of God going out to all eternity goes forward from there. That's going to be very exciting—isn't it? Have you ever thought about traveling out in the universe?

John 17:5: "And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You **before the world existed**. I have manifested

Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours... [we all belong to the Father] ...and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word” (vs 5-6). All the words of Jesus were the words of the Father—right? *Yes!*

Verse 7: “Now, they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You. For I have given them the words that You gave to Me; and they have received *them* and truly have known that I came from You; and they have believed that You did send Me” (vs 7-8). That’s the whole process of faith that we are to come to also.

Verse 9: “I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and all Yours *are* Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*” (vs 9-11).

This is the whole purpose of God. And notice what Jesus kept His mind on when He was facing the crucifixion. He is keeping His mind on the whole purpose. He was keeping His mind on finishing the work that the Father had given Him to do. The ultimate purpose, that “...they may be one...” as He and the Father were one. That’s the whole prayer.

That’s the whole purpose of why we are here; the whole purpose and reason why we take the Passover and renew the covenant, and go through the things that we do.

Verse 12: “When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I am speaking *while yet* in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them.... [internal joy] ...I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world... [that’s not going to happen] ...but that You would keep them from the evil one” (vs 12-15). The promise given there—though Satan accuses us day and night—he can’t take us away from God.

Verse 16: “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth” (vs 16-17). That’s what we are to have written in our hearts and in our minds:

- Christ in us, Who *was* the Truth;

- the Holy Spirit *in* us, which *is* the Spirit of Truth
- the Word of God *in* us, Who *is* the Truth
 - ✓ that sanctifies us
 - ✓ that sets us apart
 - ✓ that makes us Holy before God

Verse 18: “Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be **sanctified in Your Truth**” (vs 18-19). There it is again. Have you ever thought about the fact that you are *Holy*, brethren? What makes you *Holy*? *Having God’s Spirit means you’ve been sanctified, and sanctified by the Word of God and in the Truth of the Father!*

Here is a prayer directly for us, v 20: “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word.” Preaching of the Gospel going out. This is always continuously being fulfilled in our lives. Never think that God is against you.

- God is *for* you!
- God *wants* you!
- God *loves* you!
- God *has called* you to eternal life!
- He wants you to overcome!
- He wants you to put away the deeds of the flesh!
- He wants you to grow in grace and knowledge!
- He wants you to be in the resurrection.

That’s what this prayer is all about. And again, the final goal: vs 21-24 tie directly in with the fulfillment of Rev. 21 and 22.

Here’s the prayer for us, all that are Christ’s, v 21: “That they all... [not excluding anyone] ...may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me, in order that they may be one, in the same way *that* We are one” (vs 21-22). *That’s the ultimate goal!*

See sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*, God truly does hate religion, because religion places men in a position of God over people and cuts them off from this knowledge in relationship with God.

Verse 23: “I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one...” That’s why we are a work in progress. We are to be perfected.

1-John 2:5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected.... [That’s how we are to be perfected. It is the love of God that does that, and

it's through the Spirit of God that this is accomplished.] ...By this *means* we know that we are in Him." That goes back as a direct part of what we have just read in John 17.

Here is how we are perfected, 1-John 4:10: "In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us... [and the Father says directly He loves you] ...we also are duty-bound to love one another... [There again, repeating the very words of Christ, right?] ...No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us... [a process] ...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" (vs 10-13). That's a tremendous thing, brethren!

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love... [That's what the whole thing concerning the Passover and renewing of the New Covenant is all about.] ...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love *of God* is perfected... [There are a lot of rough edges to knock off—aren't there?] ...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in the love *of God*; rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of God*. We love Him because He loved us first" (vs 16-19). That's all part of Christ prayer.

John 17:23: "I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one; and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me may also be with Me where I am, so that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; because You did love Me before *the* foundation of *the* world. Righteous Father, the world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You did send Me. And I have made known Your name to them, and will make *it* known; so that the love which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (vs 23-26).

Those are the words of the New Covenant. It is a covenant, and actually when you go back and you review each of the chapters here you will see that in these four chapters, John 14-17, it's also an encapsulation of *our life and relationship with Christ*, the things that we will face and be confronted with, the difficulties and problems that we will have in the world, and how the ultimate goal is to be in

the Family of God as a son of God, and that's what the Passover is all about.

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

Scripture References:

- 1) John 15:9-10
- 2) Galatians 5:19-25
- 3) John 15:17
- 4) I John 5:16-18
- 5) Luke 18:11-14
- 6) John 15:18-27
- 7) John 16:1-2
- 8) Isaiah 66:5
- 9) John 16:3-11
- 10) Revelation 12:9-11
- 11) John 16:12-13
- 12) Romans 8:14-15
- 13) John 16:13-22
- 14) Luke 24:36-48
- 15) I Corinthians 15:3-8
- 16) Acts 1:1-11
- 17) John 16:23-27
- 18) I John 3:1-2
- 19) John 16:28-33
- 20) Luke 22:39-44
- 21) John 17:1-4
- 22) John 19:30
- 23) Revelation 21:5-7
- 24) John 17:5-23
- 25) I John 2:5
- 26) I John 4:10-13, 16-19
- 27) John 17:23-26

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 2, 3
- Matthew 4
- Luke 4
- John 14:6
- Matthew 6
- Revelation 21; 22

Also referenced:

Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

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