

# UNDERSTANDING THE LOVE OF GOD

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## 1. THE FOUR TYPES OF LOVE

We begin a new series on love. It is such a simple topic but there is so much in the Word of God on the topic of love. I just want us to see how important love is in the Word of God. If you can set a firm foundation of the love of God it is going to profit you down here and profit you in heaven.

I Cor. 13:1-3 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. It tells us in the Word of God that love is far above even tongues. We have taught on tongues and we do not undermine the importance of tongues. But at the same time we want to see what the Word of God says of areas that God considers important. It says you can speak in tongues morning till night but if you do not understand love and you do not operate in love, you are an empty can making a lot of noise. That would be what this verse one is talking about. It doesn't mean that you can not pray in tongues loud. It is all right because some times you need to pray in tongues loud. In fact if you thought that praying in tongues loud is not all right then something is wrong with you.

Here the bible wants to emphasize love. And the background of it is in chapter 12 and chapter 14. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 talks about the gifts of the Spirit. And chapter 14 Paul says I pray in tongues more than all of you. So he is a man who has been praying in tongues and who knows what it is to pray in tongues unceasingly and now he is telling you to go up higher than that. If you have not established yourself in tongues, you have to review that and establish yourself in that area before you can go higher.

In verse 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. Even when Paul emphasize prophecy he said I would love all of you to prophesy one by one that all may learn. Paul talks about the importance of prophecy in the next chapter. He is not undermining prophecy. But Paul is emphasizing that love is the firm foundation of our whole New Testament Christian life. The love of God is far above prophecy; is far above understanding mysteries; its far above knowledge; its far above power and faith to move mountains. All of our prophesying; all of our faith; all of our understanding and knowledge is based upon God's love. How can I exercise faith in God? If I know that God loves me and I know in my heart that I am dedicated to God and I love God, my faith is on a firm ground. Do you know that if you have strong love, you have strong faith? Your faith comes forth from the source of love.

Lets look at some human love. For example, Albert loves his son James and James loves his father Albert. Because of the love between them Albert could say, "James I am going to do this for you. I am going to buy you a bible. It is going to come to you on your birthday." Because James loves his father and knows his father loves him, it is easier for him to believe what the father said. And James will go around saying, "I am going to get a bible." And he says, "I am going to get it soon." He could believe his father's word because he loves the father. Now lets take another example. Supposing that the relationship is strained. Supposing that his love is not established. Then the father said I promise to give you this or to do this for you. It makes it harder for him to believe his father's word. See love produces strong faith. And we need to be founded in love. It is far above all these things.

Verse 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. In other words you can do good works and a lot things. You can give everything away. And you can even give your body to be burned. Now that would have brought a lot of attention to this world. It is not normal for a person to give his body to be burned. But yet you could do all these things without the agape love of God. It still comes to square one.

And at the end of this passage in verse 13 So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. Love is the greatest force far above faith; far above hope. Why did the bible say? It's the greatest force. The reason is because with love you could reach into faith and hope. But with faith and hope alone you may not reach into love and develop your faith fully. See it's the greater force because it is greater. You could reach into faith and hope easily with love. We are talking about God's love. And if love is the greatest, then if we teach on the gifts of the Spirit, on all aspects on finances and faith and on other areas then we ought to teach on love too. If love is the greatest we must have a series of teaching on love.

In everything we do we have to learn. We have to be taught how to love. Love is not something that is automatic. We have to be taught how to love. People love not because they are not taught. Just as people don't function in the gifts of the Holy Spirit because they are not taught to function in that area. So people don't know how to move into the love of God and don't know how to relate in the love of God because they are not taught about God's love. All they hear is some wishy-washy kind of worldly love. And they associate it with the love of God. Sometimes they get some feeling and then they think that's the love of God. And when it comes to the body of Christ just because they can not get along with another guy they can not love them. The reason is they don't differentiate between the love of God and the love that is present in the world. They are two separate forms that we are going to see in the Greek word.

Love is eternal. That means that when you grow in love down here it will determine your position in heaven. If you develop your love greatly on this earth you may be unknown in the world but live a perfect life as far as God is concerned. Your ministry may not be in the international limelight. But if you develop love in your heart you are going to be in a position very close to God when you get to heaven. In heaven I want to stick close to Him. One thing we know to be close to God in heaven you have to develop love down here. Otherwise when you go up there the angels would tell you to please enroll in the nursery with all the other little children and begin your life in heaven by learning the ABC of love.

There are four basic Greek words for love. Two of these words are found in the New Testament and the other two are found in Greek literature. All four are found in Greek literature but the bible emphasizes only two forms of love. The first one is the word storge. Storge means family affection. Storge means the love of a parent to a child and a child to the parent. Storge talks about family affection between family members. See the English has only one word for love. There is a certain sense of family affection that you have one for another because you are of the same family. Blood is thicker than water. So you have the inbuilt affection unless something comes in between. In the world today family affection is not strong. Brothers sue brothers in court and there are all kinds of family squabbles. But normally family affection runs strong with those of the same kin. That kind of family affection is the word storge.

The second word is the word eros. Eros speaks of physical love. It is physical love and physical affection as between a man and a woman. And that word has been used today in English literature to refer in that area. Now eros is not necessarily something evil. In the same way love as storge is not something evil. You wouldn't consider the loyalty of people to their own family as evil. In fact the bible says that you are to honor your father and your mother. So you don't consider storge evil. Neither do you consider eros evil. But eros has been perverted by the devil. And the devil has perverted it so much that when people think of eros they think of evil. But God has made it in the Word of God where in the book of Genesis chapter one God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. If they were to be fruitful and multiply, they had to have eros. And I want you to know they have not gone into Genesis chapter three yet when they met the tempter and fell. So God created eros or physical love or sexual love in order for mankind to be fruitful and multiply.

At one time in the church in the Puritan ages they considered anything that is of the flesh evil. As a result of that they have caused people to go beyond what God intended for them. God made you with a body. Your body has passions and desires. The passions and desires themselves are not wrong. If eros was wrong then eating is also wrong. But it is wrong when it is out of control. That is when it becomes wrong. Eating is not wrong. But if your eating habit goes out of control then you have a problem. So eros is not evil in itself. But when it goes beyond temperance and beyond control then it becomes evil. So the devil has perverted all the natural body appetites and caused it to look evil.

You must understand that in the original plan of God eros is not evil. So you must renew your mind to realize this. I had to counsel many Christian husbands and wives who find that they can not function in their physical love to one another because they feel condemned. But God has ordained that eros is a part of His total plan for the husband and the wife. You take it out of the context then it becomes wrong. But as long as that takes place between a man and his wife it is right in the eyes of God. The book of Hebrews says the marriage bed is undefiled. That means it is holy and that which the husband shares with the wife is sacred. Its sanctified and its holy. So eros speaks of physical love. It originates in God's plan. Even before the fall God told them be fruitful and multiply. They would have to experience eros in order to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis one. So it did not start in Genesis three. So storge is family affection. Eros is physical love.

Then we look at the third Greek word, which is the word phileo. Phileo speaks about friendship love. It talks about friendship that is established between various people. It can even go to the extent of a friend that is closer than a brother. So phileo speaks of friendship love. And it is a very broad word. It covers everything that has to do with the relationship of one person to another person with a friendly affection. Phileo speaks of being endeared, as a friend just like I am endeared to the whole church and the church would be endeared to me. So there is an endearment. And within the family they have storge love and phileo love. For example between a parent and a child as the child grows up and as they live together under the same roof phileo love comes in. So Albert has storge love for James. James would be able to respond to Albert and say, "I storge you." See storge is a family affection. As James grows up they not only become father and son, they become friends. Your father could be your

friend too, someone to consult. So then James could also say to his father, "I phileo you." Albert could also say to James, "I phileo you."

So phileo love extends to cover all other areas. Phileo talks about being endeared to another person. It speaks of those nearest and dearest sometimes without the relation of blood. Jonathon and David in the bible had great phileo love for each other. They had so much love for each other that they made a covenant. That is phileo love working. And between a husband and a wife they could say to each other I love you. In Christian circles we are so used to say, "I love you," to each other. That when it comes to your special friend you have to add, "I love you very much." I remember when I was courting Amy who is now my wife, I had to tell her that she is more special to me than anybody. I had to put it as, "I love you very, very much." I had to add in more adjectives to differentiate the quality of my love for her. See the English language is very limited. In the Greek they could have said it very easily.

Within the family they have storge love and between husband and wife they have more than storge love. They have eros love where they could open themselves up to one and another and move into a unity both of body and of soul. Then they have phileo love. So between husband and wife they could also say, "I phileo you." So I want you to understand how phileo love covers the other areas of storge and eros also.

And the same word phileo is the same word that has also been used to refer to how our Father loves Jesus Christ. We know that God loves Jesus Christ with agape love. But God loves Jesus Christ with phileo love too. Phileo love speaks of being endeared one to another. And the New Testament uses phileo a lot. The New Testament tells us to phileo each other. We express phileo to each other. When we have been together for some time because of phileo love you are endeared to one another and when you have to part you feel sadness there. That is because you have been endeared to the person you love. Phileo love covers all our relationship with each other. We would have to experience not only agape love with each other we experience phileo love with each other because we become friends with each other. You are my parishioners you are also my friends. I always treat all of you as friends. I don't introduce myself to you and say I am Reverend, pastor, apostle, evangelist etc. I may be a pastor but I am also your friend. A friend is someone who stands along side you. Let me tell you that this attitude is not only supposed to be in the church. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our friend. He is the King of Kings. He sits at the right hand of God all authority in heaven and earth and hell is in His hand. And yet He says I am your friend. If our Lord Jesus could do that, then how much more we also should do that.

That is why when I relate to another person whatever title they have like "Baron" or "Duchess" I will always relate to their position but also as friends. Of course you give respect where respect is due. You give honor where honor is due. I don't mean that you don't respect or honor. Those of you who are in business know it is one thing to have a business partner and it is another thing to have a business partner who is also your friend. It is one thing to work for the boss, but it is another thing when the boss also is your friend. When phileo is not there in your office there will be stress coming in. So when the bible talks about phileo love it covers all areas of endearment, of one person with another with a friendship love.

Then we come to the most important. This word is called agape love. The word agape is a very special word. Very rarely was it used in the Greek literature. The word agape

was only used a few times in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). When Jesus and Paul came, the word agape became the most common word in the New Testament. The word agape is found all over your New Testament. Isn't it a wonder, its found all over the New Testament and its so seldom taught. We only take agape for granted but we are not taught what agape involves. So it is very important for us to develop agape love.

Agape love is something different from all the others. Storge love, eros love and phileo love are based on your emotion and affection. You can not say, "I phileo you," to a stranger whom you have not been emotionally tied and linked with. When we are together and do things together we get linked together emotionally. If ten of you were to go to a camp, and you sit down and open your hearts one to another, you share and you pray, you cry and you laugh, when you come back there is an emotional bond. When the emotional bond comes in phileo love gets involved. And when people fall in love eros love gets involved. People of the same family have an emotional affection for each other. Storge, eros and phileo are based on emotional bonding. Which is something good also if it is positive. Its only becomes wrong when it is something that steps beyond the boundary of where it should be. So storge, eros and phileo are based on the emotion. That means its limited. You can only show eros love to the one life partner God chose for you. Storge love you can show among those in your family kin. Phileo love you can show to those whom you know and who had been endeared to you.

So when Paul was using the Greek to describe the love of God, he had to look for a word that goes beyond this love because God's love reaches beyond the people you know. Agape love not only reaches people you know, it also reaches to your enemies too. You can not say, "I phileo you," to an enemy. You are not bonded to them emotionally. So Paul in writing the New Testament reaches out for a word to describe this love great love that God has. And this love is described in Matt. 5 where it says God is good to the just and to the evil. God sends rain on the just and on the unjust. This is the type of love that God has for His people. This type of love is where God seeks the highest good. This is the kind of love that God seeks the best out of the person. It seeks the highest good, the best, whether the person is evil or good. The New Testament authors were struggling for a word to describe this kind of love.

If you have agape love, you can look at a criminal and ask, "What is the best good that I can do for this person?" Remember seeking the highest good does not mean that there will be no punishment. Let me give you an example. When a child misbehaves, like for example he has picked up foul vocabulary from their non-Christian friends, you know that if you let your child continue in that way, the child will grow up to be an infidel. So what do you do? The parents know that it is not good for this child. If this child goes this way the child will end walking in the path of destruction. The child will destroy himself. So the parents know that this is not for the highest good. And so the parents discipline the child. So this love that God has for His people and His creation is not love that is just saying love, love, love without punishment or judgment. It is the love that seeks the best good. When a chastening needs to come, the chastening comes forth. There is still punishment because of the highest good. But yet this love that God has reaches to those who love God and to those who hate God.

Storge could not describe this love. Eros can not describe this love. Phileo can not describe this love. It is a love that is not based on emotional bonding. Finally they

found the word to describe this love, the word agape. The agape love of God is the love that reaches for the highest good. When you look at a person no matter what their weaknesses are, no matter what their bad points are, or their good points or their strong points, you always see and say, "What is the best good I can do for this person?" And God does that.

Agape love is firstly, universal. John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God so agape the world; God so loved the world. It is a universal love. He loves each and everyone. He doesn't love you for the color of your skin. He doesn't love just one race. He doesn't love a particular tribe or clan. He loves every race, every person in this world. He doesn't just love the Israelites. It says God loved the world. It did not say God loves the Israelites. God loves the Arabs too. God loves everybody. It is a universal love. And if your heart has not been touched by agape love, you will probably still be biased or prejudiced against another race. If you have a prejudice in your heart against another tribe or race or even people of different social position, your heart has not been touched by this agape love. All you have is phileo love. You could only love those who are emotionally bonded to you. You can not love the agape love. There is where the body of Christ falls short. They are still basing their love on phileo love when God wants us to base our love on agape love; a universal love to everybody without prejudice, without consideration of their worthiness to be loved. It's a universal love.

Secondly it is an eternal love. It remains unchanged. You see phileo love changes. Sometimes when you are not with a person and you are relating with another one, your emotional bonding becomes stronger with the latter and weaker with the former. It changes from time to time. But agape love is unending. It is eternal. Look at Rom. 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothings present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love (agape) of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. You can not stop this agape love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It keeps flowing from the heart of God. It seeks the highest good all the time. Nothing can separate you from this agape love of God. God sits on His throne with benevolent love for all and everyone. No wonder the hymn writer caught a glimpse of that love and he said O the love of God where every man on earth ascribe and where every stork whose feathers they used for writing. And where the sky made of parchment to be the scroll to write on. And where the sea to be the ink bottle to write the love of God. And the sky can not contain the love of God.

The love of God is so great, so unending it never changes. Let me tell you Christians are basing their love on phileo love. When someone is good to them they are good to them. When someone is bad to them they are bad to them. What kind of love is that? Phileo love. It's the love that is based on emotional bonding. But the agape love of God says, "I don't care what you do. I don't care who you are. I will love you. I will seek the best for you. I will seek the good things for you. I will seek to do the good things for your life. I will lift you up that will bless your life. I will make you a better person than you are. I want to make you better than you are." That is the agape love of God. It is eternal it never changes. And if your love changes to another person your love is based on phileo. It is not based on the agape love of God.

God demands that those of us who believe Him should exercise this agape love. Isn't it amazing among all the commandments of Jesus, like His command to go out and preach the gospel, His command to heal the sick, there is one main commandment He emphasize. Only one, love one another; Jesus used the word agape. Have agape love for one another. And this is the main commandment our Lord Jesus Christ emphasized. He emphasized it again and again. And how little it is taught. We are taught faith, we are taught deliverance, prophecy, gifts of the Spirit but the people of God are not taught agape love. They are not taught the strength and the love of God for His people and for one another. Because we are not taught, because we hear not we understand not we don't operate it.

God wants a revival in these last days. How do you think that the body of Christ is going to be one? Jesus has prayed for it and it will happen before He comes. Jesus said they would have love for one another. So the revival is not only the revival of power and miracles. It is a revival of the agape love of God. That's the revival that God is bringing forth, a revival of His love. Being in the ministry in the church and in the body of Christ many times people have come to me with their comments about other people. But many of them have no agape love. They don't understand the love of God. They only want to do what they want to do. They do not seek the highest good. Many times people seek revenge. It's a vindictive judgment. Not a benevolent judgment. If you understand agape love you will look at the person and say what is the best good for this person before you take any actions. You won't be looking at the person and say since this person has done this, therefore this course of action must be taken against him. This must be done to them. You won't have that attitude any more. You will look at the eyes of another person and say, "I want to seek your highest good," when you have agape love.

Thirdly agape love is an underserved love. Rom. 5:6-8 While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. Up to verse 7 it would still be phileo love. Phileo love can bring you very far for someone whom you love very dearly you may even be willing to die. But to die for your enemies takes agape love. Its one thing to die for a good man and someone you loves. But it takes agape love to die for your enemies.

Verse 8 But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For, if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Only agape love will reach out to the enemies and say no matter what you do to me I still love you and die for you. And it is this same love that our Lord Jesus has for us while we were yet sinners who don't deserve such grace. We don't deserve it. But He loves us. He loves us and He seeks our good. When you seek the good of another person you don't count whether they deserve it. You only want to help them. God looked down on earth He saw the world dying. He saw the world going to sin and hell. Some were cursing God. Some of us don't love God. Some of us are rejecting God. All of us were enemies of God. Yet He says I will seek your highest good. He knew the best for us. He sent His only Son while we were His enemies. We never deserve it; it's the agape love of God.

And God tells us today when Jesus spoke on the Mount in Matt. 5 He says love your enemies. He is giving you a new covenant. In the old covenant it was an eye for an



eye, a tooth for a tooth. But in the new covenant which Jesus was describing in Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. He says what good is it when you do good to another person. What difference is it from an unbeliever? But He says, "I tell you: love your enemies and do good." You see agape love seeks the highest good. Do good to those who hate you. That is why agape love is only possible when you are born again. It takes a miracle of the new birth. Unbelievers, non-Christians are not capable of agape love. It takes the love of God to be shed abroad in our hearts to be able to love everyone, universally eternally and giving an undeserved love. It takes the agape love of God to love as He loves. That is the standard of God's love. His Holy Spirit has shed abroad His love.

It tells us in chapter 5 of Romans verse 5 Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. When you were born again the love of God was placed in your heart. You have been touched by the agape love. Then Jesus turns around and says go and love others too. Are you able to love those who are not emotionally bonded to you? Are you able to love those whom you never know? Only agape love can help you to do that. Are you able to love all equally? Only agape love can do that. It is "unfavoritism." He loves all equally. And the Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus. It is an equal love to all because it's the highest good of all.

I want you to bow your head in prayer and let the Holy Spirit search your heart this morning. What is the level of love that you have been walking and functioning in? Unless it is this love of God you fall short of His glory. You fall short of His standard. What is the level of love that you allow it to flow from your heart? God has already given His love. It has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. You can experience this love and you can share this love.

## 2. PERFECTED BY LOVE

We are covering on the subject of love. And you will notice that there is no other way to the perfection of Jesus except through His love. If you try to be perfect by His laws and just by truth alone you will never achieve it. Perfection comes through His love. Through His love we learn His truth. Through His love we began to comprehend truth. Perfection is always through love. We have been singing the song “To Be Like Jesus”. If we want to be like Jesus we have to start on the love side not on the justice side. Justice demands judgment. But love demands mercy.

Turn to the gospel of Matthew chapter 5 in the Sermon on the Mount in verse 48. You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Definitely it is the will of God for us to be perfect. Otherwise Jesus will not make this statement to His disciples, “Therefore you shall be perfect.” God intends for His people to be perfect as our Father is perfect. The only question is how do we achieve that perfection? We will see through this series that the whole Sermon on the Mount is based on love. We will compare the scriptures and we will show that every fruit of the Spirit is found in that Sermon on the Mount. Perfection flows from love. The gospel of Luke records for us the same Sermon on the Mount. But it records a few extra phrases that will give clarification to this passage on how to be perfect. How are we to be like our heavenly Father in perfection?

Turn to the gospel of Luke chapter 6:36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. So now we begin to understand how to be perfect. The Word of God tells therefore be perfect as your Father is perfect. The same word that was heard by a different disciple he also remembered that Jesus said therefore be merciful as your Father is merciful. We can never be perfect unless we understand the mercy of God. Perfection flows from God’s mercy. It was the same Sermon on the Mount. And it is recorded in a different phrase, mercy.

Now mercy progresses from love. Because of God’s great love He is able to show us mercy. And if it was just God’s justice and law we would all be judged. Justice demands judgment. But love demands mercy. So to be perfect we have to have mercy. To have mercy we have to have love because God is love.

Turn to I Jn. 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

Here is a statement that the apostle John made saying that if you know God you will love. It will come forth in your relationship. Many times people claim to know God, know the great doctrine of God, to know sanctification, justification, predestination and all those huge doctrines of God. They know the bible from Genesis to Revelation. But all our knowledge if it does not produce love comes to nothing. In other words it will just remain knowledge about God. To know about God and to know God is different. How many of you have heard of Abraham Lincoln? You know about Abraham Lincoln. We know something about him. He was tall and he was President of the United States. He was assassinated. We know about him. But if I were to ask, “How many know him personally?” None of you will be able to put up your hand. To know about and to know is a different matter. So many times people know about God. But they don’t know God. To know about God is just to receive information or

knowledge concerning someone. But to know a person is to have a relationship with an individual. So to know about God is just to have a huge amount of knowledge about God. But to know God is to have a personal living relationship with our Father.

The bible says that those who know God will be able to love. Those who do not know God do not love. Or he put it the opposite way. He says those who have learnt to love are because they know God. But those who have not learnt to love do not know God. And those Christians who do not know how to love one another the way Jesus tells us they do not know God. They may know a lot about the bible. They may know a lot of doctrines. But everything that we know in the end must come down to the level where we could relate to another individual whether they are lovable or unlovable.

As we have said there are four kinds of love, storge, eros, phileo, and agape. The first three types of love storge, eros and phileo are based on emotion. But agape is based on our will, our decision to love. It is not based on an emotion. So many Christians are confused with the different kinds of love therefore they can not practice God's love the agape love. He who does not agape does not know God. He has not comprehended how to love one another. Can you imagine we can live on this life until Jesus comes maybe some of us may live up to 70 and some 120. But as you pass through this life and you go to church and learn the doctrine of God, you could have victory and success on this earth, in the long run it still comes down to whether you are able to relate with people better. So as Christian we must realize that this year you are supposed to relate better with others than last year. And next year you are supposed to relate better than this year. And if you can not measure your progress you have not grown to know God. You have only grown to have more knowledge. The more you grow in God the more loving you become. If you have not become more loving you have to examine your life because all you are concentrating on is the knowledge of God and not knowledge personally of God.

The measure of our progress in God is our ability to love one another. All of us to a certain extent develop different ability to love people. Some people because as they are growing up they come from broken homes they have no ability to love others. And oftentimes these people grow up to be criminals. They vent their hatred on society. We are talking in reference to human love first. Whereas others who have received a lot of love and attention and affection when they were small, as they grow up to a certain extend they have a larger capacity to love others. Yet we find that human love comes to a certain limit. You can love and love and then you come to a certain limit where your capacity runs out. But isn't it wonderful that our Father God's capacity never run out. His capacity to love us never runs out. It just keeps flowing from His very heart.

We say God's love is eternal, is inseparable. It tells us in Rom. 8 that no angel, no demon, no death, nothing can separate us from the love of God. That kind of love we are talking about is called the unconditional love. It is a love that flows from God's heart and that is not dependant on the recipient. Because God loves us even while we were yet sinners. He saw the good in us and He love us into His goodness.

Here in I Jn. 4 it says in verse 7 Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and know God. If you are born of God you are having the ability to love God and then you know God. Verse 8 He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. When the apostle John made this statement that

God is love he is saying more than God has love. God not only has love. God is love. His love itself is personified. His love is flowing. Every part of His being is love and mercy flowing forth. All those who have come face to face with God like Moses will see His love. Moses saw the back part of God. What did God revealed – His love. God proclaim His long suffering and His mercy. See God Himself is love. Love is a part of Him. Love is His presence. We sing, “Holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty.” I remember that holiness of God is filled with His love. To be in the presence of God is to be in the presence of love. So there is no way you could be in God’s presence without being in God’s love. God’s presence and love are inseparable. When we say God has love it means the quality of God’s love is separate from His being that He has love.

Let me illustrate here. We say that James has the bible. That means that James and the bible can be separated out. James is a person and the bible is a separate part of his being. He just possesses it. And if I say that James is the bible. What do I mean? That means James is a walking bible. If you ask him any question on Scriptures he would answer you correctly and immediately. He is the bible. It’s a different matter. That means there is no way I could separate James from the bible. The bible is him and he is the bible. When I want the scriptures I just read him.

The bible says that God has love. It would have meant the quality of love is separable from God. But when the bible says that God is love, it means that is inseparable. There is no way you could dissect it out. To dissect love from God is to dissect God Himself. There is no way you could separate the quality of love from God. The bible says certain things about God. It says God is holy; it says God is light. When the bible applies the word “is” about God it means that there is no way you can separate God. Lets look at the phrase God is light. When it says God is light then it means there is no darkness in God. Light is a part and parcel of His being. To remove light would be to remove God. And the opposite of light is darkness where the devil is. So its inseparable. God is light; God is holy; God is love. Love and God are inseparable. It is the living force from His being. There is no way you could divide them.

Having understood that God and love are one, then we see that to be in God’s presence is to be in His love. Which is why John is saying here the reason he made those statement saying that he who loves know God. They are born of God and they know God. He who does not love does not know God. The reason he say it is because God and love are inseparable. Like the Word of God. If certain parts of the Word of God have become a part of our lives, we can not be separated from that Word of God because it’s a part of our very flesh and bone. Look at Jesus Christ in I Jn. 1:1 It says that Jesus was the Word. He was the Word made flesh. And John says we have touched, we have handled the Word of life. John is saying that Jesus was the Word personified. If you want to see what a walking Word is like look at Jesus. Jesus was the walking bible. Everything that was in the bible came from Him.

When we say that Jesus is the Word lets illustrate here. I Jn. 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

In verse one and two it clearly talks of Jesus as the Word of life. Jn. 1:14 it says He was the Word made flesh. He was the logos. This bible is the written Word. Now the written Word came from the living Word. Which one started first? The living Word. And the living Word was revealed. Let's supposed Timothy is the Word personified. If he said that he is the Word personified it means that he and the Word is inseparable. When you say the bible you have contains the written Word it means that he for example is the Word personified. Lets say he represents Jesus Christ the Word in person. Jesus Christ puts forth a part of His Word and spoke it to man. So it became the written Word. So the written Word came second. It came from the person who was the Word. And the person who is the Word will always be in line with the written Word. Or rather the written Word will never contradict the living Word.

In the same way love was in God first. God is love, love is God. The only way we could understand love is by what God does. The only way for us to understand the Word of God is by what Jesus did. By His acts and by His spoken words we understand what the Word of God is like. We understand the laws of God; the knowledge of God through His spoken Word. What Jesus did and through all creation and generation, everything in the bible from Genesis right to Revelation when it was spoken it had the Trinity together, The Father the Word and the Spirit. And all of it flows through Jesus Christ. It was revealing Jesus Christ. Everything that have been spoken to man has always has an instrument and a connection to Jesus Christ who was called the Word. So God reveals His Word through the life of Jesus.

In the Old Testament we see glimpses of the Word here and there in a prophet here and there. But when Jesus Christ came to the planet earth and lived and walked and talked among men, men began to see the fullness of the Word. We began to see the fullness of what the Word was like in the life of Jesus Christ. Now if Jesus were the Word, everything He did and spoke would have been the Word. Everything He did would have been the Word. Everything He lived would have been the Word. And all that He said, all that He did, all that He lived was recorded for us in the written Word. It proceeded from the living Word. It says in the Word that God is love. Love is a part of God's being. There is no way you can understand love without understanding God. Now if God is love every act of His is love because love is a part of His being. Every word that He speaks is from His love. Everything He said and does is from His love because it's a part of His being.

If I say that you are a human being, everything that proceeds from you would be as the works of a human being. Look at the things around you. This cupboard was the work of a human being. The chair you have is the work of a human being. So we can classify everything as from a human being. You see buildings, you see buses, you see roads, everything around you are works of human beings. Now the works of a human being and the human being are flowing. The works came from a human being and it reveals the existence of a creature called human being.

In the same way God is love. Everything that God does has love involved. You can not separate love from His acts; love from His words; love from His being. Everything He said and does breathe with the life of love. That is what the apostle Paul meant when he says that the gifts of the Holy Spirit which come forth from the Spirit of the living God has love involved. Here is how you tell a genuine gift of the Holy Spirit from a false counterfeit – love. Jesus talks about false prophets that come. How do you tell the difference between a false prophet and a true prophet? By their

fruits you shall know them. By their lifestyle. Because everything that proceeds from the devil have the devil's nature. Everything that proceeds from God will have God's nature. So when the devil sends a false prophet, the false prophet can do some imitation tricks. But there is no way that they could demonstrate a degree of love that is called agape love. So Jesus says you can recognize by the product of love. When you see all these false prophets you will find that they always contradict the written Word and they always contradict the nature of God. What they do is never in line with the love of God. Having understood that God is love that His existence is love. In His presence is love. Every time you worship God and you experience God's presence. If you want to know the real presence from the false presence, the real presence of God has love involved. Whenever you are in God's presence you sense the fullness of His love. His love comes forth and there is no fullness of God without the presence of His love.

Look at Eph. 3:14-19 For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

It says that we have to be rooted and grounded in agape love. There is no way you can reach perfection without being perfected in love. The next time you are thinking of getting angry with somebody else. The next time you are thinking of having a bad relationship with somebody else. You have to remember that the poor relationship that you have with another person is going to cause imperfection. It is going to cause you to be beyond or below the standard of perfection. How you relate to another person is going to determine the measure of God's presence in your life. See God's presence and love go together. When God comes love comes because God is love. When God goes loves goes. God and love are linked up together. In fact there is no way we could have understood love if God has not sent His only begotten Son to show us what love is like. God demonstrates His love and tells us about love and how it operates. When God's presence comes love comes.

Paul is applying that truth positively when he says being rooted and grounded in love. Who did you get grounded and rooted in? God. Many times we want to be perfect and we always put it in a mystical and theological fashion. You say I want to be in God, like God. Tell me how are you going to be in God, like God. See we left it in the theological circle. You go round and say I want to be like God. On the practical aspect there is no way you can be like God without being like love. So Paul is simplifying the process to tell us how to be like God. To be like is simply to be like Him in His love. To be rooted and grounded in love. People go round saying I want to be rooted and grounded in God. To be rooted and grounded in God you got to be rooted and grounded in His love. Love and God are inseparable. So Paul knew the key that is why he knew how to pray. So he prayed for the Ephesians and said I pray that you may be rooted and grounded in love. When you are grounded and rooted in love, you are rooted and grounded in God. See how important your relationship is with another. The test of love is in relationship.

Lets continue. That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, what is he talking about? Love. The bible says the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Which means the whole earth shall be filled with the presence of the Lord. Which means the whole earth shall be filled with the love of God. In heaven love is everywhere because God's presence is in heaven. And everywhere where the presence of God is there is the love of God. Paul is praying for them that they all may together understand the great height, depth width and length of God's love.

What does width, length, height and depth speak about? Four dimensions, these are all dimensions in human terms. We have to come to a stage to realize that God's love continues sideways, forward, downwards, upwards in all direction. Do you know that we always draw a line where love ends? When they grow up some people draw a line around only their family. That is only storge love. Then after that they draw a line among those whom we know. That is only phileo love and eros love. All these three kinds of love have a limited dimension. Eros is only between a man and a woman. Storge is among family. Phileo is among your friends. These all have a dimension. There is a limit to its dimension. But agape love has no limit. It draws a huge circle that covers all of eternity. Which is beyond our comprehension. Which is why Paul says that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width, length, depth and height, the love of God that is so far reaching.

And some times we draw people outside the circle of our love. How much love do you intend to show to another person is determined by your free will. Many time people say if only I have that love. What they are saying is if only I have that feeling. Do you know that God's love you have to love by faith? Everything that comes forth from God has to be by faith. If its God's love it proceeds from faith for without faith it is impossible to please God. In God's love you love because God loves. You can not claim that you don't have the love of God in your life if you are born again. Look at I Jn. 4:7 it says that he who love is born of God. The fact that you are born of God is the only ability and the only qualification required to have agape love. The only qualification to have agape love is to be born again. When you are born again God's love is in your heart. You possess God's love. As long as you are born again God's love is in your heart. In Rom. 5:5 it says and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. It says that when you are born again the love of God has been, not will be, past perfect tense. It is something that has already been accomplished. When you were born again God's love has been poured. I am sure all of you know the difference between pouring and sprinkling. It did not say that God's love has been sprinkled. It says God's love has been poured that is without any discrimination. Everyone of us who is born again the Holy Spirit has poured God's love into you.

You say, "Brother how can that be?" The bible says that you have received a new spirit and you have the Holy Spirit inside you. Now your spirit is a hundred percent like God. And being like God it has a hundred percent of God's substance of love. You were made in the new image of God. Your whole spirit man is bubbling with love. It is not just a little drip. It is not just a little sprinkling. It is a pouring into your heart. You have more love and you have a greater capacity to love than you are deciding to release. Your capacity to love is enlarged to the capacity of God. Understand this very carefully eros love, storge love and phileo love has a limited

capacity. But agape love has an unlimited capacity. And when you are born again it says the Holy Spirit has poured His agape love into your heart. Not only do you have agape love but you have it in abundance. God changed your heart when you are born again. To make you and to give you an ability to love with the same capacity like God which is an unlimited capacity. It will never run dry.

God is telling us to build our homes, build our families, build the churches, build our relationships on agape love. You know there are situations in life where you need agape love. Your own capacity runs dry tap on the love from the Spirit. Love is the fruit of the Spirit and not the fruit of your flesh. Love is from your spirit not from your head, not from your soul, not from your body. It tells us here that love is in great abundance in our heart. Having settled the fact without controversy. Having settled the fact that there is love in everyone of our hearts. The question is why are people not releasing it? Because they did not see that it is theirs. If you keep on having in your mind the fact that I am limited in your love and capacity to love, of course you will act according to what you believe. By that kind of thinking you limit God's love.

But when you accept the fact that God has put His capacity to love in your heart then your mind get renewed and you began to act in the love of God. It is not a feeling. It's the accepting of what He says. Then you will be able to love whether you feel like it or not. Do you know that the justice of God that looks down on us would have zapped us all if it has gone by feeling? The bible tells us that God loves us while we were sinners. Do you know as sinners we provoke the wrath of God? Do you know that sin angers God? Sin provokes His wrath. If God were to just go by His feelings or wrath we will all be doomed. But His love came forth. His capacity to see the highest good in our life never ends.

Ephesians chapter 3 that you may know the width, the length, the height and the depth. Even among Christians circle sometimes we say love, love, love but when we come to a certain brother or sister, we say he or she can not into my circle of love. Then we draw them out of the circle and continue with our lives. What we are doing is that we have not understood the length, the width, the depth, the height of God's love. Here is how Paul say how do I comprehend and understand with the rest. For example, you may be able to love everybody but there is a certain particular person that your feelings and your capacity seemingly in the natural seems to run dry. What happens is you have to link yourself up with God. And you have to see God still love this guy. If God still love this person I tap on God's flow of love. See God's love is flowing to everybody. God's love is radiating on everyone of you no matter what you have done. Supposing His love is flowing to Albert. As His love is flowing there and supposing I can not seem to release love to his life. What I do is get in the flow of God's love and God's love will lead me to be able to love him the way God wants me to love. Just get into the flow of God's love. Look at one another with the eyes of God not with our own eyes. Then we will be able to comprehend the greatness of the love of God.

Eph. 3:19 And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. There is no way we can be filled with the fullness of God without being filled with His love. The result of understanding love; the result of being rooted and grounded in love is to be filled with the presence of God. So there is no way we can release the presence of God without releasing love. There is no way you can release the power of God in your family or in your church



life without you releasing love. What will happen when the fullness of God comes? Healing comes, deliverance comes, prosperity comes and blessings come. In the fullness of God we receive all these things.

But how do we release the fullness of God? By releasing love to one another you release the power of God. The fullness of God brings the power of God. We know what the power of God can do. The power of God can part the Red Sea. The power of God can feed three million people in the wilderness. The power of God can cause healing to flow to millions. The power of God is great and awesome. The power of God is released through the love of God. Love is the key to release the power of God in your family. So husband and wife the love of God in your life needs to flow. And among family members the only way you can release the power of God into your family is by releasing love to each other. And the only way we can release the power of God in the church when we gather together is by releasing love to one and another. That kind of power is always released in a church that loves each other. And we gathered to worship God the power of God manifests. Many times when I travel to a place, and there is a great division and strife in the church the gifts of God could not operate. The power of God can not demonstrate. All we can do is to just teach them some principles and go off. The power can not be released without love being involved. Love must be released.

Do you know why our capacity fails? Because we look at each other's past and we look at each other's present. But God loves us because He looks at each other's future. Agape love seeks the highest good in your life. And because God has a wonderful plan for each one of you, you can look at each other's future. And those of you in the same family you find it hard to love one another. It is one thing to talk nice things to people who you meet once in a while. But it is almost disaster's time when you are under the same roof. Do you know it's a different thing? And do you know that it's harder to love those who are under the same roof some times than those you meet once in a while. Every time you meet in the church you are just well dressed, you are just loving each other, you always have a smile on your face. But when you go back that's where you live life out. And that's where the person is not up to their best. And that's where some times a person misbehaves. Then when you are at home you find it hard to love. Because your eyes have turned away from whom a person can be to look at who a person is or who a person was. And every time you look at who a person was and who a person is agape love gets stifled because agape love looks at your potential and your future. The next time you find your love limited you can check on this area it is always there. You are always looking at each other. You know how some couples quarrel? They always say, "You always do this, you always do that. I don't know why you are like this? I don't know why you are like that?" They constantly look at each other as they are. Do you know if God were to look at each one of us as we are, we would be finished? And if God had looked at the way we were sinners, we would all been condemned to the lake of fire. You better thank God that God doesn't look at you the way you are. But God looks at you and say you little saint. He looks at the way we will be. And He brings it out from us. That's the agape love of God.

Here is a little tip. The only way you can change another person is by seeing what they can be and loving them into it. You will never be able to change another person by looking at who they are or where they are. Even when you drive a car or when you are walking, do you know you have to keep in mind where you are going? In order to

bring someone along where God will be able to deal with their life and they will be able to come into the fullness of God's plan for them is to see who they are going to be in God. Then every time when you see what they can be it becomes natural for you to talk about who they can be.

### 3. WALKING IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

We have covered how we can not be perfect unless we grow in the perfection of love. God's love is the gist of the whole gospel. And we need to grow in His love.

I Jn. 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. In the new heaven and new earth we won't need the sun any more. Because the book of Revelation tells us that our God is the light that lights every inhabitants of the new heaven and the new earth. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Verse 6 If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. So if we say that we know this God who is full of light where there is no darkness. If we say that we know Him and we love Him and then we turn around and walk in darkness then we are lying to ourselves. God is light. We are not being like Him if we are walking in darkness.

Verse 7 But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. It is good to see how that we have to walk in light. The question is, "How do we walk in the light?" We know that His Word is light. But however this epistle does not emphasize in that area but one particular area of His Word. How do we walk in light? For most of you, you will begin to think of walking in His commandments. What are His commandments? The main commandment is to love as Jesus loved.

John begins to apply in a practical sense how to walk in light and how to remain in fellowship with God. I Jn. 2:3 And by this we may be sure that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. When we ask, "How do we walk in light?" Some of you begin to think the Word of God is the light onto us. You are thinking of keeping His commandments. John brings you further. He say we will keep His commandments then he says in verse 4 He who says, "I know him," but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. He is saying the same thing as I Jn. 1:6 but in a different way. Verse 6 says If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. Truth is the real state of being. Then in chapter two verse 4 He who says, "I know Him" but disobeys His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. He goes so strong as to say that if we say that we walk in light, yet we walk in darkness we are liars. He turns around and says that if we say that we keep His commandments and we say we know Him and don't keep His commandments then we are also liars. Verse 5 But whoever keeps His word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in Him.

You notice in verse 5 that being perfected in love is the result of the obedience of commandments. It says that but if we keep His Word love is perfected in us. He says in the first instance God is light. He who walks in God walks in light. In God there is no darkness. We have to walk in the light. If we have darkness we are lying. So we have to walk in light.

Then we ask this question. How do we walk in the light? Your mind began working and you say, "Thy word is the light onto my feet and a lamp onto my path." So you

say to keep God's Word is the way I could be walking in the light. Keeping His commandments cause us to walk in the light, which is what John is saying.

Then John asks us how do we know that we keep His commandments and that we are not just hearers? How do we really know that the commandments of God have been worked out in light? By the results. He says that he who keeps God's commandment, not just hear God's commandments, keep means to practice not just hear. The one who actually walks in it, it says the love of God is perfected in him or her. So the result of keeping God's commandments is that our love is perfected. Love is the measurement by which you have kept God's commandments. After all the information, after all the knowledge, after all the impartation of teaching the test of how much of it you have actually kept can be seen in the amount of love that you have grown in. It is the after effect. There is no way you could keep God's commandments without being perfected in love.

Many times people think that they have kept God's commandments where actually they have not kept God's commandments. But what they have is that they received some knowledge of God's commandments. We know the difference between knowledge and experience. When a person has just graduated from school he or she has a lot of knowledge but very little experience. Knowledge needs to be practiced out and to be worked out in the affairs of life.

He says in verse 9 He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. That is even more direct. He says that God is light and he who walks in God there is no darkness. How do we walk in light, God's word and God's commandment? He says light equals to commandment. Commandment equals to love. Then he says therefore light equals love. Walking in light means walking in love. Walking symbolizes movement. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. It is what you are doing that is essential. Not just what you feel you are doing; not just what you think you are doing; not just what you know. See God is not interested in just what we know. But He is interested in what we do. He is not going to judge you on what you know. He is going to judge you on what you do.

The next verse 1 John 2:10-11 says But he who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. Now we know that every time we do not walk in love darkness is there.

How do we know whether we are in the kingdom of God or in the kingdom of the devil? By love; love is the test, love is the fruit. The bible says in Colossians 1 that we have been saved out of the kingdom of darkness into His marvelous light. Col.1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Your inheritance the promises of God dwells in the kingdom of light. The kingdom of Jesus is called the kingdom of love; it is called the kingdom of light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. See love and light are related. Do you know why when God was on His throne light shines out? What is the substance of light? The substance of light is His love. Like this light that flows out from this tube here. Scientists tell us that this lighted bulb gives out rays of light. All these rays of light are made of photons. These

photons are little pockets of energy that move at different wavelengths. So we know the substance of it.

Now God is light and there is light that shines forth from you. Some of you God may have given the privilege to some of you to see His light in glory. The question is what is causing that light that comes forth from Him? The answer is love. If you take a portion of the light that came from God and you analyze it, it is a substance called agape love. Do you know that there is light shining from all of you? The moment you are born again every one has a degree of light shining from them. When we all go to heaven you will see clearly there is light that is shining from all of you in different degrees. We know that the bible says the righteous shall shine as the stars. In heaven there are different degrees of light that we shine in. And that degree that you shine in is according to your degree of development in love. See how important love is. In heaven you can not hide. Here you can love people it can not be seen so much except by your action. But in heaven it is visible as light. Love is visible as light. They can see whether you are a loving person or an unloving person.

It says in Col. 1:13 two things happened to you. You have been delivered; you have been translated. Translation talks about movement. Actually it is a movement in the spiritual geography. You have been delivered and you have been translated into the kingdom of His beloved Son, the kingdom of His love. Do you know you can move out of His kingdom? First John was not written to unbelievers. First John was written to believers. Do you know believers can walk in darkness? There is a borderline in the kingdom of God. Lets suppose that this is the borderline. When you were born again you were No. 1 delivered, No. 2 translated. Spiritually you have been translated into the kingdom of light. That kingdom of light is actually expanding all the time. So actually what takes place is both the translation and the growth of the kingdom of God. So what happens is the kingdom extends to cover your home and your family. The kingdom of God is expanding all the time. Lets just illustrate with you coming in and he coming in too; by these two coming in, the kingdom of God expands.

And so you are walking in the light. Do you know that you can walk in different degrees of the light? And at the same time you could also choose to walk outside of that light. First John was written to believers. He says if a brother says that he loves God but does not practice love that person is walking outside the kingdom of God; outside the borderline. By our attitudes and by our love we determine whether we are walking in the kingdom or outside the kingdom. It's very important because outside the kingdom there is no protection. There is no protection, you are subjected to all kinds of sicknesses; all kinds of demonic activities. The kingdom of Satan has sickness, strife, poverty, darkness and demons. But in the kingdom of light demons can not exist. Demons can not stand the light. And in the kingdom of light there is prosperity, there is wisdom, there is righteousness, there is love, there is joy, there is peace. And we determine whether we want to remain here or we can walk there. I am not saying that you are lost. Your salvation has nothing to do with it but your life style. See there are many Christians who are saved, who are born again but who walk like the world. The light that they have is just like the tiniest little candle when it should be a bright searchlight because they haven't developed in that area. They are born again and they are saved. But one day when Jesus comes then they realize that they have not grown in their Christian life.

And those Christians who remain there in that realm they have sicknesses, poverty, demons and all these together with them because it is the kingdom of the devil. You determine which kingdom you want to live in. These evils happen in their lives because they didn't walk in love. When you don't walk in love you automatically move yourself outside the umbrella of God's kingdom into your own little umbrella, which is full of holes. It doesn't protect you. Jesus says no man can snatch those who believe in Me out of My hand. Yes, no one can snatch but you can walk out of it. You can walk out of His protection. You can walk into destruction. Many Christians walk in the permissive will of God, did all kind of things that God never intended them to do and died from all kind of sicknesses. Jesus was never sick. Jesus never lived in the permissive will of God. Jesus always walks in the perfect will of God. How did He learn to do it? By walking in love.

If I walk in the light, walking in the light is walking in His love and is also walking in the Spirit. Do you know that the bible tells so many times walk in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. But many Christians wondered what is walking in the Spirit. To them walking in the Spirit is like being on cloud 9. Walking in the spirit is just going around prophesying thus says the Lord. The question is, "Which lord?" Walking in the Spirit is just going around and saying in Jesus' Name, "Come out, come out," as if everybody but them has a demon. Walking in the Spirit is not walking on cloud 9, with a sense of spiritual pride, lifting up your nose and saying, "I am spiritual. Hey, I did this, hey, I prayed."

What does it mean by walking in the Spirit? Very simply walking in the Spirit is walking in love. Now when you move out of love, do you know that you can function in certain things without love? You are not functioning in the Spirit. You are functioning in the flesh. See whenever you move out of love you moved out of the Spirit because the spirit of power is the spirit of love. II Tim. 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. And 1 John 4:18 says perfect love cast out fear. See how all the relationship comes in. Walking in the Spirit is walking in His love. That is why for example if God gives me a revelation of a person's life that is unpleasant and that has to be dealt with, because I walk in love I will not run that person down in public. I will not in public say, "Thus says the Lord, 'You did all those unlawful things,'" and everybody hears it. That is not walking in the Spirit. That is walking in the flesh. When you move out of walking in love, you move out of walking in the Spirit also.

Take note of that the next time you want to move in the gifts of the Spirit: when you move out of love you move into your flesh. When you want to lay hands on people, what is your motive? If you want to show off, then you have moved out of love into flesh. See it is so important to determine love in our hearts. Lets say when I am singing a song. Am I singing because I want people to hear me or because of love? When I sing not because of love for God and for His family I have sang in the flesh and not in the Spirit. How do I tell whether it's the Spirit or it is my own flesh? By love. If the love of God is not present the Spirit of God is not present. All we have to remember walking in love is walking in the Spirit. And all of us will know whether we did in love or not.

The person outside may not be able to tell. It could be the same incident but from a different attitude it makes it in the Spirit or in the flesh. Lets suppose that brother A loves the Lord very much and brother A wants to do something for the needy because

of his love. So brother A goes to the needy helps them in their gardening just to express his care and his concern. Now he was walking in love therefore he was walking in the Spirit. Then brother B was just seeking for people to know him. Just wanting to get something from that guy. So brother B goes to that person's family and did all kinds of things for them. But brother B wants something from that person. He does the same things; he could do the gardening and help round. From the outside it looks like the same action and the same help was given. But from the inside it was different. Brother B's action was in the flesh brother whereas brother A's action was in the Spirit. The same action but from a different perspective of heart determines whether its from the Spirit or in the flesh. In the same way my motive for preaching has to be verified by God. I have to make sure that I do it because of love. Some times people do spiritual things out of a wrong motive. That makes it in the flesh and not in the Spirit. When I sing a song, am I singing it because of self-glorification or because of love? That makes it either in the flesh or in the Spirit. When I desire to move into the gift of the Spirit, do I do it because I want attention? Or because I really care that the needs of people are met. That determines whether it's the flesh operating or the Spirit. Do you know the flesh can do some imitations but it has no power? Power and love goes together. Every time God's power moves love moves. When Jesus heals His compassion always flows out.

Turn with me to Gal. 5:22-23 where the nine fruits of the Spirit are listed. But we have taken the nine fruit of the Spirit out of its context many times. The fruit of the Spirit is listed in verses 22 and 23. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. What is the first word in verse 22? The first word is "but". And we all know that when somebody says, "but" it is always at the conclusion of something. It means that they have said something before. None of you go around starting a sentence with "but". You don't go around using that word by itself. None of us start a sentence with "but" unless you have said something before. Like I don't quite like you but I love you. The "but" completes the sentence.

Notice what Paul is saying here in Galatians. The context of Galatians 5 talks about walking in the Spirit. Verse 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. Now he is teaching them to walk in the Spirit. Many Christians wonder what is it to walk in the Spirit. Is it just walking in the feel of the anointing? Verse 17 it says For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. These are contrary to one another. And he is writing to believers. He is not writing to unbelievers. Look at verse 15 what is the first word again. But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another. Who is he talking to? Believers. Do you know believers some times bite one another? That is walking in the flesh. But I say to you walk in the Spirit.

Then verse 18 But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Walking in the Spirit is also being led by the Spirit. He first list the negative side the works of flesh are immortality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealous, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such thing shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Col.1:12 says of the partaking of the inheritance of the saints in light. You know what your inheritance is? Prosperity, health and abundant life. That is your inheritance. Goodness and mercy flowing in your life. Your inheritance is the land of milk and honey in Christ. Do you know why some people

just seem to attract blessings? It doesn't come by accident. Why some people seem to attract blessings and some other people seems to attract problems. We live in a world that is hostile to the things of God. And the devil will have every opportunity to bring disaster on your life. But there is a way where you could attract the blessings of God. Where in your life things just flow. How many of you like to be like that? That explains why in some people's life bad things seems to happen. But in some people sometimes without effort they get blessed here blessed there blessed everywhere. They just get blessed. What are they receiving? The inheritance of God. When you receive an inheritance you do not deserve it. You did not work for the inheritance. Somebody worked at it. Somebody accumulated it. And then because of your position they pass it to you. That's an inheritance. Jesus conquered for us. Jesus paid the price for us. Then He says it is yours now. Do you know that inheritance can not come to people because they are not walking in the Spirit, they are not walking in love? When you walk in love the inheritance comes forth. You are in right relationship with God's family. The inheritance is the family blessing of God.

Lets look at Gal. 5:21 the last sentence, That those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Now you see how important love is. Those who walk in the flesh will not taste health. They will taste sickness. Those who walk in flesh will not taste prosperity; they will taste poverty. Those who walk in the flesh they will not taste abundant life. They will taste a miserable life. They will not inherit the things of God. It may be theirs but their inheritance can not come to them.

The inheritance is so important that Ephesians 1:17-18 Paul prayed That the God of our Lord Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints. There are so much blessings God has blessed us with. But its not coming to people because they are not walking in the Spirit; walking in love. They are walking in the flesh. Paul says those who walk in the flesh who do such things can not partake of the inheritance of the saints. It may be yours but you can not taste it. In verse 22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such there is no law. Then he says in verse 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. He is saying that walking in the Spirit means walking in love, walking in joy, walking in peace, walking in long suffering, walking in kindness, walking in goodness, walking in gentleness, walking in self-control, all these fruit of the Spirit you walk in them. That's what he means walking in the Spirit.

Turn to I Cor. 13 and I will show you that all the fruit of the Spirit came from love. Verse 4 love suffers long. So love and long suffering is the same thing. Now you see all the fruit of the spirit can be tied to one word agape love. And is kind (1 Cor 13:4) and in Gal. 5:22-23 mentions kindness as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Kindness is an expression of love; long suffering is an expression of love.

Love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. Look carefully what envy, parade and puffed up mean. Envy cause strife, the book of Proverbs tells us envy brings forth strife. Strife means no peace. You can not be in peace with another person and be in strife. So love produces peace. When you have peace, you are at peace with God, at peace with yourself and at peace with your fellow brothers you will not strive, you will not envy and you will not puff up. You know why some



people are puffed up. They are not at peace with themselves. Some times people don't have peace in their lives so they do things to gain attention. When you have peace you are not worried. You are not puffed up. You do not strive nor you do not parade yourself. Love is peace.

Verse 5 does not behave rudely. What is the opposite of rudeness? Politeness and gentleness. Gentleness is strength; gentleness is not weakness. It also means meekness. Gentleness means that I could come to a brother and say you made this mistake. Gal. 6:1-2 says when you correct one another you must do it in the spirit of gentleness. If you have the fruit of gentleness you will say brother lets go for lunch. While he is enjoying that nice lunch, you ask him, "What do you think about this that you are doing? Do you think its O.K?" "Actually I don't feel too peaceful." "That's exactly what I was trying to gather from you that this doesn't seem the best." Then you bring a person to be corrected. If you don't know how to correct people you will kill them. Actually people give the excuse, "I am correcting them." Actually they are killing them. Correction builds up. The way to correct is to build a person up not to tear them and destroy them. Galatians 6 tells us when you want to correct somebody correct in the spirit of gentleness.

Now it says that love does not behave rudely. In other words love is gentle. When people love each other they are always gentle. Do you know that people who like each other there is gentleness in their voices? Love produces gentleness. It is those you don't like that you become very rude. Put it this way if you love everybody in the church you will be gentle with everybody. But do you know that being in the family of God, sometimes people don't quite like each other and don't quite love each other. They become rough with each other. What is happening? They don't have love. Love seeks to build. Love takes that fellow out for lunch. If you know how to do an operation you can do it in such a way that people don't even know it. That is what we call a skillful surgeon. And we all need to develop that by love. If you don't have this gentleness when you do the correction and operation, you cut that person. He cried out and the strife becomes bigger.

Then Paul says love does not seek its own; is not provoked and think no evil. Does not seek its own. Love controls itself. Love is self-control. You don't let your own self go off. You put a bridle on yourself. Does not seek its own selfish way. And the word think no evil, you can tie it back to goodness. What is the opposite of evil? Good. And he is telling you the extent of goodness. Goodness not affect your action, it also affects your thought life. You have no malice against anyone. You don't look at anyone and think evil against him or her. Because of goodness, because of your nature of being good, your nature of thinking good comes forth. If you think good towards others and your intention is only good towards others goodness bubbles from your life. But do you know when you get angry and you have strife you think evil. You say, "I wish a thunderbolt will come down and strike that guy down." We think evil and wish evil. To wish evil to happen to another person is the word called malice. So love has no malice. We do not wish evil happen to another person. We only wish good things would happen.

And it says in verse 6 love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth. Love is joy the right kind of joy. It is not the wrong kind of joy. Something bad happened to another person you feel joyful. That sounds more like an evil laughter. Love does not rejoice in evil, in the bad things that happen. In fact when you see that love causes you

to weep for them. But when you see something good happening, then you rejoice. It rejoices in the truth. When the truth is working it's the real joy. So love is joy.

Then in verse 7 love bears all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things. Love never fails. Love is faithfulness. To be faithful you have to bear all things. You have to believe the best to remain faithful. How can people remain with each other and be hooked up together to serve God in the church or in the team? No matter what happens they bear up with it. No matter what happens they believe the best of the other person.

So we see that all the nine fruits of the Spirit come down to love. When you walk in love you walk in the Spirit. Then you can also know when you were not walking in the Spirit. You are walking in the flesh when you are not walking in love. When you were having strife, anger, it was the flesh. See now you know: you are not in the Spirit when there is no love.

## 4. THE CAPACITY TO LOVE

I Jn. 4:7-11 Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Rom. 5:3-8 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man – though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

We have been talking about walking in love and walking in the Spirit. You can not walk in the Spirit without walking in love. We have shown in the last message how that when you walk in the Spirit, all the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance, all relate to I Cor. 13 with regards to love. Walking in the Spirit will help us to walk in love. Walking in love will help us to walk in the Spirit. The two are one. They are not separated. When you move in an anointing of God; when you move in the things of the Spirit, the Spirit of love will determine whether you are in the Spirit or in the flesh.

In the same way when you are walking in the will of God you would also be walking in the boundaries of His love. When you stop walking in love, you stop walking in the will of God. The will of God is covered under the umbrella of His love. When you are no more loving then you have got out of the will of God in your attitude. And when you move out of the will of God all the other consequences will follow. So the bible in Gal. 5 when Paul was talking about the fruit of the Spirit the context was walking in the Spirit.

This morning we want to talk about the capacity that God has given to all of us to love and to be loved. In all of our life God has created us human beings as creatures in His image with a capacity to love. That capacity to love is also the capacity to be loved. You will notice that all of us need fellowship. And none of us can live by ourselves without being loved or to give love. We would not be able to develop in our character; we would not be able to develop in our maturity in God if we do not give or receive love. A person who lives on a mountain and never sees nor relates to any human being, spends all the time in prayer may feel that he has developed a very great height of spiritual maturity. But when that person is taken out of that mountain and placed in the city where the hustle of life goes on, where the circumstances and the time pressure comes forth, that person began to get irritated; that person began to walk in the flesh and lose his temper. All these reveal that actually that person was not matured although he looks matured.

The test of your character and the test of your maturity is in the crisis time. Not when you are surrounded by beautiful scenery, and you are having a nice contemplation of

God; meditating with no care on your life. That is not when you demonstrate your character. Demonstration of your character is when they put you in an iron box and all the pressure come upon you. Then it tests whether you are truly matured or not. What happens is that many people who are good in living a hermit's life are no good when it comes to living a Christian life out there in the valley. They are good in the mountains but they are not good in the valley.

How many believe that God is both God of the mountain and of the valley. He is God both in the field and in the city. He is the God both in your circumstances of life when the pressure is there and when there is no pressure. He is God onto us both of the mountains and of the valley of life. In Christian life many times I have come across those who have developed a spiritual life of prayer, they have developed their spiritual life and hunger in the Word. They have developed their spiritual life in the goal that they have in their life. But they never develop their horizontal relationships. They developed only the vertical relationship. And as a result they don't actually reached that high in the vertical relationship, as they actually should. There is no possible development of a vertical relationship without a horizontal relationship. It's a self-deceptive spirituality. Jesus Christ did not come to live a life of a hermit. Jesus came to demonstrate to us that the love of God and the character of God is possible to be lived out where the hustle of life is. Right there on the streets, right there where the pressure is happening. He has experienced all kind of things that you and I could experience in society. He came and lived right in the middle of sinful human society to prove to us that it is possible to be perfect in pressure. Many Christians have the concept of the vertical relationship without realizing that the vertical relationship has to be backed by a horizontal relationship.

Lets look at I Jn. 4:7-11 Beloved, let us love one another; for love is God, and he who loves is born of God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. John is saying, "Hi Christians, hi fellow brothers, hi beloved, you need to be developed in the horizontal relationship." He is saying if you say you love God you have to love your fellowman.

Look at I Jn. 3:13 Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love remains in death. Any one who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. So John is saying the proof of your vertical relationship is actually the horizontal relationship. He is saying that if you say that you abide in life that you love God. He says because we love the brethren we have passed from death to life, which is the vertical relationship. This is a book on love and he emphasizes on love.

In I Jn. 2:9 He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. That means his vertical relationship is nil. The vertical relationship is life. God is love, God is life and God is light. He says, he who does not have a horizontal relationship their vertical relationship is only false relationship. It is a false form of spirituality. Now the world has a concept of being spiritual as that someone who is a hermit. Now the bible does not advocate that. The bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ came to relate to us. He says God demonstrates His love to us in sending His Son. If God sat

in heaven and say I love you it doesn't mean anything. But when God send His Son to die, to bear the pains of sins, to take all turmoil of human beings, to suffer as a human being, to die on the cross for us, then we can say, "God thank You. You love me." We understand because He has a horizontal relationship with us. He relates to us through Jesus Christ living as a man to relate to us horizontally. If God did not come in human form then we can only look to the Almighty God without being able to relate to Him in a closer way. That is why to understand the Father you have to understand Jesus. See through Jesus we can understand God.

I Jn. 4:17-20 In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If any one says, "I love God" and hates his brother, he is a liar.

John is saying that there is no real vertical relationship without a horizontal relationship. You won't get away by hurting people. You won't get away by not relating to people. I wish some one has taught me this in my early ministry. See when I first went into the ministry I was just concentrating on my relationship with God. I didn't realize the importance of relationship with another human being. Whether they are lovable or unlovable, whether they are likeable or unlikable, I did not realize the importance of my horizontal relationship. Being young, going into the seminary at the age of 18, all I focused on was my vertical relationship. And all I wanted was to know more of God and to know of the things of God. And I found that I have not developed my horizontal relationship. So always I have difficulty when it comes to my horizontal relationship. I found it hard to relate to those who don't think like me; those who don't believe like me. Now I can, praise God by His grace. I found it difficult to relate to those who don't flow with the Holy Spirit. See I was zealous. I wanted revival. And so here was I sent to a dead Baptist Church. And my zeal was to bring revival to the church. And usually when a church is dead there are always dead leaders too who need resurrection. I did my best to resurrect them but I found I could not.

But there were others who were still having light and most of the time in that old traditional churches are those young fellows who are just fresh in the Lord. So we formed a prayer meeting in a small town in Bukit Mertajam. I found that I had a hard time with my horizontal relationship because I concentrated solely on my vertical relationship. So those who don't pray as much as I do I found it hard to relate to them. You see to have a vertical relationship with God you have to take time. You have to spend time with Him privately in prayer, in the Word and in worship. You spend time so you get to know God. And to develop a horizontal relationship you have to spend time. And that was the time I neglected to spend. I did not spend time. I did not take all those deacons out and relate to them. I did not sit down with them and understand their problems. I did not do all these things because I found it difficult. Most of them were carnal. I remember Jesus lived among carnal men including His disciples.

Then when I moved to another church in the north in Kangar, Perlis. When I was there it was the same thing repeating itself. I focused on the vertical relationship; I did not pay attention to the horizontal relationship. I could never get away from that. Time and again I always had to come down to the fact if you say you love God you must love your brethren. And your brethren include all those who were born again

whether they have their shoulder blades sticking out at you or not. Some people their shoulder blades stick out longer than others. When you fellowship with them their shoulder blades start poking at you. It is not easy to love some people because they bite you, they devour and they will say some bad things about you. Let me tell you it is not easy to love some one who doesn't like you, especially if he doesn't agree with your doctrine. Or they don't agree with the way you do things.

Then through the years God began to teach me. And especially I must confess my marriage helped me to realize the need to develop horizontal relationship. Whether you are called to be single or called to be married there is an importance to relate to other human beings especially the family of God. You must relate to them. You can not run away and try to be spiritual and say I don't care about all these things. I don't need any church to go to. Because every time I go to a church the church is not perfect. And so some people are that way and say I don't want to go anywhere else because nowhere else do I seem to be able to find a relationship. A church is a family. You find all kinds of people inside. And in the family you did not ask for the other guy to be in the family. They chose God and they got brought in. In a physical family you did not choose your brother or sister. Your parents chose them.

Our heavenly Father begot all of us. Our heavenly Father is the One who chose all of us. John says in I Jn. 4:20 If any one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, can not love God whom he has not seen. John is saying your vertical relationship is false. Because your vertical relationship is actually checked and judged by your horizontal relationship. How do we know Jesus really love God? Because He loves us He is like God. Any one who loves God becomes loving like God. Look at the life of Jesus Christ. Look at His horizontal relationship. He could love everybody even Judas who betrayed Him. Jesus gathered Himself in a towel and He washed all His disciples' feet including Judas. Then when Peter and John were asking Him who is the one who betray you, He took the bread and He fed Judas. He literally was feeding him from His hands. And He washed Judas' feet. I am sure He washed it as lovingly as He washed John's feet. He did not wash all His disciples' feet one by one but when He came to Judas's feet He took the hardest brush made of steel. No, He didn't do that;

He washed all their legs as lovingly.

Jesus' vertical relationship was revealed in His horizontal relationship. For example if you say you are some one who spend a lot of time in the Word, it will come out from you. The way you talk it will come out with the Word. The way you confess you come out with the Word. And the way you could sit down and share and talk about the things of God you will talk about the Word. Even though you were not called to teach publicly you were in some way in one to one relationship the Word will come out of your life. It is proven in your horizontal relationship. The same way if you are some one who says, "I love God a lot. I am full of God's love," prove it in your horizontal relationship. If you can't prove it the bible calls you a liar. Those who don't love their brothers and say they love God they are liars. Your vertical relationship is judged by your horizontal relationship.

To develop and say you love one another we are going to touch on what it means to love another person. But basically all of us are created with the capacity to love and to be loved. We get encouraged when we are loved. Because it's the capacity that God

has created in us. We get discouraged when we are not loved. It is because that need of love is not met. Some times as you grow up you did not receive love and there when you grow up you are not able to give love. But God has changed all that.

The bible in Rom. 5:5 it says that when you were born again God poured His love into your heart. Your capacity to give love is restored because God has poured into your heart His love. And we are obligated to love one another. In I Jn. 5:1 Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child. (Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one who loves Him begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.) I used to think that the one that the "him" who is begotten of him refers to Jesus the begotten of the Father. But as I read it carefully I realized that it is not referring to Jesus being begotten of the Father. But it is referring to every other one who is born again into the family of God. It says he who loves the one who begot, the one who gives new birth will love those who are given new birth by him. In other word its just like in the physical relationship, physical family. You did not choose your brothers and sisters. Your parents chose them. If you love your parents very much you will definitely love their choices. And if they chose your brothers or sisters you love them because you love your parents. See it flows and you develop your love towards them. In the same way the bible says if you love God who gives new birth you will love everything and every one that He gives new birth to. The reason He gives new birth is because He loves. And because you are part of the family you will love what He loves. And if God loves all His family you should not draw a circle and say I am going to love only these people and the others outside the circle I am not going to love. It would be very wrong. You should love those who are begotten of God, which means the family of God.

Jesus says a new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you. So all of us need to develop our horizontal relationship in love. And this is the part where we are saying our capacity to love is the test in all circumstances. In other words when some body hurts you or when some imperfection occurs in your horizontal relationship it does not reveal the fault in the other person as much as it reveals the fault in you. Every time you come to the point where you feel you can not love the other person the way God loves him or her, it reveals your own lack and the lack in the other person.

For example we have this pulpit here. It is structured to take a certain amount of pressure. And supposed I were to put some heavy stuff on this pulpit. And I keep on piling them up one after the other. There will reach a point where the pulpit can not take the pressure any more. Then it begins to crack. When it begins to crack what does it reveal? It does not reveal the pressure so much as it reveals that the pulpit has only a certain point of capacity. It reveals the weakness in the pulpit more that it reveals the external pressure. Example if this building that they have built. The first thing they will do is the piling work. You some times see them on the road you see a huge pile of heavy stones. What are they doing? They are testing whether there are any weaknesses in the soil. If the soil sinks then they know how much piling need to be done in the soil before they could build a high super structure. So the higher they want to build the more they must make sure that the foundation is strong. And the pressure that they put on the ground reveals the weakness of the ground more than it reveals the external circumstances.

And when you reached a point where you can not love another person, and you complain because they are this way they are that way, it does not reveal their lack as much as it reveals yours. It does not reveal their weaknesses more that it reveals yours. It reveals that you are not able to love them. It reveals that you can not love them. It reveals that there is a crack in you that say I can not take this pressure anymore than it reveals the pressure.

So every time you are not capable of loving it reveals that your capacity to love has been weakened structurally by some thing. It reveals more your own character than it reveals the character of the one you talk about. See when you talk bad about another person it reveals more your own character than the person you talk about. Look at the Lord Jesus Christ everything that He did was in great love. When they put Him on the cross and put Him under pressure, you know what He did? He loved. He showed no structural weaknesses in His being. When they crucified Him on the cross, they rejected Him, they mocked at Him and they did all kinds of things to Him, He says, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." What was He saying? "Father I still love them." Love was pouring out through Him. His capacity to love was without measure. He could love all kinds of people. It was agape love the love of God.

God has to teach me this. I am not saying and teaching all these things just out of theory. Many times I complained to the Lord and said Lord I wish your ministry was easier. All I could do is just minister the Word and walk off. And God began to show that our horizontal relationship is important. Jesus said in the gospels that if you love your friend what is that? Even the world does that. If you love those who like you what is that? Nothing, even those who are not born again can do that. But Jesus says because you are my disciples you will not only love your friends you will love your enemy. He is telling you that as His disciples your capacity to love has been renewed, has been rebuilt and has been refilled. Such that your capacity to love is so great that you not only love friends you love even your foes. So every time you can not love another person it does not reveal the other person. That is not your responsibility. It is their responsibility with God. But your responsibility is to love.

Jesus said a new commandment. He did not say a new suggestion. What is a commandment? An order. He ordered you to love. He was not giving a nice suggestion. He was not giving a nice idea. He says it is a commandment. And God has to deal with that in my life. As I grew in the ministry I felt many pressures and all kinds of pressures. Some times you don't understand why people do the things they do. In the early days of my ministry I was a black sheep. The only problem is that my detractors were wearing dark glasses and didn't look very carefully. So I could look back and laugh at that. But I can tell you the number of tears I shed on the way. I was ostracized in the seminary. Then I was ostracized among the whole Baptist churches. Then I was ostracized by the Pentecostals. And some of the stories they tell about me I myself say that's very interesting. I have never heard of that before myself. The snake was about one foot long became twenty feet long. Tremendous stories, but inside it hurts because they were not true.

During these times God comes and said, "Son it does not reveal their fault; it reveals yours. It is your fault not theirs. It reveals that there are structural weaknesses in you; correct that. And if you correct that I will bring you up to higher ground." So I realize that every time I reached a point where I found it not easy to love or my capacity to love runs out I need to draw from Him. I need to acknowledge my own weaknesses.



Most of the time we had the Adam and Eve syndrome. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. We try to put the blame on the other person. We don't want to take responsibility. But after hearing this truth this morning you realize that God has given all of you a commandment to love. God has given you a capacity to love. With the commandment is given the capacity. And as you grow in life you will develop that love. See love is perfected. And there will be many times in your life that you come across some one some where along your path whom you found it not easy to love. And you have to still love; you have to continue to love. When you do so you correct your structural weaknesses within you. Take this attitude it will be good for you. Never put the blame on the other guy put it on your own self. Adam should have told God and say, "God I have sinned not my wife; it is me." Instead he said, "Eve did it," and Eve looked at God and said, "The serpent did it." Adam and Eve syndrome put the blame on the other guy.

Do you know that people who find scapegoats are very insecure in their life? People who have to find others to blame are because they themselves are avoiding the issue of correcting themselves. And there is no such thing as correcting another until you correct yourself. Jesus said don't pull the plank of the other eye until you pull the little splinter out of your eye. And every time some thing is said about some one some where about their weaknesses remember if you participate in that kind of conversation it reveals not only the other person it reveals you. And because every one is accountable directly to God you are responsible for your own weaknesses not the other guy. What the whole world may do or what the whole kingdom of God may do is not your responsibility. It reveals more that you have to take care of your part. If every one of us takes care of our department and responsibility the whole church of God will be a lot smoother. Your responsibility is that you have to acknowledge that you have failed and you have sinned. People who can not acknowledge that they have failed and they have sinned are like the Pharisee who came and pray, saying, "Lord thank you that I am not like the other guy. The other guy is a rotten guy." God doesn't like that. The publican came and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He was not even conscious of the Pharisee standing there. If your attitude is to find scapegoats in your Christian life you will never grow. Your vertical relationship has actually been suspended. You are no more growing in God. You are in the wilderness going round and round. And I found this about God that before promotion comes testing and improvement.

Lets give an example. If for example this pulpit can take about a hundred and fifty pounds of pressure on the top of it without cracking. If that is the maximum capacity of this pulpit and if I put one hundred and fifty one a crack will start. If I put three hundred it will collapse. When they build this pulpit they built it with five sides. So after this pulpit was built I tested it and I shook it. I said no, it is too shaky. It can not take the pressure some preachers will put on it. I said some preachers will come and they will bang on the pulpit. They are called the pulpit hammerers. Every time they emphasize a point they bang on the pulpit. The structure was not strong enough. So the person added a small little structure here at the bottom and that made it less shaky. So what we are talking about is the structure was improved to take a greater capacity. And every time you reach a point where you can not love you must restructure yourself. How many times when people reached a point when their personality weaknesses come out. You know what they do. They re-structure the circumstances instead of re-structuring themselves. For example if it is a firm or any organization

could be church or be secular work or it could be a family. Lets take it in the church context. In the church the capacity is different from the secular organization because in the church you are commanded especially the love. And you can not sort of chase people out of the church unless they are fanatics or they are really causing what you call hurt in the scriptural way or they are destroying the body of Christ. But most of the time many people don't have the intention to destroy. But more or less it is their shoulder blades sticking out.

But supposing that a person is insecure. Lets take a pastor to be insecure. A pastor is insecure in his own ministry when another ministry starts coming up. The pastor will begin to run down that guy to preserve his own ministry. And so as a result of that the pastor can not change himself. He tries to change the church to flow along to accept his weakness. As a result of that the people will grow to a certain point when they can not move any more. And when they want to do something he bang them down. After some time of hitting you either have a church of flat heads or you have no more sheep. Because of his own insecurity he tries to accommodate his own insecurity by structuring a place such that the insecurity is protected instead of repenting and changing his own life. And so what happens? People will come to a certain stage where they will go off. Then they come to another stage where they can not take it any more. They will leave and they will go to another place where they can grow. As the years come and the years go the pastor says I wonder what's wrong. He himself is the problem. And instead he always excuse and say that guy is this way, that guy is that way. None are so blind as those who refused to see their own faults. They are blinder than the blind people.

So its most important for us to realize that in any situation where you can not love another one it is more your responsibility and your structural weakness than the other guy. If you were like Jesus in every circumstance you will still be able to say love. Has Jesus ever come to the point where He says I can not love? Never, but many times you and I come to a point where you say I can not love. This guy is my thorn in the flesh. That guy is a thorn in the flesh. It looks like every one is a thorn in the flesh except you. Let me tell you a thorn in the flesh is never a believer. The word thorn in the flesh is used to refer to the devil. So remember that you are responsible for your own reaction. And if anything happens it reveals your own structure more than the other guy. Every time husband and wife rub each other it is always easy to blame the other guy. If you want to start changing, start changing right where you are. Instead saying "It is your fault," begin to see what is my fault. If every body will take the blame for where they fail they will start improving. Husband and wife if you are not having harmony the time has come to stop putting the blame on the other guy's fault. Don't tell them. Pray to God and let God tell them. Who do you think you are taking the splinter out of other people's eye while the plank is in your own eye? Correct your own mistakes and some times when you are correcting your own mistake the other guys will see it themselves. When you correct your own mistakes, it becomes a mirror where the others can see their own faults. Self-correction is important.

Then as it comes to a wider body of Christ, there may be times you find it hard to relate to some body else. They may have said something that hurt you. They may have done this or they may have done that. And always in most disharmony and strife the first thing people do is put the blame on the other guy. Put the responsibility on the other guy. That's not your responsibility of the other guy. Your responsibility is to

correct your own fault. Let me tell you in any disharmony there are always two sides to it. It does not only reveal the other side but it also reveals your side. And instead of correcting ourselves we avoid the issue of correcting ourselves by a red herring. A red herring is a distraction. We make a smoke cloud on the other side so that people forget about ourselves. That's what happens. It's a sort of self-preservation. We don't want to correct ourselves. So we make a lot of noise about the other guy so that every body will turn and see the other guy. In that way we could hide our own weaknesses. We could hide our own structural weaknesses. You go on that way you will continue going round and round the wilderness. You will never get a promotion from God. You will never get promoted to new spiritual heights. Every time you correct yourself God promotes you because to correct yourself and it requires humility. To correct others does not require humility. Correcting others is easy and correcting yourself is most difficult. Paul says about himself, he says, "I judge myself lest others judge me." So from this day forward judge yourself. Keep correcting your self. Every time something happens judge yourself. The first thing people do is to judge others. Don't you dare to correct another person if God never told you and give you the anointing to do it.

## 5. THE FATHER HEART OF GOD

Rom. 8:31-39 What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulations, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "for thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Notice here that the bible says that there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God. We speak about agape love. And this love that God has for us is the love we qualify as unconditional. The word unconditional means that it is not limited by conditions. Most of the time human love is conditional. What happens is we say to each other, "I will love you," but we attach conditions to our love. When we attach little condition to the giving of our love, it makes our love conditional. And in fact it is not agape love because love is a gift. It is no more a gift when you attach a condition to your love. It becomes an exchange. You do some thing, you give some thing and then I give you my love. It is no more the free gift of love that the bible talks about. We never gave God anything. We never deserved anything.

Rom. 5:8 says while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. That is the love that is unconditional and it's a love that is a gift. And we have to rise up above the level to God's love, which is unconditional. See a love that is unconditional says, "I give you the gift of my love." I do not attach conditions to it. I don't ask that you be good. I don't ask that you be deserving. I don't ask that you exchange something back for my love. Some times parental love for children can be manipulative. That means that we tell our children that if you are good I will love you. If you are bad I won't love you. And we have a preconceived idea that that's the love of God. God never said that. God loves us whether you are bad or you are good. The only difference is that when you are in disobedience you are not in the position to receive the full measure of His love. But even though man may go to hell the Father heart of God beats with love for them. It is not in His plan. It is not in His intention for them to suffer in that way. His love never ceases. His love never stops. And so that kind of love that parent show to children is manipulative love. In other words we manipulate them with our love.

And some times husband and wife use that form of love. But that is not God's agape love. That is human affection, human love. And Jesus says that we have to love one another with His kind of love not with our type of love. The truth of the matter is that we should tell our children that we love you no matter what you do, no matter who you are. But we would like you to behave this way. But whatever you do my love for you never ceases. That is called unconditional love.

In the United States they did a survey of all those top criminals in prison. And they found that eighty percent of them in their childhood have never received unconditional love. And they have never have a happy home filled with love. Children

need to know that we love them not for what they do, not for what they are but simply because we love them. That is the love that God wants to bring forth in the family in a relationship between a man and wife; in a relationship between Christian brethren. That's the kind of love that we need to have. You see agape love that says that I will give you the gift of my love without demanding anything. Also it says that you can be what you are without the fear that I will stop loving you. If it is the love that is unconditional there will never come to a time when it will stop. But if it is a love that is conditioned then there will come a time when it will stop. And when we began to love one another with God's kind of love, we love each other unconditionally. For example I could come to James and say, "I love you with the love of the Lord." What am I saying here? That means I love him with unconditioned love. That means that if I love James with unconditioned love, that would mean that James can do what he likes. He can say what he wants. He can pour out all his good feelings and his bad feelings. He can pour out all that is hot in him and all that is cold in him. He can pour out all his best and he can pour out all his worst without the fear that I will reject him. That is unconditioned love. When we love with unconditioned love we are actually saying I will never ever reject you.

Think about human kind. All the time most of us received rejection to a certain amount. I have experienced rejection before so have you. What is happening is human being is still governed by conditional love. But when we have a glance of God's kind of love its unconditioned; God never ever reject us. You watch the Old Testament every time they did the worst possible. One of the worst kings was Ahab. One of the worse was Manasseh. And it tells us he did every thing that was wicked. It made God very angry. The bible says that when he says God I am sorry immediately God loved him and God forgave him. And Ahab he did terrible things. He started Baal worship in Israel. He made God to anger. But there was one time where there was a little hint of repentance in his life. After he had got Naboth's vineyard Elijah came to him and rebuked him and says thus says the Lord. Ahab went back and he put on sackcloth and he wept. And God said He would not mete the punishment in his time. I want you to understand the heart of God. He is called the God who is ever forgiving. I am sure if Adam and Eve had just come and say we are sorry instead of putting the blame on each other, they would have been forgiven. They feared God and they feared rejection. They feared that God would reject them.

And so with each other we fear to be rejected. God says I will love you with an everlasting love. And the love that God has for us surpasses all our human comprehension of love. The bible tells that in Ephesians three that Paul was still praying for them that they might know and comprehend that love of God, the width, the length, the depth, the height of God's love. It's a tremendous love. It never ever rejects. King David knew this. He knew God's heart. He knew what God's heart was like. And when he fell into sin in numbering the Israelites, God sent the prophet Nathan and said, "Choose from these three judgments." See the judgment that we experience are the reciprocal of the laws that has been set. But he had a choice of three: either to be chased by his enemies, experience famine and he says I choose to fall into the hand of God because He is a merciful God. That is a smart guy. I don't want to be pursued by my enemies. I would rather if any one were to give me a spanking let God give it to me. That's what he was saying. I don't want my enemies to spank me. If there is any one who want to discipline me I want it to be God because He the most kind person in the universe, most merciful. And true enough God's

mercy and love reached out. When the angel drew the sword against Jerusalem the bible tells us that God's heart reaches out. His heart of love said, "Enough." See every time God spank them He felt the pain. That is the heart of God.

This morning I like you to beat with the heart beat of God and to understand His unconditioned love. And when I began to look at the love of God and began to understand more about the love of God, I began to realize how limited human love is. All of us go through time and all of us have been through experiences. When we ourselves condition our love to others, every time you come to a place where you reject another person it only shows that your love for them has been conditional. True agape love never ever rejects. A person could criticize all they want and you are like Jesus and with unconditioned love you say, "Father forgive them for they know not what they have done." Look at Jesus His unconditioned love was pouring out through His being. They could crucify Him, they could beat Him, they could spit at Him, they could pull His beard out and He still say, "I love you." What kind of love is that? It is the love when people rejected Him He still says, "I will not reject you."

Lets see some verses on this love of God. In the book of Isaiah chapter 49:15 sometimes people have a misunderstanding of the Old Testament. They don't understand that in the Old Testament is the same Father whose heart beat still beat with a heart of love. Isa. 49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. This is the Old Testament God speaking. And Isaiah lived in the time of Hezekiah who saw the destruction of Israel. The period of Hezekiah was interesting. Hezekiah was the king of the southern kingdom of Judah. And Isaiah lived at that time to see the destruction of the northern kingdom. Jeremiah the prophet was up there. Isaiah the prophet was down here. Both of them spoke of God's love. Even though the judgment came because of what they did they reaped what they sowed. God says I will never forget you. And He was not talking to a lovable lot. He was talking to a most despicable, unlovable, ungrateful group of rascals who were having idol worship, all over in Israel, on high places on every hill. And He says I will not forget you. This unconditioned love was flowing forth from the Father heart of God. Jeremiah in the northern kingdom said this. Lamentations 3:22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.

Now Paul never had any New Testament to read. The only bible Paul had was the Old Testament. I believe he got I Cor. 13 besides the revelation from the Spirit of God was in his meditation of the Old Testament scriptures. And here is where Paul probably got his verse where he says love never fails. In other words love never ends. In other word love never comes to a point where it says I will not love you any more. What is rejection? Rejection is actually saying I have come to a point where I will not love you. But the love of God never ever comes to that point. The love of God always says, "I will always love you."

And God at this time through Jeremiah show forth, he is called the weeping prophet, who cried out for the love of God for the Israelites. And he says his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." I can still trust in His love. We reap what we sow but I can trust in His love that He will never cast us off.

Then in verse 31 For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though He cause grief, He will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love. Which is why I say that you can disagree without being disagreeable. Many times people argue doctrine. Many times people discuss methods in Christendom. But in the midst of their discussion they come to the point where they say I will never love you I reject you. But we must never. We must always realize that God's unconditioned love says that even if your doctrine disagrees with mine I still love you. Even if your method disagrees with mine I still can love you. The unity that we have in Christ Jesus can only come when all of us understand unconditioned love. Unless the church of God and the kingdom of God on this planet earth is built on unconditional love we will never see the unity of the Spirit of God. It will only come by the unconditioned agape love of God.

And God tells us in Deut. 7 He told the Israelites that I have chosen you. I have loved you because I love you not because he was strong. Not because he was mighty. Not because of who you are. He told them very clearly in Deut. 7. The Hebrew word when He said I love you is the word *hased*, which means I am kind to you. I desire to just love you and do the best for you. See love is in three stages. The first stage of love is kindness. Kindness says that I love you and I care about you and I am on your side. The opposite of rejection is to say I am with you; I stand with you. And all the time the devil has been fooling man to think that God is against us. Today he is still working in the minds of Christians. We always think that God is against us. At the back of our mind we fear Him, we fear to be rejected. At the back of our minds He works on us. And finally when Jesus came we realize that God says through Jesus in what Jesus did He says I am on your side. Even though I am the judge of the universe I don't want to see you condemned so He sent His Son. See God is on our side.

That is why Paul got that revelation where he says if God is for us who can be against us? Now bring it closer home to our love for each other. Do you know many times you tell another person you are not on my side? How many have this incident repeated in many Christians relationship. But if we love each other with the love of God say, "I am on your side." Denominations fight because they say, "You are not on my side." What kind of love are Christians showing to each other? Shame on us if we put conditions to our love. The bible says that love says, "I am on your side." Remember what we said in the earlier series. We said love seeks the highest good in a person. I am on your side I seek the best for you. Do you know everybody in the world needs to hear that? There are many people out there on the streets today that think that God is a great judge up there who is against them, seeking to punish them, seeking to judge them. They didn't know the heart of God that God is on their side. That God loves them. God cares for them.

Here is where we began to see the heart beat of God. In the book of Luke 15 in the story of the prodigal son, the prodigal was not doing what the father wanted. The prodigal son chose to go his own way. The prodigal spent all his inheritance and wasted it. The prodigal son did everything he can to hurt the father. Let me tell you everything that is wrong on this earth hurts the Father. When the father has to give the inheritance to the prodigal son, I can tell you the father's heart bleeds. It hurts. Some people think that when judgment comes God does not hurt. He hurts more than we do. All of you who are parents realize this. When you have to discipline your children it hurts you as much. It hurts. That is why in Genesis 6 before the flood came God

revealed in His Word, “and God was grieved.” You know what grief is. It is the same word that says sorrow. God is sorrowful. He feels sad. Imagine the great creator of the universe and the galaxy He feels sad because a bunch of human beings down there didn’t obey His laws. He has feelings. When the judgment came not only did the cries of humanity go off. Many of them may have cried when they died. The heart of our Father cried louder than them. He cried when the judgment came. He was grieved.

When Jesus was on the cross don’t tell me the Father don’t have feelings. Jesus felt the hurt of sins for us. Took the pain of sin and death for us. Jesus felt it even though our Father didn’t come down like Jesus did. Our Father up in heaven felt the hurt. For a moment He has to turn His eyes away. That’s when Jesus said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” Our Father hurts when the judgment came.

One day the prodigal son came back the bible says in Lk. 15:20 And he rose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. The father has been looking for his son. That is why when the son was far away the father could see him. He has been looking in that direction all the time waiting. The bible says he was full of compassion. And he had so much love that before his son came he ran to the son and hugged the son and kissed him. He brought the son home, ordered the fatted calf to be slaughtered, had a party eat and be merry. He wants to rejoice because his son has come back.

Notice here, look at what the other son comes to do. Lk.15:25 Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. But he was angry and refused to go in.

Look at the attitude of the older brother. He saw all these things happening the music, the dancing, the fatted calf killed and merry making. He refused to go in and when the father came out. I want you to see in verse 28 what the father did to him. His father came out and entreated him. The father didn’t just ask him to go in. The father said come on son please go in. He pleaded. Now look at the reasoning of the elder son in verse 29. But he answered his father, “Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!” And he said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. First the father cleared his misconception. The father says that you could have as many parties as you wanted to. But the older son says I kept all your commandments. See the older son kept the commandment but didn’t know the heart of the father. He didn’t know that the father loved him enough to the point that he could have what he wants. He still didn’t understand unconditioned love yet. See his understanding of the father was still on conditioned love.

Let me tell even though our Father has unconditioned love for us, we many times have misunderstood His love to be conditioned. It takes the breaking of the wall down. But I can tell if that is broken in your life you will never be the same again. If you get a hold of the unconditioned love of God for your life, you will never be the same person again. What was the attitude of the older son? He says I have kept your



commandments, I have done all these things but you never gave me. He was not sure of the father's heart. He wanted to earn so that the father would come to the point and son you now deserve it. But the father says you don't have to earn it. It is yours; you could have had it any time. The reasons why he never enjoyed himself is because he doubted the unconditioned love. And many of God's children today who go about life who still think that they have to earn God's love. You never earned God's love when you meet God in your sin. Don't try to earn it now that your sins have been washed in the blood. You could never earn it. What you do for a million years can never earn His love because His love is a gift. He did not ask an exchange He just wants to give His love. For God so loved the world that He gave.

And verse 32 It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found. See the older brother saw the merry making. The older brother saw the feasting. The older brother saw the fatted calf. The older brother saw the dancing. But older brother never saw the heart of the father. The older brother never saw the hurt of the father when the son was gone. The older brother never realized what the father went through. He saw all the benefits that were there. But he never saw the grief of his father when the father was deprived of the younger son. And many of God's children they will go about doing things but never realize that what they do hurts the Father. You see we see God's blessings. We see what God had done here. What God has done there? We never see the heart of God. Sometimes people are like Cain. They look at Abel and say, "Abel has been blessed by God." But they never see that Abel was blessed because Abel somehow has made God happy. And God told Cain, "If you do well you also would have received the same blessings." God loves everybody unconditionally. But what happened was that like David we must learn the heart of God. David knew the heart of God. That is why in anything that happened he runs to God. He didn't run away. But many times when trouble comes, when we fall, when we disobeyed, whatever happens, failure comes into our lives we tend to run away from Him than run to Him. Because we fear Him. We fear His rejection. God says come to me I will never reject you.

The heart of the father of the prodigal son was bleeding with grief and sorrow. The older brother knew everything about the father's love except his heart. If you want to be a child of God that pleases our Father you have to learn the Father's heart. And not just His commandments and the words but the heart beat of God. So that you began to understand that in your relationship with one another is not so much what we do but is what our Father's heart feels. And Jesus was so sensitive to the Father's heart of God when He went to the waters of baptism the Father said "This my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

I had an experience of the heart of our Father and His love. What it was that I could never ever forget. On January 18<sup>th</sup> 1986 early in the morning. That whole night I could not sleep because on the 17<sup>th</sup> it was when the Lord appeared to me and shared with me about the anointing of God. So the whole day I just spend in worship and praying. See when you have been with the Lord its not easy to forget that kind experience or come out of it the same. But on the 18<sup>th</sup> in the early hours of the morning, my family was all asleep. I was still sitting down in the dark room and praying. Suddenly from one corner of the room came a ball of light. It came towards me and then it stopped at a certain distance. Then as I was looking I recognized the presence of God. And I said, "God I know its You. Welcome into my life." The

moment I said that the ball of light spread out into words. And the words that were formed were “Holiness onto the Lord.” Then those wordings came close to me and started coming nearer and nearer. And it came to a point where it hit me on the forehead.

The moment those words touched me on the forehead I was in a different world. For the first I felt what the love of the Father was like. I knew He love me but I have never experienced that kind of love to that measure. When His glory touched me I was like in a different world. I don't know whether I was still here or up there. But it was like that I was outside of the planet earth. I was looking at the whole planet earth and it was just like a ball. While I was looking at the planet earth I felt every sorrow the Father felt. I felt every pain He felt. I felt every hurt He felt. I felt every grief He felt. To understand what it is, is like this. Every small thing that was not in line with the will of God and the Word of God was hurting Him. You felt the pain of the world. You literally felt it. Even if one bird drops down to the ground and die our Father felt the pain. You know why? He made those birds. And He never made them to die. And I could feel the hurt of every human being whose lives were not in the will of God. You could feel everything that was not in line with His will. Every one of the diseases that was not in line with the will of God, anything that hurt human being hurt God. And all those things that were done that were not in line with His will that was against the goodness of man and the perfection of man was causing hurt to God. Every bit of it. Every single thing on this planet earth that was not in line with His will hurts Him.

I felt such sorrow, such grief, that my eyes were literally pouring out tears. I felt that I was one with God. And I began to feel what He felt. I literally poured and cried with the love of God for people. When I came out of that I looked at the world. When I see anything that is not perfect I realize that our Father is hurting. Then I understood that the scripture says in Matt. 10:29-30 when it says not a single sparrow shall fall to the ground without God knowing. And not a single hair on your head is unknown to Him. Even the hairs of your head are numbered. O the heart of our Father.

That was the heart that Jesus revealed in the prodigal son. See the elder brother could only think about all the things in the house. But the father says this younger son is my son. I gave him life. I brought him into the world. He is mine. This world belongs to our Father. He made it. Everything on this planet earth, every creature on this planet earth belongs to our Father for He made it. And every time those things that are not in His will it hurts the Creator's heart. I will never be the same again when I understood His love and felt the heart beat of our Father. And yet many times believers go about doing what they want to and they do not seek the will of the Father. We see the dancing. We see the merry making. We see the fatted calf. Privileges that we should have received, we see the blessings, we see the gifts and we see the fatted calf. We see what we deserved, we see what should have been ours but we never see our Father's heart.

Right now this very moment and every day until the Lord Jesus comes again our Father's heart is weeping. Until everything on this earth is brought subject to Jesus Christ it is still causing hurt to the Father. Every individual, every nation and every thing that is not flowing with what our Father wants, He desires that everything be brought under the Lordship of Christ. And I thank God that there is a day coming that the book of Revelations tells us that the kingdom of God is on this earth. And finally after six thousand over years the heart of our Father stops hurting. When Jesus Christ

is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When every human life begin flowing into the will of God. When every creature and human being is brought into the perfect will of God. When there will be no more tears, no more pains, no more death, no more suffering then and only then will the Father's heart stops feeling the pain. And every time when I pray and intercede all I have to do is to remember what our Father feels.

The next time you find it difficult to love one another, all you have to remember is that what you do is not what the Father wants you are part of His hurt too. I don't want to cause hurt to my Father. Neither should any one of the children of God. There is enough hurt in this world that causes hurt to our Father's heart. Even when the apostle Paul met Jesus, Jesus felt the hurt too. Jesus told Paul, "Saul, Saul why do you persecute Me?" Paul never met Jesus. But every time Paul touched one of His believers, every time Paul imprisoned them, every time Paul abused them, every time Paul persecuted them Jesus felt every hurt and Jesus said, "Paul why do you hurt Me?" And God is asking that question of your life. If you are not living in the will of God, if you are doing some things that are hurting to God, if you are doing things that hurt another human being, if you do things that hurt the body of Christ, if your life and attitude hurts any one, God does not come to you and say, "Why do you hurt them?" God says, "Why do you hurt Me?" For when you love even the smallest you love God. Jesus told them this parable. He says I was in prison and you visited me. I was hungry and you fed me. And they asked, "Where Lord?" And Jesus said, "As much as you do to this little one you do it to Me." Our Father's heart feels the hurt of every single thing that is not in line with His will.

## 6. THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Matthew 26, when our Lord Jesus Christ was in Gethsemane from verse 36 to 46 “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.’ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again, a second time, He went away and prayed saying, ‘O My Father, if this cup can not pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.’ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and He prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ‘Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.’”

We have here Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane, and He is struggling in His prayer. There was a struggle or war in His soul; He was having soul travail. He says, “Father God if it is possible let this hour pass away from Me. Let Me not need to go through all these. But if there is no other way then let me go through.” Many people don’t understand what Jesus is going through at this time here because they look at this passage from a human perspective. I have seen many films on Jesus and they show how our Lord Jesus Christ was about to go to the cross. Here He is at the garden of Gethsemane and most of the time they display the physical suffering more than the spiritual and the soul suffering. Sometimes preachers use to preach the suffering of Christ by describing the crucifixion in the physical details. No doubt physically it was painful.

They used to talk about how they would take the rusty nails and they would put it on His hands, then they would take the hammer and they would strike it in. They talk about how He was whipped physically, how His skin peeled open at the back until it reveals His raw flesh and how He carried the cross on the very back where it just been wounded. When He was on the cross, they talk about how they nailed His feet and He was raised up the weight of the whole body was suspended on those nails and all kinds of physical description. They could really do it well and make you cry because Jesus went to the cross. Sometimes when we do all these we forget that crucifixion is a common way to kill criminals in Jesus’ time. Jesus was not the only one crucified. There were two others that were crucified with Him and there were many others before Him and many others after Him whom the Roman government crucified. It was the common way they executed criminals and that kind of description leaves us with the impression that when Jesus was at prayer in Gethsemane that He was just anticipating that physical suffering and that was all that He was struggling about. However that was not the only area. It’s only a small part of the suffering of Jesus. Physical suffering and physical death was only a small tiny part of what He bore for you and I compared to other more important areas of Jesus’ suffering.

When Jesus was there in the garden praying, He was not afraid of physical death. There is no fear in His life of death. He Himself prophesies in Matthew 16 that in three days the Son of Man shall be raised from the death. He will be delivered, He will be crucified and He will rise again. If you know you will be raised physically you wouldn't be afraid. If you knew you would be raised in three days and they put you in the firing squad, there will be no problem for you. You know you are going to be raised. You will die with dignity.

So there is more than what we see in the physical suffering of Jesus but what Jesus experienced in Gethsemane was the spiritual separation from God and Him becoming sin and taking sin for our lives that He has never ever done before. Jesus lived a pure sinless life, He has never known sin, He has never yielded to sin but He knew that on the cross He was going to be sin so that we can be the righteousness of God. He was taking the pain not only of our physical suffering; He has to take the curse of death, spiritual death. The curse of sin and all the curse of the law on Himself and to Jesus I believe the spiritual separation He experiences from God is the greatest agony that He would ever experience. For someone who walked close to the Father as He had, who has never been separated from God the Father before, who had never lived a life of disharmony, to be separated from the Father even for a split second is sure torture. And so Jesus Christ in Gethsemane began to take the sins of the whole world. He began to feel it upon His being. That is why just before His prayer in the garden, Jesus had the cup called the Lord's Supper. In Matthew chapter 26:26 Jesus had taken bread and broke it and said this is My body broken for you. After that Jesus took the wine and He said this is My blood shed for the remission of sin. Notice His concern was sin. He has come to do away with sin. Could you imagine that here in the Holy Communion, He took the cup and said this is My blood. Imagine when they were drinking it say this is Jesus' blood that they were drinking. They were drinking of His life and the agony He went through spiritually was very intense. He struggled within Himself as a man because of sin. He has never allowed sin to be upon Him. It is sure torture for Jesus to bear sin. In fact it was suffering for Him to live among us. All those 33 years that He had lived was suffering. He has to take sin upon Himself, be separated from God fully. II Cor. 5:21 tells us that He became sin for us. He literally took that sin upon Himself. None of us can ever know what it was like. We all were born in sin and then we were born again. None of us knew what it was liked to be sinless and to experience the awfulness of sin. None of us can experience the agony that Jesus experienced.

There are some religious folks today especially in the Philippines who try to re-experience the cross in a small measure physically by undergoing the crucifixion experience themselves physically. But no human being on earth could experience what Jesus experienced in the soul realm and in the spirit realm, of a pure and undefiled spirit and soul coming into contact with sin. The cup that Jesus drank in the Holy Communion He took that cup symbolically right to the garden of Gethsemane. That's why in chapter 26:9 Jesus had that cup. That cup was a symbol of His whole life, His whole being, His blood and when He took that cup before God He says in verse 39, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." Now in the Holy Communion that cup for us represent the forgiveness of sins but for Jesus that cup represents Him becoming sin. In II Cor. 5:21 Jesus was made sin so that we can be made the righteousness of God. It is symbolized in that cup during Holy Communion. When you and I partake of that Holy Communion we became righteousness but when

Jesus partook of that cup He became our sin. There was an exchange. It was a covenant of blood. In the Old Testament they called that a Blood Covenant. In a sense it was an unfair exchange. We took His righteousness and He took our sins. He did it because He loves us.

When Jesus took that cup, He said this is My blood, it's shed for you and He took the same cup to the garden lifted it up to the Father and said Father take this cup from Me. I can not imagine that Jesus was unwilling to die for us. Some people said that at that point Jesus felt unwilling to die for us. I don't think so. If He were unwilling to die for us, He wouldn't have come down in the first place. If He were unwilling, He wouldn't have emptied Himself in Philippians 2 and come down to this earth. Philippians 2 tells us He shed His glory and came down as human life and lived among sinful man. He was willing to come for us. But what He was struggling in the garden of Gethsemane none of us can comprehend. He had to become sin. To you and I who have known sin to a certain degree, we don't feel the pain of it.

Let me illustrate, if a father sees his children sinning, there would be hurt in the father's heart. See sin hurts. But for Jesus it was not just an experience of compassion for us, Jesus had to literally take that pain and experience it upon Himself. Jesus Himself had to contact with sin and know what it is like. That was the part, which Jesus agonized over. It was not physical death. He had no fear of physical death but Jesus had to see sin in others and get hurt by that sin. He now Himself had to take sin upon Himself; He had to be separated from the Father. The Father was His life, His love, His source and His everything. Now Jesus had to be separated. You can imagine the agony; the agony is more of the experience of separation. He wouldn't even want to be separated one second, but He had to be separated 3 days and 3 nights. That is why when Jesus was on the cross at the point of intense suffering He cried in Matthew 27:46, And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The most intense moment of His suffering had started already in Gethsemane and climaxed about the ninth hour, that is, between 12 noon and 3 pm. That was a cry from the depth of His being. Now what was He experiencing? The forsaking of God. He was experiencing extreme separation from God, which is sin. Sin is separation from God. He was experiencing sin and separation to the fullest.

You never read that He cried when they whipped Him. You never read that He cried when they pressed the thorns on His head. You never read that He cried when they forced Him to carry that cross on His back that has been bleeding and wounded. You never read of His cry when they pierced His hands physically. But you read about His cry when He spiritually suffered for you and I. Let me emphasize that physical suffering is nothing compared to the spiritual suffering. All those films about Jesus have over emphasized the physical suffering of Jesus. If you realized that the spiritual is more intense than the physical, you can imagine what it's like. Even the world in that time when it was 12 noon when the sun was supposed to be at its brightest, it was the darkest in the spiritual realm for Jesus. Jesus started that area of suffering in Gethsemane. The moment He drank of that cup that represents sin, then all the evil started happening to Him. In a sense evil exerted its victory over Jesus for those three days and three nights. You must understand the laws of God. Unless you fall spiritually you can not fall naturally. Until Jesus voluntarily yielded no one could

touch Him. Do you know that in the Bible there is a law that says, unless a man dies spiritually he can not die naturally.

In the Garden of Eden when God told Adam and Eve, don't eat of this fruit, for in the day you eat it you will die. You and I know that Adam and Eve ate it but they didn't die immediately. They died some 900 over years later physically. But God said in the day you eat it you will die. What was God referring to was spiritual death. The day you disobey you die spiritually and then the physical death follows. From that day Adam and Eve died spiritually, sickness came into the Garden of Eden. Imperfection came in; the process of ageing came in. They could have lived 1000 years and still look the same as God created them but when they died spiritually every part of their being, spirit, soul and body begin to experience the aging and destruction process. For the first time physical body began to decay. The process of decay took 900 over years in Adam's time because there were a lot of other reasons. The climatic situation was different before Noah's flood. But we see the main point that he died physically.

If Jesus did not die spiritually, do you know He will never die physically? It must take place in the spiritual realm first. By spiritual death I want you to understand that the definition of spiritual death is merely separation from God. It does not mean annihilation and it does not mean non-existence. It means existence separate from God. So from the moment Jesus took of that cup, He has voluntarily chosen to take spiritual death upon Himself. Here is where you see the love of Jesus Christ. He went in by His choice. Every step of the way at anytime if Jesus had said I can not take it anymore, everything would have stopped. At any step during that time from the betrayal, the trial and the persecution and the crucifixion if Jesus said, "No, I am not going further with this", everything would have stopped. The marvelous thing about the love of Jesus is that He still went ahead.

Even right there at the garden of Gethsemane, remember after His prayer, He came to His disciples because He knew that the betrayer was at hand. So all those soldiers came in the garden looking for Him led by Judas and when they were there, they identified Him. They captured Him. Peter took his sword and he cut somebody's ear. Jesus said put your sword back, don't you think that I can call to God now and He will send me twelve legions of angels. In Matthew 26:52-53 "But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I can not now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels.'" We know from the Old Testament one angel is enough to wipe a whole army. Jesus said I have twelve legions. Jesus said I have 12 x 6000=72000 angels anytime at My disposal. What is that compared to your sword, He told Peter that. Jesus said, put it off. If I want to come out of this I will just tell My Father. You know what caused Jesus to surrender Himself? His love. You and I won't understand if Jesus went through without the power to be free. Many of us claim to be suffering for Jesus but do you know that suffering is something you can get out anytime you want. Not something that circumstances forced on you. Some people say I am suffering for Jesus. Sometimes when people make mistake they are persecuted for their mistake not because of their life for Jesus. If you are persecuted for your mistake, that is not persecution. That is repayment for what you sow. But true persecution and suffering for Jesus is when you live righteously, you live right with God and you chose to bear the evils of the world especially human imperfection

against you. But the most glorious part is this, that you are not a victim of circumstances. You have a choice to come out anytime.

Paul said in the book of Corinthians he went through hunger, he went through shipwreck, he went through fasting, he went through all those suffering. Do you know that anytime if Paul wants to stop those suffering he can. He could have an easy life being a rabbi. After all he was taught by one of the best teachers of that time, Gamaliel. He could have made tents and taught the rabbinic schools. But what make Paul willing to forsake that and go and preach the Gospel? Paul he says I am constrained by the love of God, so I chose to suffer inconveniences, I chose to be without something that I could easily obtain. I chose to give up something so that for the love of God I could bring the Gospel to those who are lost. He could have stopped the whole process. Paul was not a victim of circumstances. Some people today say they are going without, they are hungry, they are thirsty, and they are in poverty. Not so much they say they are suffering for Jesus but they are victim of circumstances. Paul was not when Paul says that he went without, hungry at times, shipwrecked. Do you know Paul was able to support himself anytime he wants. He was able to enjoy prosperity anytime he wanted but he went without so that the Gospel could go on. He says this is the suffering of Jesus.

When Jesus Christ was suffering, the first thing started when He was captured. He was not a victim of circumstances; He was not incapable of setting Himself free. What kept Jesus there? It was not the soldiers, He had angels to destroy the soldiers anytime. What kept Jesus there in the trial? What kept Him meek and quiet as a lamb? When they slapped Him, when they pulled His beard, when they tortured Him, didn't He have the power to be free? But love held Him there. Every time they did all those things, He knew He was doing this because of love. Because of love He was willing to be slapped, because of love He is willing to be beaten. Because of love He was willing for people to just bruise Him and mock Him and even when He was at the cross, when they nailed Him to the cross and they were challenging Him, I believe Satan was speaking through them when they said, if you are the Son of God come down from the cross and show us. Did you know that at that point He could have come down? When they were mocking Him, to the whole world He looks like a failure. Right there hanging on the cross, do you know they really sound like Satan when they said if you are the Son of God come down from the cross. If they only knew Jesus had the power to come down. But if He did the plan of God would have been upset. When He was hanging on the cross, I wonder how He felt? It was not the nail that kept Him to the cross. He was stronger than the nails; He was stronger than the whole Roman army. It was the love of Jesus Christ that says, "I am doing this for you Father and I am doing this for them. They know not what they do. They don't understand but Father I am right here because I love You and I love them." And His love kept Him on the cross. His love for you and I, the love of Jesus Christ.

What kind of love do you have? People hurt you a bit you give up. You are confronted by sin and difficulty and you get upset. Then you rebuke and hurt others unnecessarily. But Jesus never at one time throughout His whole crucifixion cause any hurt. Jesus never at one time spoke an unkind word because His love was flowing out, the love of Jesus Christ. After all He came to love us. If you understand the love of Jesus Christ you will realize that those difficulties you are going through, those relationship that you find it hard to exercise love is nothing compared to what Jesus



had to relate to. He had to love those who don't love Him. He had to love those who hated Him. He had to love those who cause the crucifixion and He did love them. He says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." This is the love of Jesus Christ. It's a powerful love and it is this love that Jesus said that we have to love one another. And it is with this love that it's more powerful than any force on earth. Faith, hope and love but the greatest is love. This love of God can do what human beings can not do.

Human beings sometimes try to rehabilitate a hardened criminal. Sometimes criminals who have killed people, who treat human beings like playthings, for them human lives are worthless. Some of those hardened criminals in prison where human psychology could not change them, human efforts can not change them, and human punishment also did not change them. Some of those criminals who are punished in prison, when they come out they are worse. It looks like nothing in the world can change these hardened crooks. Some of them when they met Jesus, the love of Jesus Christ conquered them. What the world can not do to change them, Jesus in one split second through His powerful love changed them into people who love others and who love humanity. It's a powerful love that can change a human being. It's a powerful love that can change you and I. None of us will be here today if it were not for the love of Jesus Christ. Many people tried all kinds of method to reach others but love never fails. Everyone of your method will fail. You tried rebuking, it didn't work. You tried scolding, it didn't work. You tried punishment, it didn't work. Try love, the love of God. All you have to do is just keep loving.

There is one wonderful book called Agape Love. The author talks about his experience in love. He says many times he confront people who have not been loved and they don't know how to react to agape love. They run away. He talked about how he handled some of the most difficult children and he started loving them. They run from him. He talked about how there was one particular child he recorded in his book. How the child keeps scorning him and all he keep saying was I love you. And the child spitted at him and walked off. The child keeps coming back and mocked at him. Every time he sees the child he says I love you and he kept loving, day-by-day, month-by-month. One day the child was sitting all alone by the corner. The parents had given up on the child. The parents couldn't handle the child anymore. He came to the child and put his hands on the shoulder and said I love you. The child kicked him and walked away. He came back again, and he said John I love you. The child could not stand it and he broke down and cried. For the first time that steel curtain was broken. From that day onwards they began to see a change in that child.

Love is powerful, love never fail. Your love and my love, our human affection may fail but do you know that is how God changed our life. Some of us have ran away from God, some of us have fallen into some weaknesses and sins and the world tells us and sometimes Christian tells us I don't love you anymore. But God literally gets on your back. You may have done the worst thing in the world, you have backslidden, and here comes God and He says I love you. You could hardly stand it. You run and finally He finds you again and He says I love you. You can not run from His love. Heaven and earth can not separate you from the love of God. He keeps coming and say I love you. That is how He changes us. Finally one day in our backsliding, in our weaknesses, in our imperfection we turn and say God I love you too. That's the day you changed.

The Bible tells us in I John we love God because He first loves us. I John 4:9-10 “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” You never know what is like until you know the love of God. Right now every one of you have different capacity to love. Your capacity to love is proportional to your capacity that you have allowed yourself to be loved by God. Noel Hayes says at one time he was with Jesus and shaking over in His presence and Jesus said, “I want to love my people but they never let Me love them. They never stay in My presence and allow Me to love them.” Don’t see it the wrong way. Don’t demand love from others. You love others. Don’t go to others and say, “You’d better love me or else..” That is wrong. You should be the one loving others. But how can we love others until we have come to God and receive His love and experience His love? Up till now you have only tasted one drop in the great ocean of God’s love. There is so much more of His love that Paul talks about. He says that I may know God and the fullness of His love to be loved by God.

I remember one time when I was in a Baptist church, I was fasting 40 days and nights and it was in the middle of my fast that God woke me up one morning about four something in the morning. I woke up and it was still dark. Then suddenly there is a presence, which I recognized to be the presence of God and seemingly out of nowhere comes a sweet voice. That was the first time I heard Him speaking in that manner. That voice said, “Son, I love you.” When Jesus tells you He loves you, He does something to you. There laying on my bed wide awake, when I heard Him tell me that, I started to cry and I got up and I wept in His presence. We can not stand His love; it’s too great, too powerful. You may not have heard His audible voice but I want you to know that the words of God run all over the world today through the Holy Spirit and God is saying countless and million of times I love you. He is telling you He loves you. And the day you would stop long enough to appreciate His love, to receive His love, is the day God will change your life.

You may say that I never had a father’s love. It doesn’t matter. I never had too. My father brought me up in the same oriental style. We never know closeness. We never know what it is to kiss our parents. In fact all through my life I have never heard my father say, “I love you.” I knew he did of course he must have but he never said that word to me. Only when I went to the seminary God dealt with me and told me, “I want you to go and tell your father you love him.” So in one of our vacations we went back and I told my father, “Father, I just want to let you know that I love you.” He said ‘hum’. That’s the only response I got. But I didn’t know it, slowly his heart began to open to me and he began to open things to me. It took him time. He had to humble himself too to the love of God. You know people react to love. Most of the time when another person comes to you and eyeball-to-eyeball, say, “I love you with the love of the Lord” all of us start feeling uncomfortable. Why is that so? We are not used to being loved. We are not used to the love of God. But that’s the way God’s love is. It just keeps flowing through you and to you. Every time when somebody comes to you and the person look you eyeball to eyeball and say, “I love you with the love of the Lord.” - if you feel uncomfortable, that’s something wrong with you. That’s something in your being that could not receive love. Why? Privately you have not received God’s love for there is no fear in love. Love cast out all fear.

I feel uncomfortable when people tell me I love you with the love of the Lord in my early days but when God started changing my life and I began to understand His love and see His love then when people say I love you with the love of the Lord, I say yes, I love you with the love of the Lord too. At first when I started saying it, it was a bit artificial, it was almost like I don't like you but I love you with the love of the Lord. Remember you may have the power to get out of some suffering; you may have the power to free yourself from relationships.

There is a sister I know in the ministry; she finds it hard to handle certain types of people. From time to time she had left churches from early days. She will leave one church when a problem starts and she will run to another. The marvelous thing is that the same cycle of troubles starts, only with different actors. She kept running to other churches and it was like a wandering in the wilderness for her. Everywhere she goes the same cycle gets repeated and it was like God wanted to promote her but she could not get through that stage. So she keeps running round in circles. See she had the power to be free and she chose to be free instead of sticking to love. Every time when you are not able to love, there's something wrong with you, not with the others. That is why I believe a Christian can only grow spiritually by linking up with brothers and sisters in the Lord in a local church. Christians can never be perfected if they run from meeting to meeting, seminar to seminar. We call them the convention Christians.

## 7. THE QUALITY OF LOVE

We look at the quality of love and the agape love of God in this message. In the last message you have seen the love of Jesus Christ. We are going to talk about the quality of this agape love and what it does.

Col. chapter one, there is an interesting verse inside that speaks about this love but in a manner which sometimes would boggle our theological minds. Col. 1:24 “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.” Paul says I fill up the afflictions of Jesus Christ. I fill up in my flesh right now. He refers to the suffering that he is going through for Jesus Christ.

The next phrase is the part that really shakes your theology and some times you need to be shaken. In saying this phrase, he says in what is lacking in the affliction of Christ. Paul says that I am suffering now to fill up. Notice the word fill up, in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. We know that in our theology that Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection is complete and that means He does not need to suffer anymore. He does not need to die for our sins anymore. He does not need to take our sicknesses upon Himself anymore. We all realized that Jesus has a completed work.

Now here is where we have to broaden our theology understanding a little bit. It is sound theology when we say that the work of Christ is complete. There is nothing you can add to it. There is nothing you can take away from it. When Jesus declared it is finished that means it is finished. He meant what He said and He said what He meant. He has completed His work in fulfilling the law in dying for our sins, in taking the curse of the law upon Himself. Jesus’ work is completed.

Then there must be a meaning when the apostle Paul says I am now filling up what is lacking in the affliction of Christ. The key is not in the work of salvation. The work of salvation where Jesus bought our redemption, spirit, soul and body has been completed. But here Paul is talking about being Christ like, being Christ to the world. Jesus needs witnesses today. That is the part of His work that is not completed. Jesus needs a witness in every nation of the world. Jesus told His disciples as the Father sends me so send I you. Jesus requires all His believers that just as we read in John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” In the same way I John 3:

16 is for us which says, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” This verse talks about how when we love one another, we will go to the extent that we are willing to lay down our lives for each other.

So let me put it this way, the other part of the ministry of Jesus is this, that Jesus so loved the world that He has sent His witnesses, He has sent His instruments into the world, instruments of love, instruments of power so that whoever believes in the message of the Gospel that they carry will have everlasting life. When we go and bring the message, the message has to be two fold. It has to be in precepts and it has to be by example. Jesus did not just come to preach a great sermon but He came to live a great life. Jesus did not just come with His word and says I love you but Jesus says it

with His action I love you. It was love in action. In the same way we should not just love people in word but in deed also as apostle James wrote, Let us not love in words alone but in deeds. That doesn't mean that you don't love in words. You do still love in words but you love in words and in deeds.

Now that word here in Col. 1:24 speaks about the love of God that suffers long. This is the quality of the love of God. In Col. 1:24 Paul says I am filling up the sufferings of Jesus, I am suffering. In verse 24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you. Notice the direction, the object of his sufferings. He says I am suffering for you. Thank God he did not say I am suffering because of you. They were not the cause of his suffering but because of his love for them. He says I suffer for you and verse 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God, which was given to me for you to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generation but is now been revealed to His saints. In the next verse it says Christ in you the hope of glory.

So when we talk about agape love, we have touched a little bit on that last Sunday when we said that Jesus loves us greatly. He suffers greatly. Let me tell you that when you love greatly you have to be prepared to suffer greatly because love will have to bear the weak. The Bible principle is that the strong always bear with the weak. All the things that are hurtful in your life, all the things that are unpleasant in your life, the strong always have to bear the weak. We don't expect the weak to bear the strong. In Romans 14 it tells us very clearly in the doctrine where he talks about certain people who don't understand about the Sabbath day and about food. Those who are weak in their faith we should receive them without doubt. We should bear up with them. The Bible principle is that the strong bear the weak. So when somebody whom you feel is lesser than you in the faith, whom you feel has not been renewed to the extent that you have been renewed, who is causing hurt because of their ignorance their unbelief or their sin, you have to bear with them. But many times the opposite is done. We try to get them to change to bear with us instead of we bearing with them.

Now this word in Col. 1:24 is interesting. The word affliction and the word suffering has nothing to do with sicknesses or troubles or the things that are not in line with the will of God. Some people say I am having this cancer, praise God I am suffering for Jesus. No way, God did not send you the cancer to suffer for Jesus. It says the suffering of Christ. That means anything that Christ suffered you can suffer too except for the redemption of God. I did not see Jesus suffer sicknesses; I don't see Jesus carrying leprosy on His body. How can you say that is the suffering for Christ when Christ Himself never had that? It's not the suffering of Christ at all. It's your own suffering. It's the devil's sickness on you and I won't term it in the biblical word suffering. We teach clearly that God does not want us to suffer poverty, God does not want us to suffer sicknesses, God does not want us to suffer things that are not in line with His words but at the same time we have to consider that there are Bible passages on suffering. So we have to dig into the Word of God to look at what the Word of God says about the area that is require of us. Suffering for Jesus, in fact Paul says in Phil. 3:10 "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." We like the first part. We say that I may know the power of His resurrection but don't miss out the second part. Know the fellowship of His sufferings and that's the part that will conform you to His image.

There are certain things that will not be perfected in you until you suffer. For tribulation lets read Romans 5:3 “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” There is no way you are going to have a Godly character without tribulations. Look at it very carefully, tribulations produces steadfastness or the Bible calls it perseverance and perseverance that is being patience throughout the suffering produces character, and character, hope. That means you have great vision. Your vision becomes bigger. We see very clearly from the word of God there is no way you can be conformed to the image of Christ unless we understand the fellowship of His suffering. See there are two aspects to the Word of God, His power and His heart seen in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. Without suffering there is no perfection of character. You may be living under the same roof with somebody but you have withheld your love from him or her – how can your love be perfected? After all the love of God has been shed in your heart, but you have not allowed it to be expressed and shown to others – how can that love be perfected?

Rom. 5:5 “Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” So you already have the love of God in you. You were born into love; your nature is to love. When you withhold your love, when you withhold your relationship with others, when you chose to relate to those who do not cause you sufferings, whom it’s easier to get along with, do you know you are the loser in the end? Your character remains undeveloped. You are only able to love a certain category of people. If God were like you, most of us wouldn’t be saved. Because God put up with all of us, all our weird character, all our sharp edges, God loves all of us, He did not just love a certain group of people. Thanks be onto God. His love covers all of us. If you choose to love some and not love others, you choose to withhold the love of God in your heart, you are robbing your own self. Your character will not be perfected. For tribulation produces perseverance, perseverance character. In other words, tribulation will produce character. If I am not used to loving certain types of people, if I withhold my love from them, I am robbing myself. But when I chose to keep loving them, not only something happen to them but something happen in me. My character is being changed. That is what the suffering is. There is nothing to do with sicknesses or diseases or poverty. It has to do with choosing to love when it’s difficult to love. Choosing to walk in agape love when it’s not easy to love. Why do you think that in I Cor.13 that love suffers long? Because God knew that love has to suffer long.

Lets look at Col. 1:24 and see Paul expressing himself as he does in the Greek. Lets look at verse 24 “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.” The word affliction is from the word ‘thlipsis’. The word thlipsis of Christ that is the afflictions of Christ is the same word translated tribulations in Romans 5. So he is still talking about the same affliction, the same tribulations. It is the normal word that is translated for tribulation. It is the same word Jesus used when He said in the world you shall receive tribulations. In the world you shall receive thlipsis. The root of this word is the word ‘thlipbo’. The word thlipbo means pressure. When I put pressure and press on your muscle that is thlipbo in the Greek. The noun for the word thlipbo is thlipsis, which actually means pressure. So the word tribulation has nothing to do with sickness. It has nothing to do with poverty. It has nothing to do with all the wickedness and the evil that happen in your life. The word just means the pressures of life. I can tell you if you put some people under the

same roof it's high pressure and Paul knows what he was talking about when he say this love that helps him bear the pressure. See there is pressure upon you not to love. There is pressure on you to withhold your love. There is pressure to react and yet this love could contain and flow and take the pressure. What you are is what you really are under pressure. It's nothing if you are not under pressure and say I love God. But when the heat gets stand on and you still can say I love God then we know it's from your heart. It's nothing to say I am going to follow God all the way when times are easy but when the pressure is hard on you and you say I am going to follow Jesus. That is when it's really from your heart. See it's what you are under pressure that proves your real character. The rest of it is just camouflage. It's not real. The real part of you comes out under pressure.

Lets look at Paul loving the Corinthians. In II Cor. 2:4 Look at the word thlipsis and we can understand what Paul is saying here about the quality of his love for them. After you have looked through his love, you will understand that he really went through something in his Christian life. Paul says in verse 4 For out of much thlipsis affliction (that is out of much pressure, he is undergoing a lot of pressure) and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears not that you should be grieved but that you may know the love which I have so abundantly for you. I tell you love suffer long. Love puts up with pressure. See Paul was referring to his first epistle. This is II Cor. 2:4 He was referring to first Corinthians. First Corinthians reads about how there is a group from Cleopas that tells Paul about all the terrible things that happened in Corinth, for example, the immorality happening, the confusion and some challenging his apostleship and remember it hurts Paul because he founded that church. He founded it with his sweat, with his blood and with his tears. It took effort to start that work. And here was the news, it broke his heart. I mean he really loves them. Do you know that the more you love, the more you put yourself in a position to be hurt? Do you know that those that hurt you most are those you love most? It is nothing if the world tells you, you rascal. But when you husband or wife tells you, you rascal. Which one hurt more? The one you love. The more you love, the more you put yourself in a position to hurt. That is why the agape love of God, the quality of this love will help you to withstand the pressure. Paul says because of his abundantly love for them, abundant agape, he put up with all the sufferings, he put up with all the pressure and he wrote to them with tears. You may not realize it but I Cor. 13 and I Cor. 1 right on to the end in chapter 16, all were written with tears. When Paul was writing love suffer long, the tears were trimming from his eyes. Love is patience and love is kind. He was crying and weeping away. It was from the depth of his heart that came the revelation of the love of God and you will agree I Cor.13 is one of the most beautiful definitions of love. It came under pressure. Love came out and flows out.

II Cor. 4:17 "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Paul considers that all those things that are pressing him. Now look at the pressure he went through before you understand what he call light affliction. I think that is an understatement. You know the greater your love is the greater you can take the pressure. Although you put yourself in a position to be really hurt and under pressure, yet the more you love the more you can take the pressure. The more you love the more you can put up with somebody. Have you ever seen lovers put up with each other when they are deeply in love. They really put up with each other. The love flows out. And Paul call it this is light affliction. It is nothing and it is bearable.

II Cor. 4:8 “We are hard-pressed on every side.” The illustration is like those seeds that are going through the mill, where you are being crushed to bring out the oil. You are being put through the mill. You see how they put one round stick of sugar cane through one side of a rolling machine and the other side the sugar cane comes out flat and the juice is drained to a glass. Paul says we are hard pressed and he says on every side. We yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed. You know what kind of quality is that? Love never fail, life or death, tribulation, heaven, hell, angels, devils, nothing can separate you from the love of God. The quality of God’s love is a quality that it can go through anything and it comes out the same.

In verse 10 “Always carrying about in the body of dying of the Lord Jesus.” I never understood what he meant by the dying of the Lord Jesus until I understood love. See love puts up with people. Love bears with them, that the life of Christ may also be manifested in our body.

Verse 12 “So then death is working in us, but life in you.” That is what he meant by filling up the affliction of Christ. What did Christ do? Christ died for us so that we may live. What did Paul do? He lived his life and gave his life even onto death that others may live. See we need Christ. Those great boosters throw an object into orbit; there is a great propulsion force. Paul talks about the constraining. See when the pressure is outside is great but the pressure within is greater, the pressure within will overcome. And the pressure inside is love. The pressure from within is greater than the pressure outside, and then you don’t feel the pressure. Don you know why you feel the pressure, because the pressure outside is greater than the pressure inside. Then you sensed the differential of pressure. But when the pressure inside and outside is the same, you don’t feel it. Right now you don’t feel air that much unless you swing your hand or the wind blow on you. But when you get into water, you began to feel the pressure on your body. And the deeper you go into the water the greater you feel the pressure. That is why even those divers that dive very deep up to a certain feet, when they come up, they can not come right out into the air. They will have a condition where all their body will form bubbles because the pressure in their bodies gets adjusted to the pressure under there. When they come up, they have to be slowly adjusted to the presence. See the pressure within must be greater than the pressure outside. Then you will say it’s light. It’s nothing.

II Cor. 5:14 “For the love of Christ constrains us.” Verse 15 “and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves.” Do you see what agape does? Chapter 7:5 - “For indeed when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.” Do you know that Paul had the opportunity to fear? Some of you think that Paul walk about like Superman. I want you to realize that Paul is a man like you. Paul is like you subject to fear but Paul chose to confess the Word. See he chose the Word. He says in verse 6 “Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us.” How when Titus came brought the good news. See the man who wrote I Cor. really know how to love. He was not just writing a sweet poem. It was not just a poem written in ease and flowery bed of ease and feathers. He was writing from rocks, under pressure.

II Cor. 12:15 “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you souls.” He says I will buy you with my life if I can. This is the kind of love he has for the church. Now this is the tremendous thing he says, “Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I



am loved.” This guy is really a fan of Jesus. To many people he will be fanatic. He says the more I love you, the less you love me but yet I will love you some more. Sounds like God. Jesus love and love and love until we love Him back and Paul did the same. He walks in love. He lives in love. He says you don’t love me, praise God, I love you still. What a character! This is the kind of man that turns the world upside down. If you want God to use you greatly, live the quality of love that He does. Love like Jesus loves.

That’s the word thlipsis, the affliction and the pressure of Christ.

Col.1:24 having understood all these things that Paul wrote, now you understand Col.1:24 what he meant. “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.” I tell you Paul loves the church. He loves the church and he loves believers so much. He is willing to spend himself for them. What quality of love do you have? The other word to consider in verse 24 is the word suffering from a different Greek word. I now rejoice in my suffering for you. The word suffering is from the word ‘pathema’ which means affection and feeling. Do you know Paul had feelings too? What was happening were not flowing the way he would like it. In other words, the thlipsis was flowing out against his feelings.

When Jesus Christ came on this earth, I can assure you it was a very uncomfortable feeling. Some of you have a small measure of it. If you have been in a church living a good Christian life, praising the Lord, worshipping God, suddenly we take you to a place where everybody curses the Lord. Do you know there is a different feeling? You fell miserable, you feel tortured without even the tortures of a hot iron. You feel the difference because your nature has been changed. I feel uncomfortable every time someone blasphemy God. See it’s against your nature. Your nature is to worship and praise God. The more you become like God and know God, the more discomfort you have when people are not living right with God. And this is the suffering of Jesus, yet you put up with the discomfort because you love them and you want to win them to the Lord. That is the internal feelings within you.

See the word suffering has to do with the word feeling, affection. Your feeling of discomfort is there but you chose love and your spirit man came out and says I will love in discomfort. I will love in inconvenience. The love of God will love in season and out of season. When it’s uncomfortable with you and when it’s comfortable for you, you will still love and love and love. This is the same word that Phil. 3:10 say I want to know the fellowship of his suffering. You know what Paul is saying? I want to know what it is like for the holy Christ who knew no sin to live among sinners. I want to know what that feeling is like and suffer with Him. Now you can pray that prayer with meaning. When you sing that song, To Be Like Jesus, let me tell you, you can not be like Jesus until you suffer like Jesus. Your character can not be like Jesus until you have gone through tribulation and put up with all those things and it takes time to change the character. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Character comes by tribulations and tribulations with perseverance. So you know where to get faith. You know where to get Christian character by choosing to love. Whatever situation you are in, whatever discomfort you are feeling, put up with it, let the agape love arise and constrain you. Whether it be your non-Christian parents, partner or spouse, win them with love, put up with them. Don’t react. If you keep reacting, the love of God is not coming out. Put up with them. Let the quality of

God's love flow through your life. In this world Jesus says you shall have tribulations. You shall have this kind of suffering. These are the sufferings that Paul went through.

I Peter 4:13 "But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's suffering, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ because of your godly character. Some people suffer because of their stupidity. Some people suffer because of their sins. Some people suffer because of their mistakes. This is not the sufferings of Christ. Christ did not suffer because He was stupid. He was wise. Christ did not suffer because He was sinful. He was sinless. Christ did not suffer because He made a mistake or disobeyed God. Do you know that there are a lot of unnecessary suffering? There is, we are not talking about those. They do not qualify to be sufferings of Christ. There are sufferings of disobedience. The suffering of Christ is when you live a godly life, when you live a righteous life, when you live a sinless life, when you live a holy life and you get persecuted because of that. You get persecuted because you obey God but because of the love of God you are prepared for persecution and tribulations. God says in verse 14, you are going to receive help. God is going to help you when you do that and stand in love. For the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon you. God is going to put His glory on you. The greatest pressure any human being has ever taken was taken by Christ when He went to the cross three days and three nights. He was in the depths of the earth. None of us can understand the fullness of the pressure He went through. Paul prayed actually that I may know that fellowship. And out of the greatest pressure ever undertaken and the greatest reproach ever experienced came the greatest glory, the resurrection power from the dead spirit, soul and body He was raised. Mysteries of the spirit realm are going to be unfolded and revealed, some of the most beautiful things that are going to happen in your life and the greatest revelation that is going to unfold to you, some of the greatest manifestation of God's glory on your life is going to come when you pay the price and take the suffering as a part of the Christian life. Embrace the sufferings of Jesus because of love. Love suffers long.

## 8. LOVE PERFECTS OPERATION

Paul speaks in I Cor.13 the first few verses he speaks about the operation of gifts. So I want you to see that he was not just talking about love, he was talking about love in reference to the function of the gifts and the ministries. He says in verse 1-3 “Though I speak with the tongues of man and of the angels.” That’s lovely, very few people speak angelic tongues. Most of us speak the tongues of man. When we speak forth in the tongues of angels, let me tell you the language of the angels and the heavenly language has a melodious tune to it. It sounds a lot like singing in the Spirit while they were speaking. Our earthly language can not compare to the heavenly language that God has designed to operate in eternity. So Paul says that even though we may speak with tongues of man and of angels, if we have not love, what do we become? A clanging cymbal. In other words, you will be nothing more than a tin can. You will be nothing more than what Kenneth Hagin says a donkey braying at midnight in a tin barn. A lot of sounds, a lot of noise but they are empty. Isn’t it amazing? Paul says if the gifts operate without love they are empty. Lets consider that for a moment. If the gifts are from God, why are they empty? The gifts have to be from God. Speaking in the tongues of man and angels has to be a gift from God. You see the key here people must pay attention to is that as long as there is no love, your gift does not edify. That means it’s possible to operate a genuine gift that came from God. He never said that their gift was not from God. But he said that the operation of their gift must be within the love context. Without love it is nothing. The amount of edification power the gift carries is nil.

The next verse speaks about faith. “Though I have the gift of prophesy and understand all mysteries and all the knowledge and I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, power gift operating, but have not love, I am nothing.”

See in verse 1 he speaks about the vocal gift and then he speaks about prophesy in verse 2 using prophesy in a general manner. Usually it refers to the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and discernment of spirits. In the Old Testament they operate the word of wisdom. They prophesied and predicted Christ’s coming. They called that prophecy but we all know that it is word of wisdom, a revelation of the future. But the word prophecy is used generally when it speaks about the spoken word of wisdom or word of knowledge. So Paul was using the revelation aspect. He says you can understand all mysteries; you can have all knowledge, the revelation gifts, and the power gifts. The first of the power gifts is faith, to move all mountains. He says mountains. You can have the vocal gifts, you can have the revelation gifts and you can have the power gifts operating in your life, if you don’t develop love you are nothing. So you understand why we have to teach a series on love. If people do not understand love all that they have amount to nothing. All the effort is wasted. All the work and the yielding to operate the gifts become nothing. See love is important. Love will cause the gifts to have an effect, a life changing quality in its results. This is what love does. Love brings forth perfection of the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our life. Without that it is a waste of time and a waste of effort. Genuine gifts become empty. So when you operate the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life, it has to flow from a heart filled with the love of God.

Lets examine this very closely. We human beings are very funny. We are all very self-conscious and original sin in our flesh always makes us self-centered. In the natural

world the opposite of love is hate but in the Bible the opposite of love is self. It says love seek not its own. To be selfish is to be unloving. To be selfless is the love of God, the agape love of God. The reason why the gifts do not produce an impact when we don't operate in love is that we forget the purpose for the gifts. See many times we look at the gifts by themselves per se. But when we lose the purpose the whole thing is gone. When you get into your car, we ask you where you are going. You have to know where you are going. Nobody gets into their means of transport and then says I don't know where I am going. You don't get into a bus and the conductor asks you where are you going and you say, I don't know. Then why are you here? I don't know. Who are you? I don't know. See we have to know the direction. Otherwise your journey will become a wilderness. You might as well join the Israelites and go round and round for forty years.

The purpose behind the operation of the gifts is to build another person. It's to edify them. It is to impart grace into their lives. It is to help them to walk a closer walk with God. Encourage them in areas they are discouraged. Lift them up in needs of their lives. So to keep to the purpose is important. Do you know if you don't have a purpose in life, you become a lazy bum? You become demotivated and you don't have something that makes you keep going all the time. People without a purpose in life usually commit suicide. It's the purpose in life that that keeps us going when we discern the will of God in our life.

In the same way love gives purpose to the gifts. Love brings the perfect operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in both the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fivefold ministry. You may be called to be pastor, teacher, evangelist, prophet or apostle but if you don't operate in the love of God, all your doing will come to nothing in the end. Isn't that a dangerous thought? Living for twenty years and then comes out with nothing. Not only nothing here but also nothing in heaven. Unless we operate in the love of God, all we do in this life are wasted. Isn't that a frightening thought? An awesome thought to know that you have lived and died without living in love is a dangerous thing. Because up there you will be found naked, not in our natural tern today, Paul used that word in I Cor.3 he says when you go up there, everything that is done in the flesh, everything that is not done in love is burned up. And only what is done in love remain. That's an awesome thought. So we better develop love in our life because without love we are nothing. We must have all the love of God to flow in our life and our ministries.

I John 4 Love bring perfection to the operation of the gifts and ministries in our life. Love perfects a person. I John 4:12 "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us." Love will perfect your life. We have seen how that our vertical relationship with God is measured by our horizontal relationship with our fellow men in I John 4 towards the last verse. In verse 21 "This commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also." In other words, we don't care how much you say you love God, your love for God is measured by your love for your brother. Your vertical relationship is measured by your horizontal relationship. Love is not just a philosophical idea or feeling. It is a practical aspect of seeking or edifying another. So here in I John 4:12 it says that as we love each other, as we reach our hand out to love another, we love with the love of God.

Last week we talked about love suffers. Understanding the suffering of Christ is love. Paul also suffered when he love. He paid a price when he love and when we keep loving others and when we keep denying ourselves and loving other, it says love is perfected in us. Not just ordinary love. His love is perfected in us. And I John 4 is the only place where you will find this powerful verse that says in verse 17 “Because as He is, so are we in this world.” There is no more powerful verse than that. That says as Jesus was in the world, so you are in the world. You are like Christ and the only way we can be like Christ is to learn to be like Him in love. When you are like Christ in love, you will be like Christ in power. Ever since I was born again I was always hungry for revival. I am not satisfied with a Christianity that sits in the pew. That does not change life. That does not change the world around me. And this hunger had driven me to pray and to fast and to seek God’s face for the power that will change this world and through the years God has shown that unless we know the heart of God, we will never know the hand of God. God’s hand represents His power. His right hand represents the ultimate of His power. When in Acts 4 the church prayed saying, O Lord, look at what they are doing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant us boldness by stretching forth thy hand that signs and wonders may be done in the name of your holy Child Jesus. See the hands of God symbolize signs and wonders. And God spoke those words to me and said, “Son, if you want to know My hand, learn to know My heart of love.”

Many people like to be like Jesus and have power, they want that but they don’t realize that the key to the power is through love. Learning to love one another. When we love one another, it says that His love is perfected in us. How is this love perfected in us? He describes in verse 18 “There is no fear in love.” That is a fantastic statement. Our world lives in fear. Look at the TV fear is there. Look at the newspapers fear is there. You go out into the world you find they have fear. This whole world is ruled by fear. Why is that so? The Bible already showed that in Hebrew 2:14 the devil rule the world by fear. The Bible says that the devil is the god of this world. That is in II Cor.4 and then in Hebrew 2 it says that through fear the devil holds all men in bondage. So fear has to do with the domain of the enemy, the domain of the devil. Hebrew 2:14-15 talks about the devil holding all men in the bondage of fear. The fear of death and all the other fears are involved in that one word fear. Fear of the future, fear of heights, fear of water, fear of rats. Fear rules our present world. When John says there is no fear in love, he is pointing to a possibility, he is pointing to a realm. He is pointing to a place call the kingdom of God where no fear can rule. No fear is present. And that is the realm of love. We know that the opposite of faith is fear. So when we have faith we eradicate fear. If there is faith there is no fear. And if there is love, there is no fear. Therefore faith and love are related. You can not separate them. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Roman 10:17 but the faith to believe that His word is His word comes from love. If you love God, everything He says is accepted. You will do what God tell you. You won’t question Him. You will accept what He says. For example, if you love someone and someone says, “Please meet me in town” you will take a bus and go meet him. “Lets meet at 12.30pm.” You are not going to say, “Are you sure? I don’t know I can trust your word or not. I don’t know I can believe you or not.” Maybe if it is someone whom you do not know, you may find it more difficult. But if it’s someone you love, you trust and he/she say I am going to do this for you, you would believe it, without questioning. See the ability to believe His word is derived from love. The more love

you have for God, the more love you have for believers and love perfects you. Perfect love produces perfect faith. We want to move to a realm where we operate in perfect faith. That is where we would see a hundred percent healing taking place in an evangelistic or healing service. In most evangelistic meeting or healing miracles service you will find that sometimes thirty percent got healed, sometimes 50%, 70% or 90%. It's very rare to have a meeting where you have everyone who comes gets healed. That is not God's perfect will. In Jesus healing services when He heals the Bible always record, they were all healed. What is demonstrated? Perfect faith. Everyone was healed. Remember it says as He is so are you. As Jesus is so am I in the world. Jesus had that kind of services. Gospel of Matthew records it many times and they were all healed.

In the book of Acts chapter 5, when the church in the book of Acts reached its peak of ministry, this statement was recorded in Acts 5:12 "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed." Do you know that is supposed to be a normal service? The time is coming when the body of Christ is going to recognize its position in God and the body of Christ is going to be like God in love. They will become like God in faith and it will become a common experience to have everyone who comes with a need touched by the presence of God. The key is love. There has been prophecy about the power of God being manifested. Prophecies all over the world where I traveled, I hear people prophesied about the body of Christ - the fivefold ministries being raised up, all the gifts of the Spirit being manifested, the power, the revival, the glory. Let me tell you, it has to come from love. It starts with your heart, a heart of love. Before Jesus came down on this planet earth, love was working in His heart. Love was working in the Father's heart. By the time He steps out with power, His love was flowing. Which came first, love or power? It's love. See love came first then the power. God so loved, then He gave. Jesus loved, then He died.

Remember those times when people came for healing? Gospel of Matthew records and He was filled with compassion. In your life, you want to operate the power usefully. What do I mean by usefully? That it edifies. Do you know you can have wild electricity, it will do you no good. Helps you to become charcoal. You try tapping on a lightning, its wild electricity flickering in the air. You try to have fire that is not controlled you will have wild fire. But when fire comes to your stove, it becomes beneficial.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit, unless they operate in love will not function the way God intended it to function. It's just like buying a petrol car and like putting kerosene in it. It's just like buying a beautiful tinted flower vase and then using it to keep your rubbish. Something is wrong. The gifts of the Spirit and the calling of God can only be brought forth by love, by the love of God in our lives. Develop love because love perfects your operations. Love will remove all fears from your life. All of us have been subject to fear because we have a past in original sin. And we were sinners.

When we were born again, we were given a new Spirit but sometimes our un-renewed mind still carry a measure of fear. The only way to get all fear out of your life is begin to operate in love. As you begin to operate in love something begins to take place within you. Fear starts disappearing. Look at the word carefully, it says in verse 14, There is no fear in love but perfect love cast out all fear. Why does the Bible use such a word as cast out like casting out demons? See love is a powerful force in the heart. Love not only slowly removes fears, love not only erases the fear, it cast out fear, and it gives fear the left foot of fellowship. When love comes fear goes. The love of God and the power of God are related.

II Timothy chapter one, when he talks about the Spirit of God, he talks about love. II Tim.1:

7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” You see love and power go together. The Bible does not separate them. It’s only human beings that separate love and power. Love and power come together because power is authority and with authority comes responsibility. To have responsibility you need to have love. You put an irresponsible guy and give him with authority, he will become like Hitler. See man can not handle authority without love. Authority is given in proportion to love in the kingdom of God. In the world it may not be so. But in the kingdom of God, promotion comes when you develop love. You may be faithful as a one-talent evangelist, you could be within your town known as an evangelist. You perfect love in your life, God will perfect your ministry. You can become a five-talent evangelist and then as love develops in your life, God promotes you. See promotion does not come from the east or from the west or from the north or the south, but it comes from God. And God promotes according to love. Then you are in a position for a greater responsibility. If love brings a promotion then selfishness brings a demotion. It depends on you, whether you want to operate on love or operate on selfishness. Every time someone walks in self and self-centeredness, something begins to happen. It’s like the pull of gravity on their life. It will pull them down because they are heavier now. But when you walk in love, the law of gravity, spiritual gravity of sin does not pull you down. You go upwards towards God because God is love. If God is love the more you live love, the more you allow love to perfect you, the closer you are to God. And there is nothing that can go higher than God. God is the highest. The more love you develop in your life the higher you go.

Love will promote you but watch out, no matter how high you get in the kingdom of God, the moment pride which is in the form of self comes in and you stop operating in love, you start operating on self. No matter how high you got, it will be down hill all the way. Remember Lucifer was high up. The moment he stopped operating in love, he went down hill. We have given you a powerful key to get promotion from God.

Now there is nothing wrong with having spiritual goals because the Bible says we are all in a race. Hebrew 12 talks about a race that we all run. What kind of race? A friendly race where all of us seek to be the best in God. Run the race to be like God. Paul says in I Cor. 14:1 “Desire is natural in itself.” The desire to go high up with God is not wrong. It is only wrong when the desire is self. And the desire is separated from the love of God. Jesus says, you want to be great, no problem, that is my paraphrase version. John and James came and said we want to be at your right hand and your left hand. We want to be no.1 after you. According to my version, Jesus said no problem, learn to be servant and you will be there. In the Bible it says the greatest among you

shall be a servant, a servant to all. So there is nothing wrong for the desire of greatness. The desire to be great is encouraged. But the desire to be great is pruned to be greatness to be like gods, to be like a servant to all. Love serves.

I Cor. 14:1 Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts especially that you may prophesy. See he does not discourage you from pursuing spiritual gifts. Why is it so? If you have no desire to speak in tongues you will never. If you don't have a desire to operate in the word of knowledge, you will never. There is nothing wrong with those desires but those desires must be pursued with love. Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts. Pursue go after it and you will be perfected in your life. All of us have an inherent desire to be perfect. That is born of God. The key to perfection is love. It's not power. It starts with love. When you have perfected love in your life, something began happening. The operation of the gifts become perfect, finely tuned. Perfection of love is contagious. It produces perfection of character. It produces perfection of ministry. It produces perfection of gifts and operation. It produces perfection of relationship. But it starts in the heart. Develop perfection in love and you will develop perfection in ministry.

I believe and I am very sure every one of you wants to perfectly in the gifts. When you operate the gifts of God, you want to be accurate. When God gives you a word you want to be exact. When you prophesy over someone you want to be exact. When you see a vision and you give a word of the vision you want to be precise. Do you know that when the gifts of God operate perfectly, that's when the world began to see the signs and wonders? That's when the world becomes astonished. We do the signs they do the wondering. But as long as the gifts are not perfected, we will be trying to do the signs and they will be doing the mocking. It will be signs and mocking, not signs and wonders. When you operate perfectly in the gifts of God and the ministries of God, that's when the world will say something is happening. They will begin to come and ask. Then you can tell them it's Jesus and they will come to Jesus by the flocks and by the tribes.

The key to operation in perfect gifts and perfect ministries is perfect love. Lets be very practical that means it starts with your neighbor. Turn to the one next to you and say it starts in your home. It starts among those you know. That's the amazing thing about love. How my relationship with another one close to me can determine my ministry right up to the North Pole. It's amazing but there is a relationship there. The one who stay in the same roof with you is going to determine your power and impact. If your life and ministry whatever you do, wherever you go, if you don't correct that, it's going to be a hindrance in your life everywhere you go because you will be imperfect. As He is, so are you in the world. And the context starts with love.



## 9. LOVE SEEKS EXPRESSION

I Cor. 13:3 “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

For anyone to give everything he or she has would be a symbol of great sacrifice and love and dedication. And to go to the extent of giving your own body to be burned will have been the highest expression of love. Yet Paul says that it is possible to do all these things without agape love, without the love of God. And as we understand the love of God this morning we will understand this phrase that you can give without loving but you can't love without giving. And Paul here is pointing to the possibility of giving without love. That is something that we may find hard to comprehend. But yet the Word of God declare onto us that giving by itself is no sign of love for a human being can give and even sacrifice for various reasons.

Lets ponder that thought for a moment. We realize that giving is essential to life and as we grow up into adults, we realize that in life there are certain things you can give in order to gain something back. All the businessmen know they can invest in something. They surrender a part of their finances. They surrender a part of their assets in order to gain something else. And this comes to personal relationship. Sometimes when people love one another or when people fall in love, they would seek to give. This is more acute when only one party love but the other doesn't love in return. Then the person tries to gain the love of the other by gifts or by sacrifices. In social or administrative circles, sometimes people give in order to gain favors. We call that bribery. So looking at aspects of human life we see that there is sometimes some inclination in the human nature to give or show love in order to gain something. We do not want to lose. Whenever we part with our time, we part with our finances; we part with a part of ourselves, we want to gain something. And all human love is based on that. It is actually an exchange, an investment. We want to exchange our goods for something else. We want to exchange our favors for something else. We want to exchange our attention for something else.

And Paul says it's possible to go right to the limit and give everything you have and yet have no love. That would be sad. And it's even possible to give your life and not have love. So we have to differentiate between these two acts or works, one born without love and the other born of love. Yet the Bible says in John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” At the same time on the other side it is not possible to love without expressing it in deed. Love demands an expression. Love demands that something be surrendered to show it forth. I John 3:

16-18 “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” See by this we know His love. Love has to be expressed. You can not love without giving. God loves us so much that He gave His best, His only begotten Son. He did not send an angel. Love will give the best. That's the difference between love and just liking. Love will motivate you to give the best. And God gave His only begotten Son. Roman 8 tells us if God did not spare His Son how shall He not give us all things. If God has given His best what else the rest. See we understand His love by His Son coming down and dying on the cross for us. There is no other way you can understand the love of God. There is no other way you can understand the statement that God loves you. You can put a sticker behind your car that says God loves you but people don't understand that statement. They must

understand what God did. For God so loved the world that He gave. Love needs to be expressed to be understood. If God just sits in heaven and says I love you, none of us would understand. It will be just like a human being talking to an earthworm. The earthworm wouldn't understand anything. In fact the earthworm thinks that you are harming it because you have taken it from its natural habitat, the soil, the dirt and the mud where it is comfortable. Supposing you put the earthworm back down and you want to do something and express your love to the earthworm, and you just bend down where it is in a natural position and say earthworm I love you. The earthworm will run away. See you frightened the earthworm with your voice. How can you express love to the earthworm? If in some way you could bring yourself down to the size of the earthworm and be like an earthworm and communicate to the earthworm that will be able to express it.

God is a Spirit; He dwells in the heaven above. From Genesis to Malachi God has been trying to tell us He loves us. When God made the Garden of Eden God was saying I love you. I made this garden for you. He did not make man on the first day; He made man on the sixth day because He wanted man to enjoy what He made. He didn't make man on the first day with nothing there. He made all these things and then He made man to enjoy His creation. He was trying to express His love. Man doesn't understand. Through all the ages when He pulled Abraham out, when people walk with Him, He was trying to say I love you. And through all the times when the Israelites were disobedient, God was saying I love you through the prophet Hosea. He says though you reject Me yet I love you. But human beings do not understand His love, until finally through the mystery of godliness the Word came down and live among us. And by living among us, He went about caring for the needs of people, whenever there is a need. Even the mother Mary understood that this is someone special. When in a wedding there was not enough wine, she went and tells Him because she knew that He cares for the needs. See love expresses and so there is the miracle of wine. And all through His life, He healed the sick and helped the broken hearted. He seeks to impart His life, His Spirit and His love. What did they do to Him? They took Him and turned Him over to the Roman's rulers. They crucified Him. He said, Father forgive them. What was He doing? He was saying I love you. I love you not because of what you can give back to me. I love you and I want you as you are. And that was His love reaching out. Finally when He died on the cross and He was resurrected again, the message of love goes forth throughout the entire world, the Gospel of love telling us that God has loved us to send His Son onto us. We have seen how that it was not the nails that kept Him on the cross. When they were shouting to Him and say come down from your cross if you are the Son of God, Jesus had the power to come down. Even when they captured Him and Peter thinking that he was very good at the sword, cut off somebody's ear, Jesus fixed back the ear and Jesus said, put your sword away for I could call My Father now and He could give Me twelve legions of angels. He got the power to set Himself free but He allowed Himself to be rejected. He allowed Himself to be abused. He allowed Himself to suffer because He wants us to know He loves us. See love demands expression. In John 4 it says we know love because He laid down His life for us. That's the way by which love can be known.

And we also ought to lay down our life for the brethren in 1 John chapter 3 verse 17. "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" How does the love of God

abide in us? My little children, he says in verse 18, let us not love in words or in tongue but in deed and in truth. Truth is the life not just theory. If we love with God's love, it demands that we give and impart a part of our life. Love seeks to share. It doesn't seek so much to gain. When Jesus went to the cross He was saying I want to share My life with you. I want to share all My inheritance with you. So in Romans 8 it says we have been made heirs and joint heirs. Love seeks to share, to impart of our life. So John tells us that if we see someone in need and we are in a position to help, what does love do? Love seeks to share, to build, and to give. You can not love without giving. Lets take for example, if a person is in love with another, do you know that the person will go all the way or do anything to make sure that the guy or that girl known that someone love him/her. Either they spend more time with each other or they give little gifts or notes. See it wants to express. That is on the human side. But on the overall sometimes when a person is rejected, the person feels hurt. Why does that person feel hurt? Very often people give love expecting something in return. Their motive in loving others is not pure enough; they don't love unselfishly enough – they do not love just to give. When we love with agape love, we cut off the other part of wanting to gain something in return. In agape love, we only seek to impart and to give. We don't seek to gain anything back. See the gaining part is the thing that renders all your giving to be impure. That will bring you back to I Cor. 13 where Paul says that I can give all these world goods away and I give my body to be burned and have not love. Why? Such giving was with a motive to gain something. Whether you gain fame or you gain attention or you gain something, when you seek to love to gain something, it immediately cancels out agape love. That's a fearsome thought and that's all that the world is based on. Must gain something even from childhood.

When we come to the Word of God, God is saying when you love, you must cut off the thought or motive of gaining something in return. Cut off the part that seeks to ask, "What can I gain out of this?" So when you love with the agape love of God, you are not seeking to gain anything, you are not seeking to even gain a person's heart. But on the human level on human love, when a girl or a boy likes one another they want to express something to gain a person's heart. No comparison with the love of God. The only part that can be brought forth as an illustration is the part where a person seeks to do something, want to express. You have seen people who love one another; they tend to want to be together. Shake hands and hold longer. Look at each other longer. That is human affection. We are saying that we are to go forth to God's agape love. God's agape love is when you surrender the right to gain. When you surrender your right to have a response to your attention. You surrender that right to God. So the agape love flows forth because there is so much in you to give. Not because you don't have any agape love in you and you need to do something to gain some love in return. See the difference? In other types of human love, people begin by not having any love from others. A boy or a girl doesn't have a boy friend or girl friend and they seek to have one. Somebody who does not have attention wants to have attention. A child wants to have attention from the parents and they seek to do something to win their parent's favor. See all the time is because we don't have human love we use psychological tactics to win or gain to fill up what we don't have. All our human attention and love is based on an initial lack of love from others. We don't have something. We lack attention so we cry or we make a nuisance of ourselves just to get that attention. We get rejected and we get hurt and we want the world to pay attention to us. So we do something drastic and the world gives us the

attention. See all the actions that's comes forth is because of a lack. There is a need. Some of us are even in need of love. We do not know the love of the father. We have not been filled with the love of God. And so psychologically we come into the Christian life and we do things to gain love. We do things to receive love. We do things to gain attention. We do things to get people to love us. This is not agape love that God wants us to have. But the agape love of God reaches a point where you are so full of God's love, you can't help giving it away.

Look at I John, it tells you the basis of love. I John 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death." What is he talking about passing from death to life? We look back to verse 10 "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother." So he talks about the love for brethren and all those things that have been mentioned in these verses where it tells you here that you have passed from death to life if you love. Then it tells you here when you love you are practicing righteousness.

Then verse nine is the spring board, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in Him, and he can not sin, because he has been born of God." God is love; we have been born of love. That's the whole basis for the Christian love, that it has been given to us. Love has been imparted to us. Love is a substance that has been imparted. So love is not just an attribute but love is a substance, the substance of God. See all the other type of human attention and human love and affection is an attribute, an inclination to gain something. But the love of God is His substance that fills you. God is love; you are born out of the same Spirit of love.

Roman 5:5 "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Love is a substance that can be poured forth. It is not just an attribute in life. The love of God is a substance that God placed into our hearts and life when we were justified, when we were born again. The Old King James said that the love of God has been shed but the Greek word is poured. You know the difference between shed and poured. Shed could be a trickle but poured talks about a waterfall, pouring into our hearts. When did that took place? Romans 5:1 when we were justified by faith. And then he came to verse 5 where he says that the love of God has been poured out into our hearts. Now look at the context, it says love in our hearts will cause us not to be disappointed. It says hope does not disappoint because the love of God is in us. Do you know some human beings get disappointed when they seek to love one another? It is because their type of love is a love hoping to gain something in return. So when there is no gain, they get disappointed.

Look at the things Paul talks about. Tribulations. What is the thing that he is talking about, going through difficulties, all these seeking to bless will not disappoint you. In Christ there is no disappointment, there is no discouragement because being in Christ is being in the love of God. God never got disappointed. Jesus never got discouraged. But hope does not disappoint because the love of God, the substance of love has been poured into our hearts. So that now you love because of this substance moving in you.

God is a Spirit. Love is a Spirit too. II Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." See God has put the Spirit of

love into our hearts. And love not to gain. We love because of the Spirit of love. We love not to receive. We love because we are moved by the Spirit of love. We love not because we have a need. We love because we have been filled. The love of God, the substance has been poured into our hearts. Every single one of you whether you have been loving or you have not been loving, you sit potentially in the love of God. And what God is saying the love is a Spirit, love is a substance. It has been placed in your spirit. If you try to love in the flesh or you try to love in the mind, you will be limited. You will not find love in the body. You will not find love in the mind. Love resides in your spirit. Love flows from your spirit. That is why when you have the love of God, you do not just love one or two. See the difference. Human affection will just love one or two and usually those whom we can gain something. But God's love seeks to be the same to all. We all know that God is no respecter of persons, that He loves you and me the same way. He shows not respect as to status. As to whatever level of human achievement a person has, He shows the same attention and love to all. What causes God to be no respecter of person? His love. Do you know that human being respect people but that is not the nature of God? That is a nature of original sin. When you get born again all those old things are supposed to be passed away. Being a respecter of person, all these things are what II Cor. 5:17 says "behold, all things have become new." The old has passed away. These are the things that should have passed away. It's human affection that causes us to be a respecter of person. We are exalted in the Bible to have no respect for person but to respect all equally and to love all equally. How do we do that? The agape love of God that flows out. Whether you can gain something out of the person or not, whether the person has to do with your work or your family or not, you would still let the love of God flows to that person. That's the agape love of God.

James tells us in chapter 2:15-18 "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food and one of you says to them, depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have work, is dead. But someone will say, you have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." See how James emphasizes on the practical aspect of a Christian life. The action part is the proof of your Christianity. In chapter 5 of James in verse one onwards "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have murdered the just, he does not resist you." Here is an aspect where God speaks about the life principle of the rich. It may not be for you. If you are the Christian rich, you can be rich in Christ. But don't take the life principle. What do we mean by life principle? A life principle is something that you live by. It is a principle that guides your whole life. But for some people their life principle is, "I live for pleasure." That is what James is saying. Some people's life principle is this, "I live for power and that principle directs every decision in their life. And Jesus Christ when He was in the wilderness was tempted by the devil. The devil said turn this stone into bread. What was the devil saying? Live for food and pleasure. Jesus says man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceed from the

mouth of God. And the devil showed Him all the riches of the kingdom of this world. The devil was saying live for the things of this world. Live for power. Jesus says He will live for God. See a life principle guides a person. And James was doing some correction in the church. In James chapter 2:2-4 He says "For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, you sit here in a good place, and say to the poor man, you stand there, or, sit here at my footstool, have you not shown partially among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" What is James saying here? Any sign of being a respecter of one above the other is not a part of God's love.

Some of the things that II Cor. said in chapter 5:17 that have passed away. I supposed to be the human quality of being a respecter of person. Do you know that is ingrained in all human nature? But you are not human. You are spirit being. So that nature should have died, the nature of respecting one above the other. We are not saying that we don't respect anybody but we are saying respect all equally. Give attention to all equally. That nature of being a respecter of person is born of original sin, not born of agape love. In fact one of the things when people say about Jesus when He was on this earth was you are no respecter of person. John 3 Nicodemus said that to Jesus. In John 3 when he came to Jesus, this was his first word that impresses his life. It shows the impression that Jesus has made upon his life. In verse 2 "This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.'" What is Nicodemus saying here? That he recognized Jesus as a teacher. And he gives a sense of Jesus having no respect to anyone great or small. Jesus answered him; Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he can not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to Him. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered; Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he can not enter the kingdom of God." Now Nicodemus didn't understand and in verse 9 he says, "How can these things be?" That's when Jesus Christ went on to explaining about the love of God. Verse 11-16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what we know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." When do you have everlasting life? Is it in the future? Eternal life does not begin when we go to heaven. Whoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life. Everlasting life and eternal life does not begin in heaven. The word everlasting life or eternal zoe begins now in you when you believe in Him. Zoe is the life of God. And the life of God comes in spirit form. And that spirit is the Spirit of love. Because it says the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart. I have everlasting life now. I have the quality of God's life in my heart now.

John 2 in the beginning part it says in verse 24-25 "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men." What was Jesus doing? Jesus loved everyone equally. For God so loved the world that He gave. Do you know what God is seeking

to do? God is seeking to give His life. He was seeking to impart His life into each one of us. If God is love, He is love and the substance of His life is love. It comes from the same mould. God seeks to impart His life into us and He imparts His love into us when we are born again. I have the love of God. The moment I was born again, I have eternal life. I have everlasting life. I have the love of God. I have the life of God. In Christ I can love all. Now you began to see that you love because you have received love. You love not because you need others to love you. You love not because you want to gain. For love is a spirit. Love is the substance and that substance is imparted by the Spirit of God in our hearts. Sometimes your body does not feel the love because love is not a feeling in the body. Sometimes your mind does not choose and want to love because love does not dwell in the soul or in the mind. Love dwells in the spirit. And if you want to know what the love is like and have it flowed out from you, you look into the spirit. And in your spirit you will find nothing but love, love, and love. That is why in Galatians 5 says that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc. Give forth your love, release your love and if love is a substance and love is a spirit that means it can be increased. We can grow in measures of love.

Jude verse 20 the reservoir and resources of your love are in your spirit, “but you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping yourself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Keep yourselves in the borders of God’s love. Keep yourselves within the limits of the love of God. How, praying in the Holy Spirit, tapping into the resources of love in your heart. All of you, the moment you are born again, you have the potential to love. It is against your nature not to love or to have hatred, jealousy or strife. In fact the moment you do that you lose your peace that tells you something is lost. When you get back into the love of God, you live in God’s love. With all these we go back to I John and we see the understanding there. I John 3:14 “We know that we have passed from death to life.” Now is that a future tense or a past tense? You find that is a past perfect tense. We have passed. That is why it says in John 3 that you already have eternal life and everlasting life now. It does not happen when you die. Right now you have passed from death to life. Right now eternal life is working. Right now the life of God is working. And if the life of God is working, John says the love of God is also working. Love and life are the same. Because we love the brethren, he who does not love his brother abides in death. That means if a person is not walking in love, he/she is walking in death. If you walk in love, you will not walk in the flesh. That is why last week we talk about how love is important to discern the gifts of the Spirit.

How do I know whether someone is moving in the flesh or moving in the Spirit? By love, if you move in the Spirit love is proceeded and quicken the people’s life. If you move in the flesh it turns people off. There is something that causes love not to be manifested. See love resides in your spirit. Love is a substance. Love is a spirit. I have received a Spirit of love. I have not received a spirit of fear. But I have received a Spirit of love, the Spirit of power, the Spirit of a sound mind. Which confirm with I John 4:18 there is no fear in love. How can the spirit of fear and the Spirit of love be in the same place? The Spirit of love abides in your spirit and it causes you to flow. If somebody rejects you, you are not disappointed because you are not dependant on the external. You are dependant on the internal. So whenever you get disappointed, whenever you get discouraged, whenever you are rejected and you feel it, it is your soul or your flesh. It has nothing to do with the spirit. The purpose of love is just to

give. We never ever consider the anguish of rejection because it pours forth from you. You are like a fountain, a fountain of love that flows forth onto others. There is no fear. When love comes, fear leaves. Fear and love can not exist in the same body. There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out all fear. If there is fear that means there is imperfect love for perfect love cast out fear. Imperfect love partly removes fear. When love is perfected in your life, all you want to do is to love, because God loves. You love people because God loves them and you look at everyone with the eyes of love irrespective of who they are, irrespective of what they are, irrespective of what they do. Even your enemy, Jesus said love your enemy.

Now you began to understand why this love is so different from human affection. See there is nothing you can gain from your enemy. Jesus says love your enemy because He has placed His love in your heart. Examine why you love somebody. Is it because you need to gain something? If it is, you need to correct yourself today. You need to cut off the motive of self-gain and say I will love not because I want to gain. In many Christians' lives that are not taught the Word of God or love, their love is only based on self-gain, on human affection. When you are renewed by God's Word to understand His love, the quality of His love, the standard of His love, the substance of His love, the spirit of His love, the life that is in you by praying in the Spirit drawing from your spirit. Keep yourself in the love of God all the time for God lives in the atmosphere of love. Heaven is an atmosphere of love. To be in the kingdom of God, you walk in the atmosphere of love.



## 10. LOVE THINKS NO EVIL

Galatians 5:16-25 “So I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the work of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst of wrath, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are of Christ have crucified the flesh which with its passion and desires. If you live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Here he talks about the fruit of the Spirit. Notice in verse 22 it starts with a But. That means he is comparing the works of the flesh with the works of the Spirit. And we have seen how the fruit of the Spirit is all related to love, which is the subject we are touching on, the love of God. This morning we will go a bit further to see how he contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. This has to relate to a particular part of our being which is our soul. The love of God dwells in our spirit. I am a spirit being. I have God's nature in me. And I have the love of God in me. The love of God has been shed in my heart, poured into my spirit when I was born again. So we understand that the love of God is in our spirit man. The love of God in our spirit man must flow and affect our soul. If it's in our spirit alone is not enough. See the works of the flesh are tied up with the effects that the flesh and temptation have on your mind. All the works of the flesh that are listed there speaks of for example, uncleanness, fornication, adultery, and the things that are committed in the heart, for example Jesus saying that if a man looks at a woman with lust in his heart, he has committed adultery in his heart. He is talking about wrong thoughts. All the works of the flesh start with a wrong thought, a wrong mental attitude that we allow to remain in our mind and to grow and to bear fruit. Wrong thoughts will produce after its kind. So when we talk about the love of God, definitely the love of God has to have an effect on our thinking life and our thought life. That is reading between the lines in these scriptures that we have read here. In verse 16 he says walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

How to walk in the Spirit? It has to have our soul involved. Our soul has to be involved in walking in the things of the Spirit. Romans 8 contrasting the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit again verse 5-6, For those who live according to the flesh (and that will produce all the works of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5) set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Again you see the same fruit coming forth. Life, which is zoe and peace. Notice how he talks about the mind. We can be flesh minded or Spirit minded. The only problem is what do we mean by being Spirit minded? If I were to ask you and say tell me what it means to be Spirit minded, some of you say to be Word minded. Well, that's fair but besides being Word minded it also means to be love minded. That means our

minds will only be filled with loving thoughts. Anything that is from God's nature will be in line with His nature. See the characteristic of God, which is described to us by John is God is love. So everything else that God does, He does out of His love. And if anything is not in the love of God then the source is not God. In the same way, our thoughts can either be filled with fleshly thoughts or spiritual thoughts. Spiritual thoughts are always in line with the Word and always in line with the love of God. To fill our minds with God's thoughts is to meditate on the Word, confessing and meditating and contemplating upon them.

What about the other areas of our daily life and the thoughts that comes to us daily? How do we divide thoughts that come from God and thoughts that do not? We give you a key. The key is that any thought that has nothing to do with the love of God; any thought that is void of the love of God is not a thought that you have to dwell in. It will hinder faith; it will hinder the Spirit of love from flowing through you.

I Cor. 13:4 "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil."

The love of God that we are talking about has to have an effect on your thought life. It is not only affection in a sense. It is not only a choice of your will. It is also the contemplation of your mind. To have this agape love of God in us is to be filled with good thoughts towards everyone around us. God declared in His Word that My thoughts towards you are good and they are precious. God's thoughts toward us are good and precious. What about your thoughts to each other? They must be good and precious.

Phil. 4:5 "Let your gentleness be known to all men." We have seen earlier that love is gentle; love is kind. One of the fruit of the Spirit is meekness, gentleness, and then he goes on to say how to have that. How to have this love of God flow through your life? "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Verse 8, "finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things."

If you have the love of God in your heart or in your life, you will not tolerate an evil thought towards another person. You will not harbor a thought of jealousy to another one. You will not harbor a thought of unforgiveness against another one. For love thinks no evil. Love will not allow that thought to exist in your heart and in your mind. When the bible says that God's love is toward all and everyone, what does it mean? It means that God is in a position to receive everyone. He does not harbor unforgiveness. God does not harbor evil thoughts against people. He declares onto us in Romans 8 the last few verses. It says nothing can separate you from the love of God. Death, hell, Satan, demons whatever and circumstances, tribulations, nothing can separate you from the love of God. In other words, nothing can cause God to have His thought change against you. When He says that the love of God is to each and everyone, it means God loves everyone, even the lost, even people who reject Him, even people who have died and who are now condemned in the prison of Hades.

God's love has not changed towards them. God's position of love is towards them. But they have sown evil and now they reap what they have sowed. And their minds are so twisted that there is no way they can come back to God. It has become a part of their nature. Their nature is like the devil. That is why they go to where the devil is. But God's love continues. God has set Himself in a position where He says I love you. I love you. His love doesn't change even though you change. There is no shadow of turning with God. His attitude remains the same. His thoughts towards you remain the same. He is ready to receive anyone who comes to Him openly. In the same manner God now declares that we must have the same love to each other.

Do you know that sometimes people can say with their mouth I love you but their thought do not say I love you. That is not agape love. That is plastic love. What the bible says here is that when you have the love of God in your heart, not only do your word say so, but when you are not saying anything and your mind is thinking, it is thinking good thoughts to each other. It is broadcasting loving thoughts to each other. And when these thoughts are released, it releases an atmosphere of agape love to flow between you and another person.

See we communicate to each other at three levels. We can communicate to each other in the level of the physical realm through our voice or to touch. We can communicate to each other in the soul realm. We can communicate to each other in the spirit realm. How do we communicate to each other in the spirit realm? See when someone is ministering under the anointing, do you know that the spirit resonate to the anointing? Spirit communicates onto spirit. What do we mean by the inward witness? The inward witness means when someone's spirit is touched by the Lord and someone is moving under the Spirit of God from their spirit filled with love, your spirit begin to be filled with the same love. They produce after their kind.

Jesus said in John 6:63 "The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life." In other words, Jesus said that His word contain spirit. When He speaks His word, His word impart from His spirit and every one of us impart from our spirit whether you like it or not. It's something that takes place all the time. If you have a spirit of unforgiveness and anger and hatred, even though you may not be sharing about that area and that topic, you maybe talking about the sky is blue, the grass is green, yet people will be picking that hatred in your spirit. People will be picking up that anger that is in your heart even though you never mention one thing about that. It comes out. That is why in relationship, for example, we ask husband and wife or your loved ones at home within the same family or people whom you live together with under the same roof. Do you know it's not so much as what is said as the way it is said that irritate or affects the people? What you say is one thing but the way you say it can communicate something that the other person picks up and reacts to. Many times a person reacts not so much to what you say as the way you say it. Perhaps it could be in an office and your boss comes and say, "Hey, do this thing" or the boss could come and say, "Could you do this thing?" The same command carries a different spirit. And we don't realize it but our sub-conscious mind picks up more than our conscious mind. Your conscious mind is only about 5% of your total mind. The other 95% of your mind is more on the sub-conscious level. We pick up more in the sub-conscious level than in the conscious level. Now the sub-conscious mind and the conscious mind are in the soul realm. Nothing to do with the spirit realm but in the spirit realm when you are born again your spirit is alive to God. You can pick up something that others

can not pick up because their spirit is dead. We can pick up in a deeper realm, the realm of the spirit. However this morning we are talking about communication in the soul realm. That the love of God must affect your whole being so that when you speak to one another, when you relate to one another, it is an overflow rather than the flow.

What do we mean by overflow rather than the flow? For example, if we have water, for example let this bottle represent you as a vessel of God. For example the water inside this bottle represents the love of God. If the level of the water is only up to this level, way right at the bottom and when you impart that water to another one, you literally pour it all out to fill a cup. You got just enough water in your vessel to fill that cup. For example, this is your soul realm, and then all that you communicate is what it is. It's not an over flow. What you are giving out is the flow. It is all that you have. What happen when your soul begin to draw from the spirit realm with the love that is inside? And you begin to be filled to overflowing with the love of God. What happens is that when you communicate or relate to one another, they receive an overflow with that love. It carries a greater love. It carries a greater power. Jesus says is like a river that flows. The Spirit of God is like a river that flows. And as it flows to your being, it creates a force that people feel. It's called the force of love.

For some people they are so blocked up. All they have is a trickle; whatever they do flows from that trickle. For example, your love could be about half a liter in your soul, a trickle. Everything you do, you only allow half a liter to flow per minute. No matter how you try, somehow people sense it and know that's all you love them, that much half a liter per minute. Your mind sometimes is filled with good thoughts towards others. Sometimes it is filled with anger. Sometimes it's filled with doubts. Sometimes it's filled with suspicion. Sometimes you meditate on the Word and you repent then someone rubs you again and you are filled with anger again. But you have learned that you possess what you confess. So you keep your gap shut. But you have not learned that you also have to get rid of the thoughts inside. It is not just sealing your mouth; it is removing the whole volcano. It's not only sealing the mouth of the volcano. God does not want to seal the volcano; He wants to remove the volcano from your life so that you stop exploding and all the lava flow out onto the people. Burning some or hurting many. What God wants to do is to take out that volcano that is in your soul. God does not just want to change your confession; He wants to change your thought life.

That is why Jesus says that you shall not doubt when you exercise faith because the warfare is in the mind. And He is speaking in respect to love. Loving thoughts are thoughts that are filled with love, joy, and peace. Do you know that depressive thoughts are not thoughts of love? Because it's the opposite of joy. Yet people would entertain these depressive thoughts. So when that depressive thought fill you, everything you speak will come from that depressive thought. No matter how you try to change your voice, yet that depressive thought will just come out and touch people's souls at the same soul level. You can not allow thoughts of depression or fear to dominate you. It's in your thoughts. When that gets into your thought, it comes out in everything you do and everything you say.

Do you know people somehow sense it? Sometimes they themselves do not know why they react to you that way because it's at the sub-conscious level where the 95% of their sub-conscious mind are operating and their own conscious mind do not know why they react to you that way. For that reason you will notice that sometimes people

don't change their thought life. They don't allow the agape love of God to change your thought life. What happens is that they perpetually create the same problem to different people and all their life they are wondering why that keeps happening. Why do people run away from them? Why do people seem to get hurt every time they relate to these same people. And the wonderful thing about it is that the people who get hurt also don't understand why they just don't like that guy.

See it's not at the 5% conscious level. It's at the sub-conscious level where it eats you up. That is why if you get angry with another person and you meditate on that anger, for example you could be Mr. Habakkuk and you got angry with Miss Jezebel whether rightly or wrongly. So your anger seeps in you. You are not angry against for example Nathan. Anyway here is Habakkuk he is angry with Miss Jezebel, so he has friends who called Nathan. He is not angry with Nathan, but somehow every day he meditates on his angry relationship with Jezebel and the thoughts keep coming and he hang on to those thoughts. It gets into his sub-conscious and he did not ask the Blood of Jesus to cleanse him of his anger. He did not ask God for forgiveness and here he comes to fellowship with his friend Nathan. Everything Habakkuk says is filled with anger, sooner or later Nathan picks it up and if Habakkuk holds on to it for a long time, his relationship somehow becomes strained with Nathan. Nathan will be so fed up with him that he will start avoiding him. And Habakkuk will be left to himself and wonder what is happening here. What am I doing? Why are all these things happening to me? Nobody loves me. This is an important principle here. Anytime you have a wrong relationship with another person, you will end up having wrong relationships with everyone else. You can not compartmentalize relationship.

For example, a husband is unfaithful to his wife. Do you know his whole relationship with everybody else becomes different, because he did not relate properly to his wife? Or a wife who does not relate to husband properly, you will not be able to relate with other people. One wrong relationship will spoil all the other relationship. One bad apple spoils the whole lot. It's inside you. You carry it about. You say how come it spread, because you carry it in your soul. You carry that foul stinking thought in your soul and so you bring it to another person. And before long they also get the stink. Sometimes those other guys begin to have the same stink and it spread like a cancer. The next thing you know, you need God's radiation to kill all those things off. No wonder Jesus says loves one another as I love you. Don't underestimate your relationship with any single one. If they are wrong, you have unforgiveness against one, it will sub-consciously begin to affect your relationship with others. You can not run away from wrong relationship because God has come to build relationship until we reach the point where we can love everyone with the love of God. People may hate you but you are able to respond with the love of God. Something grows stronger in you.

Lets think of it in a positive term. For example, you go through a very difficult situation. Without justification you get hurt, you get bruised, you get slandered, you get blacklisted and all kinds of thing happen. But you have learned about the love of God and you know that if you are not able to love, you learn to draw the love of God in your life. So you overcome that situation. Your soul says react but your spirit says love, meekness and you keep showing love in return. And because of your strength that you have gathered in relating to a difficult situation, suddenly you have a greater ability to deal with other people.

For example, Mr. X hurts you very much. At first you react back, suddenly you come to see God's Word that talk about love. What happens is you begin to grow in love. You begin to learn how to love. You begin to love without your feelings. You begin to choose to love and you allow the Spirit of God to flow through you. So Mr. X gives you a punch. You give him a present. Mr. X slaps you on the left cheek and you give him your right cheek. Didn't Jesus say that? Turn the other cheek. So Mr. X sends you a time bomb and you send back a present. And you keep reacting back with love. Something begins to happen inside you. And in your private life you say I am not going to do what I feel but I am going to do what I believe. If you talk about your feelings, a baby volcano was about to erupt but because you knew the Word of God, you meditate on the word, the devil comes to you and says; send Mr. X a stink bomb. You say no I will not. I reject that thought. And you say I think about sending Mr. X a sheepskin. After sometime something changes inside you. You have allowed loving thoughts to fill your life. Your vessel starts overflowing. And because you are able to stand in love in that situation, suddenly your relationship with Mr. A, Mr. B and Mr. C and with all the other people take on a deeper level. When you learn to relate with one person, it affects your relationship with all other people. The law operates, whether it is a bad relationship or good relationship.

So remember it's dangerous to foster a wrong relationship or to harbor wrong thoughts in your life or to harbor wrong relationship. Some of you may try to hide but you can not hide from God. Neither can you hide in the end from each other. It will erupt in you. You can not say I am loving to everybody I know in the church. But to people outside the church, you could have come from another church that has hurt you and you harbor that unforgiveness. Do you know that you would prevent your relationship with others too until you release them in forgiveness. Do you know that the way I react when I get slandered or when I get persecuted? The way I react to other people is going to affect the way I minister here in this place. But if I could react to them in love, the way I minister and love each one of you will increase to higher degree. You may not even be involved in that situation but my relating to them and then relating to you affects our relationship. We can not run from wrong relationship. We have to face them and change them. And the place to start changing is in your thought life. You will know a wrong relationship when you have thoughts about another person. Isn't it wonderful to come to a place in life where all you think about everyone is good thoughts?

I had to make myself do it in relationship to other places or other churches though they may disagree with me in certain areas. I had to choose to think good thoughts towards them. Sometimes people come to me with bad thoughts about them; I wouldn't want to sit down because I know they have done something wrong to me. And then comes another person who gives some bad report about this person who spoke ill of me. Will I say, "Good, good, good, give it to them." No, but because of the spirit of love I will tell them you must love. I also will not tolerate you speaking bad about my enemy. Because it will foster wrong things, so as a result of that attitude it increases my ability to love each other. That is why we have to learn to love one another with agape love. Learn to relate with people deeply because every person you relate to deeply, you invest on other relationships. For example, I may not know James. But I learn to relate to him and show the love of God to him. In doing it, my love level increases and then I will be able to love another brother or sister better and at a higher level. Don't just love generally. I mean it's a wonderful thing to say I love

the world. God so loved the world. But the person under the same roof you hate, yet it's a paradox the one under the same roof is preventing you from releasing love to the world. And the day you start changing and learn to love those, whom you see, like I John tells you, you began to love those whom you see, love those whom you relate to.

Don't think about spiritualizing and say this department of my life I am going to put it aside. I just can't bear it and then in this relationship for example church relationship. You are going to say I love you with the love of the Lord. Somehow that relationship is going to affect here. And when you learn to relate deeply to those around you, all of us got a circle that we mixed around. We can only relate deeply to a few. Even the Lord Jesus could relate deeply to twelve or so of His disciples. Because we are limited in body and in time, it's not possible to relate deeply to a million people yet those relationships that you develop properly within the circle of your work or the circle of your life, if you relate properly it's going to cause you to relate very deeply to the multitudes. You never run away from them. Start in your thought life and start with those around you and start now. Think good thoughts.

How do I start? I can help you with a few examples. For example, you could begin to send forth thoughts of love to people, to those whom you love and those around you. See when I relate to people, I consciously try to focus my thoughts. I like to look at people the way God looks at them. And I like to sense what God's thoughts is flowing towards them. And so the first thing that helps me to position myself is that when I look at another person, I will say God how do you look at that person and let me know your love towards that person. What I do is I broadcast thoughts to that person, thoughts of love and that person's soul picks it up. It is not telepathy because telepathy means that everything is communicated openly and understood. But it's more that influence, the atmosphere. Perhaps you could understand if I give a negative example. For example, if I have a bad thought or unforgiveness and hatred and it's festering inside of me and all I have is unforgiveness. Even though I may not meet that person and when I meet that person I put on my plastic smile but my thoughts are saying you rascal. And I may be shaking hands with that person, my mouth is saying, "Praise God," but my mind is saying, "You rascal." Do you know that the other person can pick it up? You may not have said "you rascal" with your lips but the other person as he shakes your hand picks up your animosity. He did not hear "you rascal" but somehow he picks up in the soul conscious mind you hate him. It's very difficult for human being to lie, their conscience react and their whole body reacts. That is why they have the lie-detecting machine. Even though a human being try to lie a part of their body gives way. Their bodies tensed up. Something reacts in them. And the strange thing is that the sub-conscious mind seems to be able to pick up all the small, small evidences.

When people fall in love, they seem to know before that fellow says it. Their sub-conscious mind pick up that extra longer look, that extra smile, that extra touch, that extra time, it may even vary a split second but the sub-conscious mind picks it up without our conscious mind knowing it. So that is what I call a physical communication in a small way. At the same time there is a level of atmosphere created in the soul realm that the person picks up. So all of your being when you come to a person saying I hate you, but you put on a plastic smile and you are saying I love you, people pick it up. Then when you relate to crowds and you put on a plastic smile yet the crowd can pick it up after a long span of time. Now that is on the negative

side. On the positive side when you are filled with loving thoughts towards each other and as you come to people before you say anything your thoughts say I love you. Before I say anything with my lips the person picks it up, because my mind will send all the hidden messages to all the small, small reactions in my body. It could be the way you look, the way you touch, the way you say. You can not hide as it comes out in many ways.

I have a book by a Christian magician. It is not psychic but it was a skill he developed to pick up all these what he calls hidden but it's actually minute detail. So being a Christian he began to talk about Christ after he performed an act of magic. It's all tricks but one day a guy rang him and says how good are you. Then he said over the phone, you pick up a set of cards or anything and you take one out. Now I want you to read out all the cards you have taken out. And I will tell you which one you pick it up. And he picked the exact one. The guy was stunned. He has learned to be sensitive even to the variations and even to the voice. So when the other guy began to speak the card that he pulled up, he began to read it out. When he came to the card that he held, there is a slight change in his voice. The normal people can not pick it up but he is trained as a magician and he could pick up the slight change in the voice and he could say that's the card, which a normal average person is not trained in that area. This is just to show you how there is an unseen communication going on. It all starts with your thoughts. What you think towards others.

So the bible says think good thoughts. Think thoughts that are lovely, thoughts that are beautiful, thoughts that have virtue. Get rid of all the wrong thoughts. Love thinks no evil. Love thinks good thoughts. Love thinks loving thoughts; love thinks joyful thoughts. Love fills your soul. Let love in your spirit fills your soul with loving thoughts in your soul. Start broadcasting thoughts to each other, loving thoughts. Don't broadcast thoughts like "you rascal, you dumb bell, you snake." Before you meet people, send thoughts to them. I love you, I like you, I love you with the love of the Lord.

I have many people come and tell me it changes. Many years ago I already started preaching about this. There was a banker. He has migrated. He was a manager in Southern Bank. He started practicing it in his own bank. Some were believers and some were not. But he broadcast loving thoughts to them. He began to say, "I love you and Jesus loves you." He said that there was a change in his relationship with them. People picked it up. Not only the atmosphere of the thoughts but when you position yourself to love others, there are unseen signals; hidden signals are being sent forth to. In your action, in your voice, in your eyes that people are picking up. And when they pick it up, they respond. Everyone responds to love. Love towards people helps them to open up like a flower and you can bring out the beauty and their fragrance in their life.



## 11. LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Mark 11:25 after talking about the faith that moves mountains, in verse 25 Jesus said “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive your trespasses.”

We are talking about agape love. Agape love is a forgiving love. When we live in the world and when we live among the family of God where everyone is not perfect, we need plenty of love with forgiveness. The ability to forgive is godly. For human beings it is natural for them to hold grudges but for the new creature in Christ, the new creation of God, forgiveness should be something natural for us. We should be able to flow in forgiveness. Forgiveness not only relates in your relationships with your fellow man, forgiveness relates to your relationship with God. We have said that our horizontal relationship is an expression of our vertical relationship with God. In the same manner our horizontal disharmony will cause us to be in disharmony vertically with God. Having unforgiveness will bring disharmony with those around us. And Jesus makes it very clear when He talks about faith. If you do not have forgiveness it will paralyze your faith. Unforgiveness will render your faith inoperative. It’s just like a car with a good engine with plenty of petrol and everything is set but if there is no oil in the car. We need the oil of love to lubricate our faith so that our faith can function the way God wants it to.

The bible tells us faith works by love. The word work is the word energize. Faith is energized by love. Jesus when He was talking about the faith that moves mountains did not finish in verse 24, He continues in verse 25 & 26. Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive Him. Now He did not talk about the other party. It is you that God is concerned with. Whenever you stand praying, if your relationship is not right with one another, you will not be able to reach God. Your prayers will never go above the ceiling. It will just reach the ceiling and bounce off. God will not hear your prayers. Unforgiveness is a blockage, which prevents our prayers from reaching out to God. It is like weights that are tied to our prayer. It is drawn down by gravity by sins and grudges and unforgiveness and imperfections. We need to be free of that. Our prayers can not take flight to God. It is hindered whenever you stand praying. So whenever you have a relationship that is not in order, the bible tells you leave your gift on the altar, go and make right first before you come back to God. For those of you who live in the same family, husband, wife, brothers or sisters, you will realize that if ever you have a misunderstanding among your family and you all try to pray to God, you could even act and pray religiously, it will still not reach God because there is something empty about it. If you ever have a misunderstanding in your family, the first thing you have to do is to humble yourself and say sorry. When you have made your relationship right, you will see how beautiful it is then to pray. You don’t have to change into a religious tone. All you have to do is just speak and the Father hears.

Jesus said, whenever you stand praying if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. Every time you have unforgiveness or you can’t release forgiveness, even though it may not be your fault shows that there is sin and imperfection in your life. Please understand the word sin. The word sin is from the Greek word ‘hamartia’; the word ‘hamartia’ means to fall short of God’s glory, to miss the mark. The word sin merely means imperfection.

So whenever you can not release forgiveness it shows a flow of imperfection in your life. Even though it may not be your fault in that situation. Usually I would say in any situation like that both parties carry some faults. It is very seldom that is only one side. Usually, 99% of the time it's both sides that carry the blame. If you can not release the unforgiveness and say, "I forgive that person, I release that person," what you are doing is sub-consciously you are holding an image of that person and you are holding a sort of vengeance against that person. You are going to react in a certain way. There is something in you that is showing a flaw. Our Lord Jesus Christ was so perfect, so beautiful a person that when He was on the cross, all these fellows who have sent Him to crucifixion, who had nailed Him, who were standing right there at that time mocking Him and saying, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross," who laughed at Him but He said, "Father forgive them." That shows the perfection in His life. The ability to forgive shows the perfection in your life.

Meekness is not weakness. Don't misunderstand that when a person asks you for forgiveness or a person says I forgive you, that person is weak. In fact it takes a greater strength to do that. It is nothing to hold grudges and say I just don't care about that guy and holding unforgiveness and saying I am strong here. No, in the world you may think that that is strength. Be a man; be strong. The bible says, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." The world tries to inherit and conquer by natural weapons and force but the meek, by their very meekness and they don't even have to lift one finger, it is given to them. To inherit is to possess something that you never worked for. That's the power of meekness. When you are meek and you are humble, God is the one who works for you. God is the one who does all the work. He sends His angels and all you have to do is just be a member of the body of Christ. All you have to do is be meek and the work gets done for you. Meekness is strength. So Jesus Christ says you must forgive.

And the next verse 26 says "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." Look at it in verse 25 it says that if you have anything against another person, it's all in your heart. You may not have done anything that is sinful in God's sight, that is trespasses. But if you don't release forgiveness to others God can not release His forgiveness to you.

Matthew 6 the Lord's Prayer, verse 12, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Forgive us as we forgive. Notice the principle again. That the amount of forgiveness we release to others is the same amount of forgiveness we receive from God. Forgiveness is linked to the attribute of mercy. Do you know that the attribute of mercy is what the worshippers always mention whenever they come to God? In II Chron. 5 they say, "Bless the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever." If God does not exercise mercy, we are finished. It is because of the mercy of God that we are counted worthy to come into His presence and worship Him. Every time they worship God they say, "Blessed be the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever." The word mercy has also been translated loving-kindness. King David said, "Thy loving kindness is better than life." What does it mean? That life without living kindness, without mercy is not worth living. But when there is mercy, when there is living kindness is worth living. It is better than life. Imagine living without God; imagine living without the acceptance from God. Living as aliens from God's love is a horrible life. That is why David understood that with the love of God how lovely it is. It's better than life. The mercy of God, if God could show us mercy and we are of

the same nature of God, God requires that we show mercy to others. To forgive others is to show mercy onto others. So don't ever withhold our unforgiveness because if you do, you are stopping the mercy of God from operation in your life. You are stopping yourself and blocking yourself from growing in the mercy of God.

In the Lord's Prayer is mention in verse 12 of Matthew 6. Do you notice that Jesus emphasized it again as if it's such an important point that He doesn't want us to miss it? Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Now the verse speaks about a conditional clause. For example, if I say to Bro. James, "If you bring a book, I will give you a bible." My giving him a bible is based upon him giving me a book. Or if I say, "If you bring your bible on Sunday I will bless you." Now the blessing becomes conditional. Praise God His blessing is unconditional because the condition has been met in Jesus. Remember every time there is unconditional blessings it is because somebody met the condition. Usually it's traced back to Jesus. Or if you tell your workers and say, "If you will work for an extra two days, I will see to it that you get recompensed." The recompense is conditioned by the first part. Jesus said, "If you forgive," that means our receiving forgiveness and mercy is conditioned upon our giving mercy. Look very carefully, it's the same principle as give and it shall be given unto you. Those who give mercy, what will they receive? Mercy. Those who bless others financially, what happens? They are blessed. It's the same principle and Jesus is saying, "If you don't give forth mercy, you can not receive mercy." Mercy needs to be release.

I don't know why He puts the next verse in. The next verse speaks the opposite side. It says, if you do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive you. That's awesome. Just think if God doesn't forgive you. Now if you find it hard to forgive, think about God not forgiving you. Why is that so? Lets examine forgiveness. Love forgives because love is mercy. Now the Father in heaven wants to release His forgiveness to us but unless we give forgiveness to other, God's forgiveness can not come in. Lets examine these aspects of unforgiveness and forgiveness. Forgiveness actually is to withhold judgment. Unforgiveness is tied up to judgments and vengeance. So when we release forgiveness, it is releasing the right to judge. God is the Judge. The meek shall inherit the earth. Do you know why the meek inherit the earth? Because the meek says, I will commit my judgment to God and my righteousness shall prevail because God will see to it. It's just like a big bully who tries to come against you and instead of relying on your strength, you rely on God who will send His guardian angel. Isn't it better to do that instead of doing boxing with the big bully? You just exercise the love of God and the angel comes and takes care for you. See the meek releases the power of God. It withholds judgment. To forgive is to withhold judgment. That means when a person does something wrong, you are saying I am not going to judge that person. I withhold judgment not that the person need not be judged but God is the Judge. I am God's servant. He is the Judge. I am not the judge. He is the Judge. When we forgive we actually withdraw judgment on that person. You examine people who have unforgiveness; you know what they do? They say, "I am right. I am right." When you forgive, you are withdrawing judgment.

You would say, "I will not judge. I leave and surrender my judgment to the Lord."

Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged." For with the same measure, with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the same measure you used it will be measured back to you. Do you know it's very dangerous to judge another

person? Let me clarify the difference between judging things and judging a person. Let look at I Cor.2, it does not mean that you walk in this life without exercising discernment or judgment of things. Do you know you have to practice judgment of things? For example, if you go to a bookstall and you buy a book. You make a decision and said you will buy this book and not that book. You are already practicing judgment. When you go to town to do some shopping and supposing you have ten things to choose and you look at it very carefully and you make a decision. Decision can only come after judgment. You have to have a certain priority to judge and make a decision. So you see ten brands of the item that you need and so you study all the brands and say I settle for this brand. You have made a judgment by choosing one and not the other nine. You have made a judgment. Whenever there are many seminars going on and you say, I will go to this and not to that. Do you know you have made a judgment?

Lets look at I Cor. 2:15 “But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.” Now how do I differentiate between these two verses between Matthew 7:1 Jesus said don’t judge and here Paul says in I Cor. 2:15 judge. This verse says judge. That verse says don’t judge. You have to understand the content of both. I Cor. 2:15 is in reference to your own life. You have to judge what is profitable for your life. Otherwise you will be sitting like a huge frog with the mouth open. Everything that comes you swallows. They come and throw the rubbish heap you also swallow. They preach nonsense and heresy you open your mouth and swallow. You will never grow. You will be destroyed. We have to practice judgment when it regards your own life. Otherwise you will have no framework of protection. You swallow everything that comes along and you are moved by every wave of doctrine. You won’t be firmly founded on solid ground. When as regards to your life, what you believe and for your spiritual growth, you have to make a judgment. When some of you came and join the fellowship in this church, you believed that you could grow better. And if you have been from some other fellowship, you make a decision and you choose. Your decision has to be regarding your own life. You have to make some decisions otherwise people will roughshod over you. That is why I disagree with the doctrine of total helpless zombie submission. The church leadership is not your decision maker. We are not going to answer in the judgment day for you. You are not going to stand before Jesus and say I didn’t make any decision. They made the decision for me. You have to make your own decision as far as your spiritual life is concerned. And it comes to your life, your time, your possession; you have to make a decision. You can not let another person to control you.

In Phil. 1:9 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment.” That word discernment is the same word judgment in the Greek. That your love may grow. Do you know love grows in judgment? For example, if I were to invite speakers to our church, I have to make judgments based on their performance, based also on the Holy Spirit’s direction that I hear. We can not invite just anybody. We have to make sure that they are sound in doctrine. We have to make decisions. So according to the realm of your life that you are living you have to make decisions. We need to practice judgment in spiritual things. You have to decide a good book from a bad book, a good speaker from a bad speaker. You have to decide sometimes between career and the ministry of God you have to decide. Perhaps where you are going to serve in. You have to practice judgment to make those decisions. So we can judge around that circumference of our life.

When it goes outside the circle of our life and it has to do with another person's life, we have to withhold judgment because it has nothing to do with your life anymore. For example, what is the profit of you holding unforgiveness against Brother X? It has nothing to do with your life anymore. You must withhold, draw back your judgment because it has nothing to do with your life. When you practice this kind of love you will understand that you can disagree without being disagreeable. You can disagree in doctrine without having fights. I don't agree fully with every minister who joins the fellowship of charismatic ministers. Some of them preach non-essential doctrine or apply methods that I don't fully agree with but I don't have to exclude them from love and fellowship. I can still love them; after all I am not their judge. God is their Judge. It's nothing to do with my life. But whenever it comes into area of my life, then I make a decision. I am not receiving this kind of doctrine or method. See I can make a decision within the borders of my life or circumference. But when it is outside, I should have nothing to do with it. The only thing I can give them is my love. The bible says in Romans 14, owe no man anything except love. I am obligated; I am in debt to love. You owe the world love, that's what Paul is saying, owe nothing except love. Why do we owe people love? It is because we received love. So we need to give them. The world needs the love. That is different from judging someone. Jesus is actually saying in Matthew 7:1 don't judge the person. And Paul is saying in I Cor. 2:15 judge the things that are said, the things that are spoken, the doctrine. I can judge some of you and say lets consider some bible doctrine and if you outline some bible doctrine, I may disagree with you. I may judge your faith, I may judge your belief. I may point out with the Word and say this is not in line with the Word and this is close to heresy. But I don't judge the person. I only keep it within the framework of the doctrine. That means doctrine is one thing but you as a person I love you.

Jesus had the skill of loving sinners without loving sin. You and I know He hates sin. Hebrew says that thou have hated iniquity. He hates sins but He loves sinners. I despise wrong doctrine but I love people whatever doctrine they hold. So we must learn to love people because the love of people is what God has. God loves each one as a person. Remember the background of love that we have taught? If you could see the potential in a person, then you can love them. Here is where we see the difference between judging a person and judging the things. We have to learn to withhold. When you have unforgiveness, you link the things and the person together. You link the action of the person to the person. Most of the time you write them off as a has- been. That is not good. Unforgiveness links the person to the action. When we were sinners, God separates our person from our action. He didn't like our actions but He loves us as a person. At the same time you also must separate the words of a person from a person although they both are related. Yet in essence deep in the heart of man you can find something to love them for. Separate the action of a person from the person. For example, if somebody hurts me, I could say that cruel person. What am I saying? I interpret the person's action to be what that person is. Do you know that many times one action of a person or two actions of a person may not be the full conclusion of the real person inside because what you may be seeing is the person's reaction due to the hurts in his or her own life. That is not who they really are. That is not what they really can be. So Jesus said, "Don't judge."

Paul tells us in Romans 14:4 "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. Look at verse 10 "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you

show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Paul who wrote I Cor. 2:15 is now saying don’t judge. Did you know the problems of the Romans? He says you have to separate the religious practice of a person from the person. If they want to eat vegetables it’s okay. Separate the action of a person from the person. Paul added there, he said they could make their own decision and eat both meat and vegetables. It’s all right. Paul himself is doing that because he says he has more knowledge. But when it is outside your life, why hold it against them? Learn to keep your practices and belief within your circumferences and don’t impose your belief and practices on others. That is an important key. That is true love functioning. You see love does not impose. In fellowship with many Christians I have never asked them to join our church. Sometimes they call for help, if we have time to help, we would help. What are we doing? We can not impose. You see, love respect the free choice of a person, that is why if somebody wants to choose to be a blessing to another church, we also bless him or her and send him or her off. That is love, it respects the free will, does not impose. It is not love if you chain up your wife, take a whip and say you do everything I say. Love is to release the free will and letting the person have the free will. See when it’s outside your circumference, you have no right to take the circumference of your religiosity and impose it on another person.

You will notice that I pray in tongues many hours a day and I don’t compel you to pray. I will just speak about the benefit of prayer until the saliva from your mouth is dropping and say teach me to do it too. Until you want it. You don’t enjoy food if I take a gun and point it at your head and say enjoy your food. Eat it now. You won’t enjoy it as much as even if I compel you to eat it. But if I just keep cooking it and let all the aroma flow into the atmosphere around you until your saliva is dropping and you say, “Give the food to me.” That’s more enjoyable because you allowed a person freedom to choose. Remember God has given us the lovely free will. We should be able to give that to others too. Never impose nor compel. Love does not impose or compel. Love withholds judgment of the person. But if you ever judge, it has to do with things concerning your personal life. It’s a skill to learn that. When you learn that you will be able to learn and practice forgiveness. I forgive a person for the way they act. But I still can accept them as they are because I separate their personality from their action.

In conclusion we look at Matt. 18:15-18 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Now that ties with relationship. Something happens when you hold unforgiveness against another person. You know there have been wives who have been praying for their husbands for many years but they have unforgiveness in their heart. And I always see this beautiful picture many times. When the wife realizes it and releases forgiveness, suddenly God answered their prayer. Why, all those ten years they have been praying and they have been hitting the ceiling. What Jesus said, when you pray, you forgive, for if you don’t God won’t hear you. It’s as if you didn’t pray. The

moment you release forgiveness it is released in heaven. What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. What you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. You may be praying for your parents to be saved, but in your heart you have unforgiveness and usually it also shows in your actions. You may pray until Jesus comes back and you may never get your answer because it will be as if you never prayed. Or those parents praying for their children, your children may have done something that has hurt you.

I counseled one mother from another church. She had been praying for the child who is in his twenties. The child is rebellious. He doesn't want to follow the way of the Lord. I said have you release forgiveness. Your child had hurt you many ways and you are holding things against him. On one side they are praying and on the other they are hurt. Many times there are a lot of heartaches and tears but when the mother or the father holds unforgiveness, you may cry until you fill the whole bucket with your tears, it will be as if you have never prayed and never cried. But the day you release forgiveness, that's when the miracle can happen.

I was counseling to that mother, I said why don't you release love, release forgiveness. I know you are much older but you can still come to the child and say forgive me and I forgive you. Take that child in your arm and say I love you. As long as you hold unforgiveness it will never go beyond the sound of your voice. It's as if you never prayed. Now you know why Jesus showed how important it is. You see it's a principle that God had created. Heaven is filled with God's love and mercy. So any prayer that is not born out of mercy can not enter Him. There is no sin in heaven, there is no sickness in heaven because in the presence of God there is no sin, and there is no sickness. There is only love and mercy. So if you are having unforgiveness and your prayers are filled with unforgiveness, your words will be filled with that. How can it enter the holy presence of God? When you begin to pray with the mercy of God, it is light attracts light, before it even leaves your mouth, while its still in your mouth -zoom - heaven hears.

## 12. SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

If people are not living right with God you will go to them. You won't leave them alone. Or if your family, your brothers or sisters in Christ are going the wrong way, if you really love them, you will not keep silent. So love is not a compromising love. It is not a love that say, you do what you want and I won't say anything. I won't hurt you. I won't do anything that will cause you to be angry. In other words, it's a human type of love. A fearful type of love. It's afraid that the others may reject us. But this love that comes from God is a love that will correct, this love will seek to correct with the purpose of edifying and building up. Which is what we are going to see here.

Lets look at I Cor. 13:6 "Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth." Verse 4 says, "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. In other words, love is gentle. Galatians 5:22-23 it says "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Gentleness is one of the fruit of love. It's one of the attributes of love.

Lets look at I Peter 4:8 "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins." It does not mean here that love ignores the sins but love seeks to cover it with the purpose of correcting it. It is not just hiding that sin away but it's a protective love. In other words, if I love you and I see something wrong in your life, I will not go to your neighbor and tell them about you, which is what the world does. But I will come directly to you and tell you the area where I see that it needs to be corrected in order to cover you. See when a person is not walking right with God, in spiritual sense they are like walking naked. So love seeks to cover you. And I come and approach you in order to cover you because your sin may be obvious to others. Your sins will put you to shame. So love seeks to cover. But the fact here is not just correcting. There is a spirit of love in how to correct. See everybody knows how to correct. Everybody knows how to tell another person he or she is wrong. But love has a special way of doing it. It's not just coming to a person and telling him or her you are wrong. It's not just coming to them and says I am right you are wrong.

II Timothy 2:24 speaking of the servant of God, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel." So if your correction brings a quarrel, you are not correcting in love. And in fact if you don't have the love of God in your heart, I don't think you should be involved in the art and work of correction. It is not only a work; it's an art. There is a style and way of doing it in love. See the servant of the Lord must not quarrel. A lot of correction that is done brings forth quarrels, brings forth strife. Love has a different method to it. It says a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach patience and verse 25 "in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth." There is gentleness about the correction in love. And as we grow in Christian life, we have to grow to learn to tell another person in the spirit way, in the Word way in order to improve them. Love will seek to edify the body of Christ.

Phil. 1:9 "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and in all discernment." The word discernment is translated as judgment. That your love may grow in discernment. This discernment is the judgment of things. It is not a love that is easily deceived. Although I Cor.13 says love believes all things,



it does not mean you believe every rumor, you believe everything that people tell you. You have a discerning heart. Phil. 1:9 talks about a love that grows in knowledge and discernment. See the kind of love we are talking about is God's kind of love, not a human kind of love. God's kind of love learns to judge to discern. See some people think it is love to just receive everybody into their home. But that is not love. You have to discern it.

There are other scriptures in the bible where it talks about in the epistle of John where if a person carries a wrong doctrine, where a person is in the spirit of the anti-Christ, you don't entertain that person. The paraphrase version says don't even have lunch with that guy. So we see that the bible is balanced. You can not take one aspect of the scripture and go to the extreme. In the same way, not everyone that comes to you and borrows money is walking right with God. Like Jesus says to Judas, the world you always have but Me you do not always have. There is no end to helping. Not everyone who asks you to be his or her guarantor should be accepted. A lot of people have been made bankrupt because they stood guarantee for another guy. So love is discerning. It is not easily deceived. Love believes all things. The meaning behind it is love will seek to believe the best of the person yet love can not be deceived. It is not the worldly kind of love. Here is a love that must grow. Say, my love must grow in discernment.

Paul says in I Cor. 2 that the spiritual man judges all things. He is not talking about critical attitude. See judging people and judging things are different. We do not judge the people but we judge the things. The difference is judging a person has nothing to do with your life. Judging things has to do with your life. We have to judge things. We have to judge whether something is good for you or bad for you. You have to judge whether a book will edify you or destroy you. You have to judge for example, a TV program is good for your children or bad for your children. You have to make decisions. But the difference in judging things is that, the things that are mentioned involved the circumference of your life. When it comes to judging people who has nothing to do with you, you are what Paul called a busybody. Where you just try to meddle with other people affair where it has nothing to do with your life. So that's why Jesus said, judge not, that you be not judged in Matthew 7 verse 1 and in verse 2, for with the measure you use it, it will be measured back to you. We have to have a love that discerns things around us. When we discern we have to pass judgment on things. When you say that someone is not walking right, that means you have a ruler to measure his walk with God. Knowing this is not enough for you will also need the key to bring the correction to him or her. How do you edify and speak the truth in love? This is the aspect which we are going to focus this morning. Jesus used an important key called parables.

Lets look at the reason why Jesus used parables in Matthew 13. If you read the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you can not help but be struck with the fact that Jesus uses parables in the major portion of His teaching. The reason why He uses it, He Himself tells us in verse 10-11, "And the disciples came and said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.'" We have seen how love speaks the truth in love. Now we look at the aspect of how to speak the truth in love, which is what I call parable. Jesus said I speak onto them in parables. In verse 34, "All these things Jesus spoke to the

multitude in parables, and without a parable He did not speak to them.” In other words, He spoke to them only in parables. To the multitudes He only used parables. The teaching that you gather in the gospel where He teaches explicitly on His coming and all the details of it and its interpretation of some parables was among the close circle. Then He explained it onto them. But to the rest who did not follow Him, the only word He has for them is parable. And if you ever read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you will always wonder why does He do it. Today we are going to see that.

Why did Jesus speak in parables? Jesus gave us the answer in Matthew 13:12 onwards, “For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.” Now He lays the foundation. Remember we are touching on why Jesus speaks in parables. How many of you ever wondered why Jesus spoke in parables? Jesus said to him that has, more would be given. That’s the foundation. See a parable brings forth in you what you have. Keep that thought in mind as we read on. In verse 13, “Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.

Now it looks as if Jesus purposely spoke in parable so that they can not believe. That is what you get superficially. Here are the multitudes and here are His disciples. To His disciples He spoke plainly. He explained many things to them when they don’t understand. But to the multitude, He only speaks in parables. Thank God we are among His disciples and not among the multitudes. It looks as if Jesus purposely does it so that they can not come to Him but that’s not what Jesus said. If people can not hear, can not understand, the responsibility is on them. Look at verse 15; their ears are hard of hearing and their eyes they have closed. They had closed themselves up. You see God doesn’t waste time with people who are not interested in Him. There are people out there in the world that God is blessing with the natural blessings. Who do not know God? Some of them curse God. Some of them do not believe in God. God does not waste time with people who are not interested in Him but those who are interested in Him, whether they be a Cornelius seeking God, somehow the gospel will get to him. God seeks those who seek Him. Those who do not seek God, God do not waste His time. The reason is God knows that if they are not hungry for Him and they don’t seek after Him, even if He manifest to them, it will be worse for them. Their rejection for God will be even greater. It will make it harder for them to come to God. God wants everybody to come to Him.

A parable has a quality of making you think and make your own decision. That’s a special quality of a parable. See a parable causes you to make your decision, but if Jesus compels them to come, it wouldn’t be by their own decision. It would have been His. A parable has a quality of making you reach a conclusion by your freewill. So Jesus wants them to come by their own freewill. If they wanted to understand the parable, it’s very simple. Just be one of His disciples. A parable serves to stir. If they have any desire for God, if they have any hunger for God, the parable will stir in them so much. They may not sleep and they may not eat. They will come and be a disciple

and say: Jesus, tell me. It's just like Moses' burning bush, the bush was burning but there was no voice yet. Moses saw from afar and say, I will go and see that bush and see why it burns and yet it is not consumed. When he drew near, God spoke to him. That is the nature of God.

Luke 24, you see how the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. After Jesus spent the time with them, and they still didn't recognize that it was Jesus. Time to check into the hotel, Jesus made as if to go on. That is the quality and attribute of God. He wants us to make that choice to invite Him to seek after Him. A parable has that special quality of making you reach a decision by yourself. If they did not understand anything, there will be something in that parable that will stir in them and will cause them to come to Him. Like Jesus says, cast not the pearl to the swine for they will come against you and destroy you. Jesus was doing what He preached. See He reserved certain truth for those who will make a commitment. Even now it is the same. If you made a fifty percent commitment with God, God can only work in your life fifty percent. God's revelation will only flow fifty percent. If you make a ten percent commitment then He works only at ten percent. God knows the percentage of our commitment. God can only work through that amount of commitment that you gave. But if you give 100% commitment, God could show Himself more to you. See the more committed you are to God, the more God can show Himself to you. So here His disciples were committed to Him and there the multitude outside say it's a good story and go off. Many multitudes will come, get their healing and go off. They get what they want. They don't want to change their life. They don't want to follow Him. They just go off. But here will be many of them asking, what's the meaning of this. And there is a hunger that stir and they began to come and ask Jesus. They want to learn more.

See a parable has a quality of making a person making a decision. And this is how love operates. Love is gentle. Paul says a servant of God must not quarrel but must be gentle in humility, correcting those who stray from the truth. See if I love you, I will not come to you and say, "You rascal, repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand." If you want to do that you might as well go and eat locust and honey and wear a camel skin. That will frighten the wits out of them. Love has a way of coming to a person and helping them to see them as they are rather than you tell them what they are. We have to learn that. It is not natural with our flesh. It is easier for us to just say you are wrong. I am right. That settles the issue. But it doesn't settle the relationship. See love builds bridges. But human beings build walls. Love values a relationship and so love seeks to cause a relationship. Love has a way of bringing a person in. It's what I call the parable style.

We have some examples in the bible; one of the classic examples is in II Samuel 12. There you see the operation of the parables. David had committed adultery with Uriah's wife and he has caused Uriah to be killed in battle. Now the Lord knows all about it and in II Samuel 12:1 "Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: there were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor." Now here is the parable, look at the situation here. If Nathan had come straight to David and said, "You rascal, you adulterer, you murderer," David may have reacted and instead of turning David to the Lord, he may have turned David worse against the Lord. Now you began to see the use of parables. See parables don't rub against your brain. It rubs along your brain to bring you to the Lord. See that is what love does. It

seeks to come down to your level to understand the hurts, the heartaches because everybody who is in sin and everybody who is in bondage, do you know they suffer? They may not know it but they are suffering. Their conscience is troubled; they are having sleepless nights, etc. Love comes down to the level of the suffering and says, "I understand your suffering." Love comes down to the level of suffering and from here brings you up. You better learn how to correct in love because every single one of you will have to correct another person somewhere, some place.

The problem is, it has never been taught. You don't know Jesus' style, the parable style. It doesn't mean that you have to go and cook up a parable somewhere. Just take the principle and learn how to do it. If God gives you a parable to tell then do it, otherwise learn to use the parable principle. See Jesus Christ, how did He turn us to God? Did He just remain on His throne in heaven and say, "You sinners come up here. "? No, He came down in the flesh and lived among sinful men and yet without sin. He understood the temptation we all go through, He understood the heartache, the pain and all that we have gone through. He understands and from there He brings us up and say, "You can come up here." That's the principle of Jesus' correction. So Nathan came to David. See the approach is important when you correct. You have to learn to speak the truth in love. Not just speak the truth. Many people know how to speak the truth but the way they speak the truth, there is no spirit of truth. The spirit of truth is called a spirit of love. It's not just speaking the truth, it's speaking the truth in love in Eph. 4:15.

Here Nathan came, he is going to speak the truth in love. He could have come to David and said, "You adulterer, you cruel murderer," and every word he said would have been true in that situation but it would not have helped David. He came to David and he said, there were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished, and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

Nice parable. David starts thinking about these two men. The poor man have only one tiny little lamb, the rich man have the whole herd and the rich man had a visitor. And instead of taking from his flock, he came to this poor man who had only one and grabbed it from him and used it for the feast. You know what David did? He reacted. Verse 5, "So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man." How can this man do it? How can he be so cruel? David said to Nathan, as the Lord lives, the man who had done this shall die. Now looks what had happened? The parable has caused David to think and make his decision of what is right or wrong. He knows it's wrong and he reacted with righteous indignation. He was greatly aroused. He said this man shall die. He has already concluded the principle. He knows right and wrong. Verse 6 "And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity. Verse 7, "then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!'"

You see David is not defenseless. What happened is that through a parable Nathan through the Spirit of God had helped use his judgment that he use on others on himself. See we know it's wrong for others to do it but we put a double standard. We

never do it on ourselves. And how the parable has helped David was that parable has helped him use the judgment. What he has in him. Remember Jesus said about His use of parables, what a man has shall increase. That's the use of a parable. The parable takes what is inside. All those things that is right with God. Your conscience and all those things that has been developed. Discerning of good and evil. It brings it up with you and it helps you to judge yourself. Paul says if I judge myself then I shall not be judged. That's how a parable does it. When a person is wrong, remember inside them there is a conscience that tells them it's wrong. And the Spirit of God must in many ways have been telling them that are wrong. All you have to do is through a special principle and a way brings them to see the light they already have instead of you shining a torch light on them and saying, "You are wrong." That is the parable principle in correction.

And Nathan explained the parable and gave the word of the Lord. If verse 7 had come in verse 1, there may not be the story we have. See what happened was David was saved. David was turned to the Lord instead of against the Lord. See how love operates. Finally in verse 13, "David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord." Now he did not say I have sinned before that. Now he recognized his own sin. And the advantage of the parable principle is that a person is helped to self-realization. Do you know that self-realization and repentance is a strongest factor to transforming a life? No matter what I tell you that you are wrong, unless you yourself realize you are wrong, all my telling will still be wasted words. People changed because of self-realization. The prodigal son who was so hungry that he wanted to eat the pig's food, the bible says he came to himself and said, my father's servant has more than this. I will arise. Before that there have been many people that try to turn him to the right way but to no avail until he realized. Then there was the power to change. Unless you see it, there is no power to change. The power to change arises from the spirit of a man. That's the power of love it can change life. It changes life; it builds life for the better.

II Kings 13, this is applying the principle but not so much the parable. Verse 14 onwards, "Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen! And Elisha said to him, take a bow and some arrows. So he took himself a bow and some arrows. Then he said to the king of Israel, put your hand on the bow. So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. And he said, Open the east window, and he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot; and he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them. Then he said, Take the arrows; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, Strike the ground; so he struck three times, and stopped. And the man of God was angry with him, and said, You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it. But now you will strike Syria only three times. Then Elisha died, and they buried him.

Elisha now lying on his bed about to go home and here come king Joash. It looks very peculiar isn't it? What has those striking of the arrows on the ground to do with his defeat of Syria? But what it brings forth was the heart of the king of Israel. See he was not ignorant of what the arrows mean. It was explained to him. He was first asked to shoot the arrows. So Elisha is now explaining the representation. The arrow is now

representing deliverance and an attack on the Syrians. So the arrows have now been spiritualized and symbolized as deliverance from the Syrians. Verse 17, he said the arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria. So the arrow has been explained to him as a Syrian. And after he shot the arrow, the next thing he told him was, strike the arrow on the ground. Remember he has been given enough information. The arrow represents Syria. And he just took the arrow and shot three times. The man of God got angry. You should have struck five or six times, now you only struck three times. You see, in the heart of the king of Israel was an attitude towards the Syrians. For example, if I were to ask James to hit a rat that run across this place and I tell James could you strike this rat for me. If James was lover of rats, won't you think it would be difficult? If he kept that rat in his home and everyday he just say, hello Mickey Mouse and feed it. Would James be able to come and hit the rat? I don't think so. Let say if Brother Amos, if he hates rats and he has been killing rats and also has been known as a number one rat's killer. If I tell him to kill the rat, even before I say go, he already killed it. Now what happens? The striking brings forth the attitude of the heart.

See the parable principle Jesus defined in Matthew 13:10 When His disciples said why did you speak in parables. Jesus told them for what a man has is brought forth and if he is good more shall be given. It brings forth from what is in a man. And in II Kings 13, the king of Israel had a certain attitude towards the Syrians. See many of the Israelites king are that way. King Ahab was the same way. King Ahab also at one time almost had victory over the Syrians but instead he let the Syrian king go. He made friends with him. In fact he had the king of Syria surrounded but he released him and said, "Come out my brother to my chariot." They were God's enemies. When Elisha gave a clue to the king of Israel, he did not leave him ignorant. He gave him a warning. When he shot the arrow the first was an indicator, the arrow of deliverance over the Syrians and if Joash was really keen to do the will of God, he would have shot all the arrows. See in the Old Testament sometimes God tells them to do something, just like God told David to destroy the Philistine. God told king Saul to destroy the Amalekites but he did not. If the king of Israel was interested in doing the will of God, he would have realized that the Lord was telling him now if you don't destroy them now, they will be a thorn in the flesh and they will destroy you back. Finally he was given the arrow that represents Syria and he shot. Now if the arrow had represented Syria, how he strike it would bring forth his intention, his zeal and his feelings about Israel. And it will also reveal his zeal to do the Lord's will. So here are the arrows that represent Syria, what he does to the arrows will represent his attitude, his inwards zeal to carry out what God wants to do to the Syrians. He just took the arrows and shot three times. That's why the man of God was angry. He said, you should have broken the arrows. These arrows represent the Syrians. He did not break the arrows.

If I give you a stick and say, "This stick represents the devil. Now strike the stick." How you strike the stick determines your anger against the devil. Your reaction to the stick represents your reaction to the devil. It brings forth what is inside you. That is the love way of correction. It seeks what is good in you and brings it out. To correct what is bad in you I become a catalyst. See a catalyst is a chemical that causes the reaction in other chemicals because of his presence. It itself does not react but it cause a reaction. So love is a catalyst for change in people's life because you come to them in love. The way you use your words, the way you talk to them it causes the good in

them to come out to correct the bad in them. Love recognizes the good in people. Remember the first attitude in correction, “You rascal, you adulterer, and you murderer.” What does it do? It completely rejects the potential of a person. It has completely written that person off and places him in the bin with the label, “Not good anymore.” See when a person takes such an attitude in correction, they are actually writing off a person.

Do you know that Jesus never given up on anyone? He didn't give up on Paul when he was persecuting the church. I have taken this attitude, no matter how hard a person is to change, as long as Jesus don't give up, I won't give up. Why does Jesus not give up? He sees the good and the potential in others. Love has a way of bringing up that potential so that you end up correcting yourself and I am just a catalyst. That's how a parable principle works.

Look at Matthew 13:12 Jesus said, “for whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance, but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables.” See it has a quality of bringing out what is in a person. If it's not there, it won't bring it forth. If it's there, it will bring it forth. The most marvelous thing about principle of a parable is, it causes you to have self-judgment. If there is good in you, it will bring it forth and you will judge yourself and God will be just standing by to receive your repentance. When we correct someone in the spirit of love, he or she will reach out for your hand of love. Everybody wants to be loved and correction must not be accompanied with rejection. That is why I offer to you the truth of speaking the truth in love. We have to learn the skill of love. We live in an imperfect world; there are imperfect people around us. Do we have an attitude of superiority or do we have an attitude of love where we seek to build others up? Do we seek to bring them up in Christ? And as long as we are living in an imperfect world and among imperfect people and among a body of Christ this is still not finished yet. There will always be many opportunities to correct and to improve.

And it is not just what to correct; it is how to correct. That is the important key. A lot of corrections that people have given are destructive. Some of you have been through that. So have I. In my younger days when I started the ministry, I wished people who have known me had led me instead of crushing me. I may have done something wrong but the joy is having someone to lead not to crush you. How do you correct another one? How do you personally correct, we have to examine ourselves. And you have to make a decision as to how you are going to correct another person when we have the opportunity. No wonder we have to pray before we can ever do it. It's easy you just tell another person he is wrong. But to build him up from where he is wrong into where he is right is different.

### 13. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

I John 4:20-21 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him; that he who loves God must love his brother also.

We talked about this passage on love. This morning we are going to look more into this area but as we touched on this series we mentioned that our vertical relationship is measured by and is proportional to our horizontal relationship with one another. It may leave you the impression that we develop our horizontal relationship first, and then we develop our vertical relationship with God. But that is not what the bible says, although the vertical relationship with God is proportional to our horizontal relationship. Yet the horizontal relationship comes forth from our vertical relationship. What this verse is saying is not that the horizontal relationship that is our love for one another comes first but this verse is saying that the truth or the reality of our love for God is expressed in our horizontal relationship.

In the words, if we really have love for God then that love will show out in our love for each other. That's all that it is saying. It's not saying that by loving one another we will develop our love for God. In verse 21 clarifies that. It says, And this commandment we have from Him that he who loves God must love his brother also. Notice that the emphasis is on loving God first because if you don't love God, it's very hard to love your brethren. On the other hand if you love God you will love your brethren. But if your love for God is a religious fear that has nothing to do with true love, then it will come out in self-righteousness and it will not come out in love for brethren. That is the meaning of this verse. So we do not want to leave the impression that developing the love of God comes from developing our love with each other. We must love God first. Every time you have a revelation of God, that revelation of God will produce a revelation of man. You began to see other people around you in a different light because you have seen God in a greater light.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 22, in answering the question of the Pharisees. Verse 34 "But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, (this was a religious lawyer, one who is expert in the law. When you see the word lawyer in the New Testament, it does not talk about today's type of lawyer. It speaks about those experts' scribes in religious laws. So one of the lawyers) asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? He was asking for one commandment. Jesus answered in verse 37, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Notice what He says next, "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus puts the word first and second in priority. That means to develop love for the brethren you need to develop a tremendous love for God. That is the first commandment. Loving God with all your being. Have you noticed that is like sometime when you have spent some time with God, when you have God's presence it makes you more loving. Makes you more patient, makes you more longsuffering, makes you more meek and humble. Are not all these the attributes of love? The bible tells us love suffers long, seek not its own. I Cor.13 all the attributes of love come forth from a relationship with God.



In I John 4:20-21 What John was dealing with was a group of people who don't really love God, who has become religious, who don't spend time in the presence of the Almighty, in the one who is their Savior who died for their sins, who don't spend time at His throne to know Him and to love Him. And He is saying, how can you say you love God when you don't show in your relationship? The positive part about it is, when we do spend time loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, strength and body, that the love of God consumes us and we come out of the presence of God with a greater love for the world and a greater compassion, a greater meekness, a greater patience.

If you have not notice it, that if you do not have enough time spend with God and you rush about throughout the day, you tend to be more irritable, you tend to react to the circumstances of life and react to people. When you missed your devotional time with God, when you do not meditate on the Word of God, when you did not spend some time worshipping God, you become bad-tempered, irritable because you have missed your time with God. On the other hand, if you have spent sufficient time with God everyday, notice the difference your day made. Your family will know. Do you know that your family members will know whether you have spent time with God? If you come with a long face we know you couldn't have come with the presence of God because in the presence of God there is fullness of joy. And when we see your long face is very hard to live with people who don't love God. But it's very easy to live with people who love God. The reason is when we love God; we are transformed into His same glory. The bible says in I John 4:16 "God is Love." Now if God is love and you spend some time in the presence of God who is love, who is the personification of love, who is the substance of love, who energizes love, who radiates love, surely when you come out of His presence you become a loving person. You come out of His presence as a person filled with His love.

The first commandment is to love God. We are not talking about religious activities. Do you know religious activities can be out of duty than out of love? There is a difference between the two. There is a difference between an obedient son and a dutiful son. I Cor. 13:3 tell us something about that. "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," now that is the horizontal relationship. That is a concern for the poor. To the poor who are receiving, they say you really like us. You really care for us. You really love us. Paul says though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor. He is not saying about giving a little bit. Notice he says all. He is not even saying about giving from the surplus and if that doesn't satisfy and though I gave my body to be burned, but have not love. It was mentioned by the love of God. It profits me nothing. You can give without loving. It is a religious act. It was an establishment of a horizontal relationship for other purposes except love. And Paul said it profits me nothing. He did not say it profit nothing. If you give away one hundred dollars the person profit but Paul said it profits me nothing. Did you know that every time you do a good work, every time you give something out of the love of God, there is some sort of profit to you? In the world we know that the receiving end profits. But in the spiritual realm, your act of giving causes you to profit in some manner. You receive a spiritual inclination. Your nature becomes more like the nature of God because God is the giver. Take this example; if you live a selfish life and all your concern is yourself, something in your nature began to be twisted to that form until that kind of selfishness becomes a part of your nature. On the other hand, if you are a generous person and are a giver, every act you do builds something into you. You do profit. When you it out of

the love of God, there is something that is built into you until you are formed, molded and baked into the nature of God. Every act you do after sometime doing regularly becomes a part of your character. And your character when it is synchronized with God will allow God's presence to flow through your life. So Paul did not say it profits nothing, he just say it profits me nothing. Every act of giving draws something from God.

Remember how Jesus spoke to the rich man who came to Him? Jesus said, give all you have to the poor and come and follow Me. But He did not put a full stop there. And you shall have reward in heaven. We must understand this life that God has created. These are the ABC of life. Not the worldly ABC. The worldly ABC teaches you grab the best, get all you can. But the principle of the ABC of life in this world is that this life is just a temporary life. It's preparing us for eternal life to come. So all that you do in this life, all that you possess in this life, all the talents that have been granted to you are in order to train you and prepare you for heaven. How you use the possession in this life, how you use your time in this life, how you use your talents in this life will prepare you for your work in heaven. It's a basic fact of where we are today. See this life is not a permanent life. All the possessions we have are not ours. They are loaned to us, to use and develop ourselves in God. I like the song that I heard once when I was in the seminary and a seminarian that was a former drug addict sang a song. And that song really touched me and I have never forgotten the wordings. It was that song that reminds me dear Lord. It says the things that I hold dear to my life are not mine; they are just borrowed. So remind me, remind me dear Lord. All the things of this life are not mine. They are only borrowed. It goes, "the things that I love and hold dear to my heart are just borrowed. They are not mine at all. So roll back the curtains of memory now and then. Show me where you bought me from and where I might have been."

Remind me; remind me dear Lord. Everything you have is given to you is under lease. It is not yours. The Almighty God gives you time, talent, and possessions for you to learn how to be like God in giving them away. And when you are born again, and receive spiritual gifts, it just gives you an opportunity to be like Jesus. Think about it, the power to heal the sick. What is it for? It is not for yourself. It gives you an opportunity to be part of Jesus' love. Think about the teaching and the preaching ministry. What is it? It is nothing but you just to be part of Jesus to people. Romans 8 says until we all be conformed to His image. Every time we have an act of giving born out of love something is received in your spirit man. Something is working in your spirit man. If you have ever learned about giving, you will know it rubs against the human nature to give. We have to train ourselves to be givers. You want to know how original sin works? All you have to do is to look at the kids. If you have two kids and you bring two apples. One is big and the other is small. You know the first thing that they go for is the big one. They will fight over the big one. See original sin is ego nature that places emphasis on the I. It is the selfish nature that has corrupted all of mankind. But selfishness was not in man when God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. That is why when Jesus came what is the thing that strikes us most, selfishness. Paul says in I Cor. 13 love seeks not its own. We have to think in terms of our life as not our own but as a commodity that we have to be faithful to and answerable to Him. We have to account to God for everything in this life. Isn't it wonderful when this life is over and we all sit together on the shore of paradise and recounting all those times on this earth? You say wasn't it nice we if I obeyed God

here, we obeyed God there? And you think about all those things you sacrificed for God then you will have all your rewards in heaven.

You can give without loving. That is you can give for other reasons but when you love you can't love without giving. And Jesus said, the first commandment is to love Him first. It's to love Him, pour your heart out to Him. When you love someone, what do you do? You spend time with the person. Not just ordinary time but special time. When you love God, what did you do? You have special time with Him. This is what Jesus spoke to me. Maybe it's of help to you. Jesus said, "If my people will treat Me as if I am physically there with them and walk and talk and live as if I am physically there with them by faith, I will manifest Myself to them and be real to them." See if you treat as if Jesus is real then Jesus becomes real to you. He will respond to you. So you have to treat God as a real person. Spending time with Him. Sit down with Him and say, "Lord here am I. I just want to love You. Tell me what to sing to you. How shall I express my love to You, O Lord?" And if you will love God in that manner, you can not help but keep the second commandment after that naturally. You will love others as yourself easily.

Rev. 2:4 was written to Christians. It says, "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." Now if you understand the word 'first love' by the context of what Jesus said in Matthew 22, then you will understand that Jesus is saying, you may still have love for each other, you may still have love for your neighbor but you have neglected the first love, which is to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength. God wants us to love Him first. You may be busy serving others but God wants you to serve Him first. My first ministry is not to you but my first ministry is to Him. My priority is always that way. First, to Him in the closet then secondly the ministry to others. There is no way you could minister to others with the love of God unless you get your love in God right. Notice what He says to them in verse 3, "You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary." They have worked hard, stood persecutions, stood hard times but their love have lost its freshness. The first love that they had for God has been lost. One of the most precious and closest things that you must hold to your heart all the time is your love for God. Don't let times steal it, don't let another person steal it. Don't even let another human being steal it. That love for God is a very precious thing to God and God will pass through every high mountain, every large valley, every wide ocean to reach to you when He knows you love Him. Rev. 2 was written to Christians because as Christians we can be involved in activities that are good, proper, beneficial to others but the love of God is missing and it becomes a duty, a task and it doesn't become a joy anymore.

How many of you have a problem doing what you like? I mean you have to struggle with yourself doing something you like to do. You don't, whatever it is difficult in the natural to others but when you really love to do it, it is the easiest thing for you in the world if you have a great love for God. There is nothing too difficult for you because you love Him. Do you know why not many people are willing to die for Him, because they don't love Him. To them it's difficult. If you love Him you will be able to say, "Lord I love you so much, I will do anything for you. You want me to live for you, you want me to die for you, whatever you want Lord I will do, I love you so much." All these become so easy when you really love Him.

I want you to examine yourself, because Jesus says in Matthew “My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Whenever your walk in Christian life becomes hard and difficult, please go back to square one, your first love. There is a song that this denomination people use to sing. I don’t like to sing because it is true in the natural but it should not be expressed in that way. It says, “It’s a long, long road and hard road.” That’s a song from the flesh. What the flesh is feeling is not an easy road we are traveling. Maybe when they sing the song half way, they die off. It’s a song from the flesh. The flesh is feeling all the difficulties. But let me tell you, that song is not in line with Matthew 11, it says, My yoke is easy, My burden is light. They should be singing, your yoke is easy and your burden is light. If your love is right, where it should be at square one, first love. There is nothing in this Christian walk that will be difficult and hard to you. Even if God tells you to go to Timbuktu, even if you don’t know where it is, you still go. Whatever God tells you it becomes easy. Please examine yourself if your yoke is hard and your burden is heavy. It may not be the Lord Jesus’ yoke. It maybe somebody else’s yoke you are carrying. It may be your own yoke. Then you are carrying something that Jesus did not carry. Your zealous bull carrying somebody’s yoke that God didn’t ask you to carry.

The Bible says, My yoke is easy and My burden is light. It depends on your heart. If your heart loves Him and it’s fresh, it is easy. So examine first whether it’s somebody’s yoke or the yoke of your own making. Second, it may be the Lord’s yoke for you but you have lost your love for Him. So you feel the way hard and the burden heavy. You may be in the will of God but if you lose the love of God it is difficult and it is heavy. It all depends whether you love Him. Lets close your eyes for a moment and say, “Father God, I love You, teach me to love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength. And Holy Spirit I love You. I appreciate You. I love You with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.”

Do you know you need to tell God that. Do you know that God loves to hear you say it with your lips, “I love You.” Have you ever told God that? Have you ever written love notes to God? Or has your walk with God grown as stale as your own relationship with your husband or your wife? Do you still tell God you love Him or do you come to God and say ‘yes Sir’, or is your relationship with God like a father and a child? Is your yoke difficult? Is your yolk heavy? Examine your heart. Love brings a supernatural strength especially the love of God. The love of God has caused men and women to give their lives to Him. The love of God has brought forth many Christian martyrs. The love of God has brought the gospel to areas of darkness, where no man wants to go but because of God people have gone. The love of God has caused people to make great sacrifices, giving all they have. Why is it that to these people could do it and it is not difficult? Why is it that the yoke is easy and the burden is light? It’s because of the love of God. Because of their love for God they could love others greatly. Unless you keep that first commandment, you have not strength to keep the second. If Jesus says something is first then first comes first. The first commandment is to love Him then you will be able to love others.

Lets look at I John 4:16 “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”

You know what the presence of God is like? Those of you who have been in the overnight prayer, you know His presence is just love. The way I describe His presence

is this: You know what is like to have compassion for someone who is sick or who has a need? You know that compassion that dwells up in you? Sometimes you look at those who have needs or those who are sick and they need God's healing power, that's the compassion that comes. You multiply that by a million times then you will know that is the presence of God. That is why many times the presence of God manifest we can not stand it. We just want to cry. Why, because we have never been loved that much. The world has not been able to give that kind of love nor any human beings. We can't stand that kind of love, so intense and we weep because we are happy that we are loved. We are touched that we are loved and we have been made to be the objects of love. And now we are fulfilling the object by allowing God to love us. The bible says that when you know God loves you and you love God and you will love Him. We will love Him because He first loves us. When you love Him then it comes to you loving others. First thing's first.

## 14. LOVE HEALS BAD TEMPER

I Cor. 13:4 “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up.”

The first phrase is what we are going to touch on. Say: Love suffers long, love endures all things, love is meek. The love of God in my life will teach me to have self-control in Jesus' Name.

Gal. 5:22-23 talks about the fruit of love and we have shown how all these qualities of the Holy Spirit are related to the love of God that is formed in our lives. Verse 22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” The last word self-control in the Old King James is the word temperance. Temperance means able to control your temper, its self-control. One of the fruits of love is meekness, longsuffering, self-control – temperance.

This morning we are going to touch on a very important subject, that love is self-control or how to hold a bad temper. See love is temperance; love is self-control. Basically every one of us in our life has to deal with our own temper. Some people have a temper hotter than others. But all of us have a temper. Some people have a very short fuse. Some still have a fuse except it's slightly longer but every one of us has a fuse. Once in a while somebody light that fuse and you explode. Your face turn red, your ear tremble, your voice raised and the smoke come out on the chimney on top of your head. All of us have a temper. Sometimes different people irritate you and to one person you can be very nice but to another person you could lose your temper. It's strange how it works. So lets look at the bible and see what it says about controlling your temper and dealing with bad temper.

Lets look at the book of Proverbs. Even the meekness of man called Moses, remember Moses had one title called the meekest man in the whole earth at that time. But you and I know that he lost his temper. Remember how he lost his temper several times at the Israelites. He scolded them many times. In the book of Numbers, we see how his anger was hot against the Israelites. Earlier on in Exodus 32, 33, when he came down from the mountain after taking the Ten Commandments, he was so angry he broke the Ten Commandments. And one time he let his temper get away with it and God said speak to the rod to bring out water and he spoke to the Israelites. In Numbers 20 he said, shall I bring water out of this rock you rebels and he hit the rock twice and God said because you did it twice, you shall not go into the land of the Canaan. Yet the bible called him the meekest of men. So we are going to look at the book of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs has many things to say about bad temper and how to deal with it. All of us need this message.

Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” This is one of the reasons why when we want to select ushers, when we have a meeting where there is an overflowing capacity crowd, if I were to select, I will select those with the softest voice and place them right at the entrance. But if you put someone with a naturally loud voice, you will stir up temper. Someone who speaks to you very softly and there you are raising your voice, the guy just speak softly, you will begin to feel very guilty. It's the best conviction. A soft answer turns away wrath. In watching some of you ushers and some of you minister in conventions and rallies, I observed

that the tone of your voice carries a lot of weight. All you have to do is just speak louder and be more commanding. That's all. People will lose their temper. You will have to deal with people's temper. A soft answer is very important.

Proverbs 16:32 "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes the city." Now the phrase he who rules his spirit, in the Hebrew it talks about one who learns to control the temper. You have a temper and it may not be a bad temper but when you go about telling people I have a bad temper, you have to sit down and hear Kenneth Hagin's messages all over again. You have to learn the faith message all over again because you are confessing what you should not be. You may have a temper to be dealt with but the first thing to change is your confession. So here it says that if you learn to control your temper, you are better than someone who conquer a city. You are better than Alexander the Great who conquered lands and nations. All you have to do is learn to control your temper. And it tells you here that if you are slow to anger that means it's very difficult to make you angry. You are mighty. You want to be mighty man of valor, a mighty woman of valor control your temper. Of course, in controlling your temper it includes controlling your tongue.

The book of Proverbs when it speaks about temper relates controlling temper to wisdom. Let me read you some passages so that we can have a good foundation for people to learn how love can suffer long and love can bring about great tolerance and temperance. Lets start from Proverbs 14:

29 "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding but he who is impulsive exalts folly." The word impulsive actually is from the Hebrew word in the same verse 29 short of spirit. So the word short fuse originates from the bible. When we say someone has a very short fuse, it means it takes him a short time to explode. It says that when a person is slow to anger, slow to wrath, slow to get angry, slow to get irritated, that person is of great understanding. The opposite is true here. It says that if your fuse is short, then you are having a great foolishness. Here the bible says when you are short of spirit you exalt folly. You remember how it is when you lose your temper? Don't you remember how you lose your understanding? When you lose your temper, you also lose your understanding. Your comprehension of facts gets boggled up, your emotion rises and your understanding doesn't work the way it should. Your understanding doesn't function properly. You say things that you don't mean to say. You do things that you don't mean to do. You are not yourself anymore. You have lost your understanding.

Lets look at Proverbs 16:14 "As messenger of death is the king's wrath." It talks about a king, a person in authority is angry, death issue forth. See when a person in authority gets angry; there are symptoms of death that issue forth. People get cut off; people get ex-communicated. Sometimes in the natural world, people die because of anger. I like the next sentence, it says "but a wise man will appease it." Wisdom will know how to appease the anger. Wisdom will know how to go about dealing with that anger. A wise man knows how to deal with the anger of a king. See wisdom, self-control and good temper are related together. Bad tempers, foolishness are also related together on the opposite side. Once we understand the bible's teaching, it will help you to control yourself.

Proverbs 19:11 “The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” The discretion of a man, the understanding, the discerning all that helps a person to be slow to anger.

Chapter 29:8 “Scoffers set a city aflame, but wise men turn away wrath.” It is one thing to lose your temper. It is a wiser thing to turn away someone’s temper. It takes wisdom. The bible gives us some wisdom. It says a soft answer turns away wrath. How many of you want to be wise? Then have a good temper. That is wisdom. That is understanding. If wisdom and good temper are related, then bad temper and foolishness are also related.

Proverbs 27:3 “A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but a fool’s wrath is heavier than both of them.” When a fool gets angry, it’s very heavy. It is just like a big stone resting on you. One of the best passages is Eccles. 7:9 “Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rest in the bosom of fools.” The bible makes it very clear. When you are not able to control your temper, you are actually behaving like a fool. Anger rests in the bosom of fools. A hasty spirit does not hasten to be angry. Be slow to anger, that is one of the attributes of love. That’s one quality that God wants us to have. If the love of God develops in your life, then you will not be angry at all.

The bible says in James 1 that the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.

Don’t excuse yourself and say this is righteous wrath. It does not work the righteousness of God.

We should leave judgment to the Lord. We should leave the display of judgmental anger with God. As for us and our household, we should demonstrate the love of God with plenty of self-control and temperance. The bible here relates the cost of anger.

Lets look at Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” The word harsh is the Hebrew word ‘atsept’ that is from the word sorrow. That is why in the Old King James it translate it as grievous word. Words that grieve. Words that contain sorrow. It gives us a clue why people get angry. When there is already sorrow and grief in your life, it does not take long before an additional word that is harsh, grievous or sorrowful adds to that burden and you can’t take it anymore, the volcano explodes. When a person gets angry, it is not that the person gets angry right at that moment but there is something that is sitting and boiling inside. When you see the smoke coming out from the kettle and say the water is boiling, you will notice it’s not at that time only that the kettle started bubbling. It has started bubbling some time back but it is at that time that the steam starts coming out when there is an overflow of heat. In the same manner why people do get angry? It’s because there are hurts in their life. There are grief and sorrow in their life. And by the time you come into the picture, you come right at the spot to let the lid of the volcano out. You just add one tiny little bit to what is already there.

For example, if my hand is all bruised and the skin becomes sensitive, then when I shake hands with you, when you touch the skin, it is painful to me. But if my hand is normal, I could use the same hand and touch you and shakes hands with you. It wouldn’t be painful for me. It would be a pleasure. In the same way, if you are having mouth ulcer, the food you eat is no more enjoyable. It’s painful to swallow. The same



food that gives you pleasure now gives you pain. There was nothing wrong with the food but there was something wrong with your mouth. And as a result of ulcer in your mouth, the food that was intended to give you pleasure does not give you pleasure anymore. The problem is with you not with the food. In the same way why do people get angry? Why do people lose their temper? It is because there is grief and sorrow in their life. It's hidden inside. We have learned to put a smile until somebody comes along and say the wrong word. The smile melts and the volcano explodes. Not that at that time you were grieved but there was a boiling up of grief in you. So if we were to examine our life, those of you who have a bad temper, those of you who find hard to deal with your temper, examine your own life. If you are sitting in anger that is hidden, it is because there is a lot of grieving, there is a lot of unhappiness, there is a lot of sorrows in you. There is a lot of dissatisfaction inside you. One fine day it will explode.

If we have the joy, the love, the peace of the Holy Spirit and do you notice that if you have joy it's very hard to get angry. Because inside you, you are healed. If you have a bad temper that you just need to be locked up in the zoo, that every time you explode, you are like a lion gone wild. There is something in your life that needs the inner healing. You see anger is what a person does on the outside against people. When inside they are angry, maybe it could be when you are a small child, you have gone through a lot of unhappiness, so now you are no more with your parents, but you are living with others. The Lord has never touched that anger that you have stored up in you. The love of God has not been allowed to be shed in some of the inner rooms in your life. Now you are living with different people and once in a while it comes out. You strike out at them. It's just like you are storing all these things to hit out but you won't dare to hit out at your parents when you were small because you know they are bigger than you and they are the authority in your life. But now you have grown up and so the same desire to hit out is still there. Any point where you can you hit out at anybody. And inside your sub-conscious mind you are seeing that person as your parent whom you are hitting out. But now it's a different person. And the person whom you are hitting at may not even know what is going on. So when you have a bad temper you can not deal with, it's because there is something in your life that you have not allowed God to touch. The love, the peace, the joy of the Holy Spirit has not been allowed to saturate your life. You are dissatisfied. Didn't the bible say that the Lord is like honey and honeycomb in the rock, that He satisfies you? You will have to allow the Lord to touch you, heal you of that unhappiness in your life. Unhappiness, sorrows, grieves are the swamp that allow bad temper to grow.

So we see that dealing with anger is not just on the surface. There are a lot of deep things inside to deal with. Maybe you have to come to God in fasting and prayer and ask God to touch the inner things in your life. Sometimes when you fast and pray in your life God shows you inner things in your life that are hidden from others. Things that are locked up in you that needs to be dealt with. They will come up in your dream. They come up during times when you seek God. The closer you seek God the more His light shines on you. Those things that are not visible become visible. They come out in your dreams. They come out during your daily life in your fasting. It's because God wants to deal with them. Unless you surrender those things to God they will keep on being a perpetual problem, a stumbling block in your spiritual growth. You have to deal with them to be touched inwardly and healed by the Lord. Anger has caused a lot of man of God to fall short of where God wants them to be. It was God's

perfect will for Moses to enter the land of Canaan but because of anger he could not enter it. Do you notice that Cain slew Abel because of anger? And I believe one of the reactions of Judas to Jesus was anger.

In Matthew 26, there was an incident that led to his betraying of Jesus. See he has been with Jesus for 3 years; there must be a cause to it. See when you are angry you lose your understanding. You lose your wisdom. You can not hold on to wisdom and at the same time hold on to bad temper. They don't go together. In fact bad temper and fools go together.

In Matthew 26:6-13 is the anointing at Bethany. "Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor. But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, why do you trouble a woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always." This is immediately followed by the betrayal in the next verses, 14-16 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him 30 pieces of silver. So from that time, (notice from that time onwards) he sought opportunity to betray Him. That was the starting point when Judas Iscariot decided to look for opportunity to betray Jesus.

Look at Mk. 14:10 "The Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them." Notice the record. It records after the incident when Judas became angry with Jesus so that incident is significant.

Look at John 12; the one who ask the question is identified by apostle John as Judas. Verse 4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot who would betray Him said, "Why was not this fragrant oil sold for three hundred denarii's and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. Notice the background of the story? I am sure Jesus by the word of knowledge would know that Judas was a thief but Jesus never reprimanded Judas Iscariot. He may know about it but He never reprimanded Him, neither did He go about exposing Judas Iscariot. But do you know what happens when you sin secretly? Your conscience bothers you. When nobody finds it out, your conscience makes you feel guilty and you let yourself out. You let the cat out of the bag by yourself. Your conscience eats you up. So Judas was stealing money all the time. Nobody said anything about it.

And here when he saw the costly ointment, he said this cost a lot of money. The money should be given here in the moneybag where I am the treasurer. And I would make use of the money. When he did that all the time his conscience must have bothered him and so when he was making that statement to Jesus, Jesus said, "The poor you always have but Me you do not have always." Publicly He reprimanded him. He never said anything about stealing but Judas, due to his guilty conscience, thought, "He is reprimanding me." And from that moment on, there must have been a reaction. He may have reacted in anger. He may have got angry with Jesus and in his anger, (remember when you have anger you lose your understanding), he went out and plotted with the Pharisees to betray Jesus. Do you remember after he betrayed Jesus

what he did? He regretted. Doesn't it sound like someone who reacted in anger and not knowing what he or she did and later on regretted what he or she did in anger. Don't you remember the times when you were angry and you broke something and then you regretted it? You got to buy it back. Men, when they get angry, they break something. Ladies, when they get angry, they scream and then you regret what you do. Because the bible says that when you are angry, you lose your understanding. Judas must have walked out very angry and in his anger he plotted with the Jews. And now he had plotted something he finds it hard to retreat and anyway he went ahead with it. From that moment he sought to betray Jesus. He was irritated with Jesus. There were many things in this bible that tells us that anger of man brought them to destruction. And after Jesus was betrayed and Jesus was crucified, he saw what happened to Jesus, he has regrets. Does this not sound like a man who had a bad temper? Who reacted and now he can not change it?

Anger has brought people to do things that they normally would not do. I heard about one incident in another church somewhere, where some body was so angry that she accused and framed the pastor. Later they found that she told a lie and the police went after her. It's amazing what anger can cause you to do. Actually it can cause you to do a lot of foolish things because when you get angry you lose your understanding. How important therefore for us to learn to have a good temper.

And remember it is not just learning to control the temper, it's learning to heal the temper. You can not control what is not healed. If you are hurting on the inside and you are controlling, every time you get angry you count to ten. In your peak of anger one of the things to do is to go to prayer. Go to God and ask God to touch the area in your life that is exposed. When you have bruised on your shoulder, then I just come to you and pat you on the shoulder, what does it reveal? It revealed a sore point in your shoulder. Whenever you are angry or irritated with somebody, it's not the time to examine and cross-examine him or her. Normally people would cross-examine the one who caused them anger. But the person to be cross-examined should be you who lost your temper. Whenever you are angry or irritated by somebody, the first area to examine is the area in your life that is being irritated. You have to sit down and ask yourself, "Why am I angry? Why am I irritated?" At that time your computer brain probably got overheated and begins telling you why, "The person did this and that person did that – this is injustice, its unrighteous." Don't trust your computer at that time because it is overheated. It's not working probably. Just go aside to God and pray, ask God to touch that inner part of you that is hurting you. Just as there are sores and bruises that people have on their body there a lot of bruises people have in their soul. And nobody realize it until suddenly that part of the soul is touched and they get angry and upset. It's all stored inside and it has to be dealt with. Take every opportunity when you get irritated or you get angry to pray to God. If you keep doing that, taking that action all the time, we do not promise you an instant solution but it is a process that is being dealt with in your life because in one meeting we can not expose everything in your life. We can only show what the Word of God says in this area then as you constantly go through your life, you will gradually heal the troubled hidden spots of your life. Every time you get irritated or angry, you turn aside to the Lord and say, "Lord touch me. God heal me." See anger is not to be controlled; it's to be healed. It's not just counting to ten then talking. But the temper is to be healed. The grief in your life, the sorrow in your life, the unhappiness in your life need to be touched by God and healed by God.

Love suffers long; the fruit of the Spirit is temperance. Love endures all things. Jesus never reacted. He acts. That is why when we talk about the love of God, we have to touch this area because one of the attributes of the love of God build and reinforce in a person life is that the person's temper changes. Things that irritated you before do not irritate you now. Things that you get upset over do not upset you anymore. And the way you talk changes and you flow with the temperance of the Holy Spirit, which is self-control. The fruit of love is self-control. He who learns to rule his spirit is better than he who conquers a city. And he who learns to rule their spirit is better than the mighty.

Another point that can help you besides showing that temper needs to be healed not controlled, it's learning to place things in the hand of God. You remember how children develop anger? When they can not get their own way, you know what they do? The child will cry. Do you know that is natural human reaction? And what happens when you grow up, you camouflage it. Instead of putting yourself on the floor and beating the floor and kicking your leg, you wouldn't do it because it will break the milk bottle. So you camouflage and you raise your voice louder usually than louder the other person so that you get your attention. You make a mess out of things and everybody look at you. Then you say, I got the attention now. That is why the book of Proverbs says; it is a fool's way of getting your attention.

The way we get attention is by prayer. If you want something to be dealt with is by prayer. And sometimes when things are not the way we want, we lose control. We are no more in control of circumstances. Do you know that feeling is there since original sin? See man was in control when he was righteous with God. Adam was in control of the world but when Adam fell, suddenly the world is the place where he is no more in control. There are some things you control and some things that run out of control. What happens when it runs out of control? Circumstances or people seem to do things that are out of your control. You react, you scream because there is no more control. It's human reaction. Do you know that there is one way that you can control all things? By prayer. If you switch on to this capacity where you realize that you can not control this anymore for the circumstance is beyond you, you switch on from the natural to the spiritual and you began to draw on the spiritual forces and learn to control it and move the circumstances by the spirit not by the natural. Not by raising your voice and losing your temper but by praying and changing it. So when you learn to be a person of prayer, you learn to change things by your prayer and not by your screaming, not by your compelling but by your prayer. The only problem sometimes prayer takes longer than your screaming. When you want someone to hear you, what do you do? You scream at them and they quiet down. You may get their temporary attention but they are not opening their hearts inside. Something closes up on the inside of them. If you could pray and get their attention you want or the hearing that you need or the circumstances that flows in your way. If you can get it by prayer, it's so much better. So you got two choices, either to get it in the natural or get it in the spiritual.

It is quite a skill to learn not to use the natural because the natural is something you could feel, you could see, you could touch. So it seems easier to use the natural than to use the spiritual and that is the problem for people. We live in the natural so much that the spiritual seem unreal to us. We should not depend on the natural. We should depend on the spiritual. But people like to take the easy way or short cut because the

natural is the realm where they could feel, they could see and they could touch. But yet if we depend on the spiritual we will develop spirituality. If we depend in the natural we will develop to be natural brood. The bible exalts us to develop on the spiritual side. So learn to surrender things to God. A surrendered life is a life that will flow with good temperance. You know why? Anything happens you surrender it to the Lord. You bring it to the Lord, so besides healing the temper, you need to learn to pray to use spiritual weapons and you need to learn to surrender, since temper comes from self. For example if somebody talks about you and says you are a nasty guy. You heard it and you get angry and you said how dare the person speak about me. But if you are dead in Christ, it's no longer you that lives but Christ who lives in you. Then when they speak something bad about you, you said you are dead and gone. They can say all they want but it doesn't affect me. So it's learning to be dead to self. When you are dead to self, you don't react, you don't get angry. You can't get a dead man to scold you back. Have you gone to a coffin where someone is lying dead and you shout at that person? That person never said anything because that person is dead. In the same way, when your self is dead, you are dead in Christ and it's not possible to be angry. How can you be angry when you are dead and Christ lives in you? So the root of temper is self. When we remove self we remove the tendency to be angry and then the fruit of the Spirit can flow out freely through our life.

Lets look at Romans 5:3-5 "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

Paul gives it the opposite way, the ability to stand in tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance is possible because it produces character and character is possible because of hope. And hope is possible because the love of God is shed abroad in your heart. The word shed abroad is actually poured into your heart. So it starts with love. When the love of God is in your heart, you have great hope. Your hope never gets disappointed. Your hope never gets destroyed. When people's hopes are destroyed, they commit suicide, they got depressed and they want to die because they lose hope. So hope comes from love and the love of God is in your heart. You know all things will work out for good, so there is hope. When there is hope, it develops a strong character. Then a character produces perseverance in your life. Perseverance to stand in tribulation. It works both ways.

After this message it does not mean that you are going to walk out here perfect. Do you know that apostle Paul sometimes blow his top? Acts 15:39 "Then the contention become so sharp that they parted from one another." Do you know Paul quarreled with Barnabas? And they quarreled over Mark. Later in Timothy Paul says Mark is a good service to me. He changed. So what are you going to do after this message and realize the truth of God? You may still lose your temper here and there but one of the secrets you must learn to do is to ask for forgiveness quickly. It is to say sorry. It is to apologize. You may slip here and there on your way to perfection but learn this truth. You learned the reasons for keeping to wisdom and learned to be slow to anger. What to do when you slip? Learn to apologize. Humble yourself. Humbling is good for you. Do you know it takes losing face to go to someone and apologize? Now that is good for your self-nature. Good medicine heals your self-nature. We Asians always think about saving face. Whenever you slip, makes mistakes, you get angry or anything, the

first thing to do is to say I am sorry. I missed it. I blew it and forgive me. It takes humility. But if you keep doing it, it will remove self-nature in your life.

Now Paul slips once in a while but he learns one thing that is to apologize immediately.

Here is another point where he slipped. Acts 23:1 Paul was being tried in the Sanhedrin council. In verse one and two, “Paul looking earnestly at the council, said, ‘Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.’” The high priest was moving with anger. Do you know one of the things the high priest crucified Jesus was because the high priest was angry with Jesus? Anger does a lot of funny things. Anger was at the root of the high priest’s heart. The devil was the anger in his life to cause him to crucify Jesus. Jesus preached the truth and they got angry. It’s amazing what anger can do. If you realize how much anger will cause a fall of man, we will watch out and not to be angry. It causes us to do a lot of foolish things. I mean crucify someone innocent. It was a foolish act. A normal person wouldn’t do it but an angry person would. An angry person does a lot of foolish things. Anyway here is a high priest very angry with Paul, the priest said, slap him. Paul got angry. Verse 3 “Then Paul said to him, God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law? Actually in the Greek, it is even fiercer than that. Paul actually said, God will strike you back you whitewashed tombstone. Actually he scolded him back. Then someone next to Paul said, do you talk like that to the high priest and this is what Paul said, I did not know he was the high priest. And he even quoted a scripture for himself, verse 5 “I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, you shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.” I just bring this to show you that Paul was not perfect. So I don’t want you to be discouraged after you hear this message and then you go back, perhaps after lunch today, you just blow your top and you said finish. I want to encourage you. I want to show you the plan of God, the perfection. And then at the same time I want to show you what to do on your way to perfection. You may fail along the way but you should apologize fast. Paul was fast at that. He quoted a scripture against himself. He corrected himself.

Anger comes in many ways. It can be between brothers and sisters. It could be between parents and children. It could be between husband and wife. Sometimes people have anger against their country and government. Let me put it on record; we have no right to join the world if the world is angry with the government. You and I are supposed to pray for the government, pray for peace and to show love. The bible says respect and give honor to who honor is due. You won’t change things by your anger. There are a lot of people out there who are angry at all kinds of things. Anger is evil and we are not supposed to repay evil with evil. We are supposed to do good. Think about those things that are good. Think about the positive things, where people are so angry you are so peaceful and you so love. It can come in any form but don’t tolerate it because it will sit inside you. If bad temper is tied to grief, unhappiness and sorrow, then good tempers are tied to love, joy and peace. Learn to have joy. Learn to laugh at circumstances. Learn to laugh at things. Learn to laugh, learn to rejoice and you will not be angry.

## 15. WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Luke 10:25-27 “And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said to him, what is written in the law? What is your reading of it? So he answered and said, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

It speaks about love. Loving our neighbor as our self. Verse 28 “And He said to him you have answered rightly, do this and you will live. But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” That is what we are going to talk about this morning. Who is my neighbor? We have talked about the love of God but the love of God is easier shown to those you meet once in a while than those who live in the same house with you. Sometimes we pick and choose who we want to love, whom we want to show love to, whom we want to let the compassion of God flow through. So Jesus spoke this parable to answer the question who is my neighbor. He is not just telling us about the story about compassion, although it does cover compassion and the kindness of the Samaritan but He is speaking here in answer to the question who is my neighbor. Here He speaks about a parable. There is where we have the famous parable of the Good Samaritan.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who stripped him of his clothing and wounded him and departed leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came that road and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Passed by was not enough, he has to pass by on the other side. That is the priest. So here we have the scene of that man lying down. The Good Samaritan has not come yet. So he could be lying down on one side of the road. I guess the road was not like our broad highways today. In those days the roads are quite narrow. So the poor man was lying on one side of the road where the thieves left him. I guess the priest was probably on his way to worship God. The priest was on his way to do some religious assignment or activities. And if I read what the bible says here, the priest was probably walking on the same side of the road as that poor man. There is no reason for him to cross on the other side if he was on the other side. So the other side refers to the opposite side where the man was. He was walking in the same side. He was walking along that road to fulfill his religious activities in Jerusalem. He came to that man and he wouldn't even want to come near that man for the purpose of avoiding that man. He went over the other side. There the man was down there and would be saying, “Help, help” and the other man would be on this side and he just looked this way and walked past. Now of all things he was a priest. Priest was supposed to be helping the people. In our days he would have been a pastor. Could you imagine that? The pastor comes by and sees that man there; there he is half dead, half naked, wounded, bruised. The only sound that comes from him was “help, help.” Can you imagine a pastor walking on the other side and then just passed him by leaving that man? That hits us pastors harder because we can identify that the priest is the religious leader at that time. That was the first man.

Here comes the second. Jesus said in verse 32, “Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.” So this was slightly better. See the first man came, he saw. The word saw is usually used from a distance. The priest saw and went on the other side and he walked by. But this Levite came

near to the man. Came, looked and then quickly went on the other side and continued his journey. All he did was look.

Then came a third man. Jesus called him a Samaritan. A Samaritan would have been a man that was shut out of the normal Jewish society. See Samaritans and Jews normally have no dealings. It is just like a Jewish man was injured and then two Jewish men came by and walked on the other side. Then here comes an Arab and he looked at this Jewish man. They are already enemies. He might have looked and said, "Very good, you deserved it." He has all the right to say that under normal circumstances. So this is what the Samaritans are to the Jews. The Samaritans and the Jews are like the Jews and the Arabs today. Here is the Samaritan; there are a lot of barriers to the Samaritan in the natural to helping him. No. 1 There was no relationship between them. No.2 As far as race is concerned, their races were at enmity. There was a cultural barrier; there was a relationship barrier. And the third area is that the Samaritan was on a business trip. This was out of his way. That was a social barrier. It has nothing to do with his program. It was not part of his planned program.

So here comes the Samaritan, and as he look at this man, in verse 33, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animals, brought him to an inn, and took care of him." That's not bad, the Samaritan came on a donkey. The priest came walking, the Levite came walking but here comes the Samaritan on a donkey. He gets down from his animal, helped the man, bandaged his wound and after everything, he sacrificed his donkey, carried him with all his bleeding and put him on the donkey. The Samaritan has to walk. It's quite inconvenient. He has to go out of the way to inconvenience himself and not only that, the first place he landed was a small motel. He comes to the place, he said to the innkeeper in verse 35, "and he said, take care of him, and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you." In other words, he paid money for this man to stay at the motel. He said charge it all to my account and when you see me again, I will settle all the bills. He really went all out of the way, inconvenienced himself, took account of his whole expenses of this man. And after the whole parable, Jesus went into such detail. Jesus turned around and said, in verse 36, "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves? And He said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, Go and do likewise."

The purpose of His parable was to show who is my neighbor. All of us have a circumference around our life. In other words, you go through certain circumstances. You meet different people that I meet. Your life revolves around a different group of people. Some of the people are the same, like in church but otherwise you meet certain groups of people and you have certain activities in your life. That is what I call the circumference of your life. And the priest came, and he had his own certain activities. Here was the poor pilgrim injured, half dead and wounded. He had his own life and so the two circles meet. The priest said, "I don't want to let him into the circle of my life. His suffering is his suffering. My life is my life." So he never opened the circle of his life out. He just went aside and walked on. That priest never enters the circle of the injured man's life. Likewise the injured man never enters the circle of that priest's life. Came the Levite, the same story. But the Samaritan had business, he



had his own activities and here he comes. He could have said, “Your life is your life. My life is my life.” When he came he took that man into the circle of his activities. He got that man involved as a part of his life. He became involved in that man’s life. That man became involved in his life.

So all of us have a circumference circle by which we conduct our life. For example, when you go to the supermarket, you normally would not spend much time there. You should be reading your bible, and when you go to the supermarket, you don’t sort of hang around. You want to hang around, hang around praying and have some other spiritual activities. So you don’t go to the supermarket and get to know people there. People are walking all around and you say, “Hello! What’s your name?” You don’t do that because in the supermarket everybody come and go, come and go. They don’t bother about who you are or what your name is. Everybody has his or her own circle. So they are not opening their circle or their life, unless you meet your friend there. So what I mean is here are strangers that are meeting and each has his or her own circumference of life. They open their part of life to the other. So all of us have a circumference of our life. It’s up to us whether we want to open the door of the circle to let someone to participate in our life and we participate in the other person’s life.

There are some situations where the circle of your life already involved others. Like for example, your parents, your brothers and sisters in the family or those who live under the same roof. Or those in your office, or those in your school. They are already some people involved in the circle of your life. Your relatives or whatever it is. When Jesus said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” He is talking about loving those who come within the circumference of your life. He is not talking about someone very far away whom you see him or her once in a blue moon. Sometimes the people you see once a year, if you see everyday, you may not like them as much. And that’s the same way when people start getting to know each other. Do you know when people get to know each other and they fall on love. There are three stages. The first stage is they discover what is nice about each other and they try to be the same. It is a sub-conscious reaction as well as in their words and conversation. They try to find what is likable and what is similar. That’s the first stage.

After sometime, when the blue moon has turned red, they begin to find what is not so nice about the other person. There are differences in opinion and differences about their character. They discover traits that are not so similar. Then they enter the second stage. They have to make a decision on how much they want to be involved in the circle of each other’s life. If they get through the second stage, then they reach the third stage. After knowing all that is good about you, after knowing all that are not so nice things about you, then the third stage you say, “Well, I will still decide to love you.” Then your love has matured. Before that your love is immature. You can not stand the pressure of life.

So there are these three stages and in the same way there is a circle of our life where we want to emphasize here. That is you begin to develop love among those who are closest to you: your husband or your wife, brothers or sisters in Christ or the members of your family or those living under the same roof with you, in your office or in your school. They are not the thorn in your flesh. They are not the devil or enemy against you. You do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Don’t you dare call your wife your thorn in the flesh. They are not. If they are then you must be worse because you married her. Your brothers and sisters are not your thorn in your flesh. Your love has

to develop to them first before your love can develop to others whom you do not know.

Now this is what I believe happen as the background to the Samaritan, to the Levite and to the priest. The priest and the Levite probable was accustomed to religious activities. They do them out of duty and they have an objective and goal. Perhaps they are people who don't mind stepping over people's head to pursue their spiritual pursuit. When the Samaritan started helping the pilgrim, I don't think that was the first time he did it. It must have been part of his nature. When he sees that he reacts the same way. When you react in the circumstances, you react out of what you already have. If you are someone who has a tendency to help others, then when that circumstance come, you will in all circumstances react the same way. If you are someone who turn the other side and walk on the other side then in that kind of circumstances, you will still do the same thing. I believe that the development came in his own private life. You can see the way the Samaritan talked to the innkeeper, like it was his old friend, saying charge it all to my account. You can see the closeness and relationship that he has and this is the point that we want to gather.

Those who are in your circle of life, if you do not love them and develop love for them, you will never be able to love others who are outside the circle or form love relationship with others outside your circle. You have to choose to show love to those within your circle. It is an easy thing to love those whom you don't meet so often but it's a different thing to show love to those you meet everyday. You have to develop love. You have to determine to love and to keep showing love. It is not easy but it is the very place where people failed or they succeed in developing love in their life. I have found out that sometimes those who have a poor family relationship become poor in relating to others. It seems natural. Do you know some people find it hard to relate when they come to a big group, in a class or in a church. You know what's the problem? They have a problem in their own home. In their own home they may not be close to their father or mother or brothers or sisters. So then when they come to the school, they find it difficult it develop relationships. But on the other hand, those who have good relationships at home, who have a close attachment, for example to their parents or to the brothers or sisters in Christ or to those who are living with them. When they move out, they tend to be very bold. They form relationships very fast. They are not filled with fear. So your relationship within your own family will affect your relationship with other people no matter how much you try to avoid that. If you can not get close to your parents it will affect your life. Later on you will reap what you sow.

See Samuel was called to be a prophet. But Samuel when he grew up, he had a problem with his children. Look at I Samuel verse 8 "Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel." Samuel was married, he had sons and he made his sons judges. Verse 2-3, "The name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice."

Samuel was the prophet, had a powerful and anointed ministry, a mighty man of God, yet his sons took bribes. His sons were not righteous. Tell me why did it happen? When I prayed and sought the Lord, the Lord said it is because Samuel in his life has a flaw in his life. He never knew what a good family should be like. If you remember

he was born into a family of Elkanah who had two wives Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah was one of two wives and those two wives never agreed. He spent the early part of his life as an infant in his family. His family was a poor example. They were divided. That's why some want to excuse themselves and say it says in the bible: David got many wives. Solomon got many wives. Elkanah got many wives. And I reply, "I know what you are saying. You want to have many wives, why don't you just say it; I want to have many wives instead of trying to excuse yourself." Do you notice that all those who got more than one wife got problems without fail because it was not the perfect plan of God.

Jesus makes it very clear. In the beginning it was not so. Follow the man of God but don't follow them when they fall. Don't follow the imperfection. In the beginning it was not so. So here he is in the family where there were two wives and he is one of those sons. If you read I Samuel, they were not in good term. He never knew a happy home. So that resulted in a flaw in him. When Eli adopted him, Eli was also not a very good father. Do you remember Eli his sons, you know what they were doing? In the temple they were sleeping with the woman. His sons were greedy sons. When people came to give the offering, before everything was burnt, before the blood was cleansed, they grab it and the person who offer it say wait. God was angry with Eli's sons. So Samuel never had the opportunity to see a perfect family. When he grew up, he is good in his ministry but because he never knew what a good home is like so he produced the same thing. He was responsible for that. See if you don't develop your relationship with those you know, no matter where you go, no matter where you run, you will face the same thing.

I once talked with one person in the ministry many years back. This person had never known authority and this person whenever he confronts a hard situation he would run. He would go to another church to try to serve. When the same circumstances come, the person would run. That person hopped from church to church until he had gone to about five to six churches. And I asked him, "When are you going to stop running?" See the problem is that such persons are not confronting and correcting their own weaknesses. They are trying to hide from themselves not from others. One of the blessings that God promised Abraham was because and conditioned upon Genesis 18:7 when He said, I know that he will command his children to obey Me. So parents relating well with their children is very important. On the opposite side, the children relating well with the parents is also important.

We talked about love, if we don't practice it and start doing it in the home; it's not going to work outside. Lets be realistic about it. It's not going to work in the church if you can not work it in your home. Do you know the bible says he who does not rule his own home, how can he rule the household of God? If it doesn't work in your home, in your circumstances, don't expect it to work outside. Somewhere along the line it's going to falter and fall. I did not say that you have to be perfect, I did not say that you can not make any mistake but I say that if ever you make mistake you must know how to come back together to love. Lets face it.

Thy neighbor are those you live with, those who are around circumference of your life, those whom you contact daily. These are the people you have to start showing your love. Don't say I will show love to the people in the church and not to the people in my office because they are non-believers. You are obligated to show love to those within your circle, those who you contact with, you can not run away from that fact.

And you have to show love to your brothers and sisters in the Lord. You have to show love to Christians in the same church. You have to show to those who are under the same roof with you. And children, whether you like it or not, you have to learn to show love to your parents. Learn to respect them. I have found that many people have problem in relating to others because they never learned to relate to their own parents. I tell you the Holy Spirit will get at you. The Holy Spirit went after me for that. When I was in the second year in my seminary, the Holy Spirit dealt with me. See all these things the Holy Spirit has dealt with me. If I had not allowed the Holy Spirit to change me in my relationship with my parents, today my ministry would not take off. It's those inner things, small little things that the Spirit of God would deals in your private life that will change you in the public.

See I grew up in a broken home, we were one family together but I was never close to my brothers or sisters in the flesh. I was never sort of in good communication term with my parents. We were a typical oriental home. I mean children are to be seen not heard. And so in that kind of home we didn't know love. All we knew was to be quiet. Don't be noisy and don't do anything they don't like. Throughout my life, my father, my mother never said I love you. And I also never said that to them. I could get away with it but the Holy Spirit in the second year of seminary dealt with me. He said, "When you go home for the holidays, I want you to tell them you love them." I said "Oh no, it's difficult." The Holy Spirit kept at it. He never gives up. When I went home, my father was sitting on his armchair and I said, "Pa I got something to tell you. I just want to tell you that I appreciate you for bringing me up and that I really love you." I don't know what happened in his life but in my life something happened. Because I broke through in love to those whom are in my circle, I was able to love others whom I have never met earlier. And sometime after that my father came to know the Lord. I don't know whether if it's because of that. So we are obligated to love each other, especially to those under the same roof.

The next time you talk about love thy neighbor as thyself, not just loving someone you see once in a while but loving those who live under the same roof with you. That guy that you may not like so much, your parents who may have made mistakes in front of you, your husband or your wife who has made mistakes. It is those very people the Lord Jesus is talking about. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The opposite is true as I said about children loving their parents. Exodus 20, one of the Ten Commandments is you shall honor thy father and mother. I found that those who have never honored their father and mother, their Christian life have problems. Somehow if they never breakthrough to that Ten Commandments, something hinders their life and their ministry. It can almost literally be seen. There is something lacking in their life. Something that's not there that should have been there. They do not know their parents.

Eph. 6:1-4, Jesus still demands the same thing when it comes to honoring your parents. Let me give you two points on loving those who are close to you. You have to know the difference between idolizing and loving. On one extreme when you just ignore and you don't love. The other extreme is when these people become like God. That is when Jesus said in Luke 14 that if you love Me, those who are your husband, your wife, your children, Jesus said if you love Me you must hate them. What does Jesus mean when He said hate them? This is what Jesus mean: In the gospel of Mark when He talked about you can not love two masters, for you will love one and hate

the other. He is not talking about showing hatred otherwise He contradicts the other part of the scripture. What Jesus is saying is that the love you have for the Lord is so great, when you compare it to your love for others; it is like the difference between love and hate. That only one is your master; only one is your God. But as result of loving God, you will love your neighbor. So there are two extremes. You have to know what the balance is. Do you know on the opposite side, some honor their family above the Lord? That's not the opposite extreme. So love is balance. You should know how to press on in love.

The second point on love in Matthew 7, it says what you want others to do to you, do it to them first. If you want your parents to be loving to you, you have to do it first. If you want your children to be loving to you, you have to do it first. If you want others to love you, you have to love first. Jesus positive statement, if you want others do to you, you do it first.

The third area is one of the most important. Love does not take advantage. Love knows its limitation. II Cor. 11, you will notice that Paul in writing to the Corinthians, he talks about how he doesn't want to be a burden to them in verse 9.

Lets read verse 8 to 10. "I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia." Notice he says in verse 9, I don't want to be a burden to you. Love does not take advantage. Do you think Paul love them? Look at II Cor. 2:4 "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you."

Paul loves them and he stayed with them. One of the reasons he wrote Corinthians is because the Corinthians were being swayed by false apostles. These apostles came and they began to take advantage of the Corinthians. One of the things they did was they took the offerings from these Corinthians. Paul never did that. II Cor. 11:20 "for you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you." He is talking in reference to those other ministers who came to the Corinthians, claimed to be somebody and then began to take from them. The Corinthians felt happy to give and they asked "Why doesn't Paul take from us?" So Paul wrote to them and explained the reason. He did not want to be a burden to them because he loves them so much. He never wants to take advantage of them. Now that is an area of love when we talk about close circle of love. Because if you open yourself to another person and the other person open the circle to you and others, do you know that sometimes you can take advantage? Human love takes advantage. But agape love never takes advantage, because when you love someone, you actually put yourself in a vulnerable position. You make yourself vulnerable to be hurt, vulnerable to be robbed. When you set yourself to love another, you will not take advantage of another.

Do you know that love has to have self restrain? One of the things Paul said about love in I Cor. 13 is that love is becoming mature. Look at I Cor. 13:11 "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

He is talking about love. Love is maturity. Your operation of the gifts of the Spirit, your operation in the ministry does not show maturity as much as you show love. That's the reason why we teach a series on love because love seems to be the most important thing in the bible. And it would be a shame if we never taught on that. We have taught about faith, taught about healing, taught about anointing, it will be a shame if we never taught about love. Love is God and God is love. People need to be taught the love of God. Now this is what is like. When little children grow up, they don't know the limitation of their action. They have to be told by others what they can do and what they can not do. Isn't that typical of children? They misbehave then we say you can not do this. They run all over the chairs, so you say, you can not do that. What happens, the adults are coming in to set the limits to what they can do and what they can not do. That's typical of children and being childish. But when you grow up, you have to have self restrain. In other words, you don't behave like a child and do what you want. You don't have to wait for others to give you the rules. Which is where we say, love learns and knows how not take advantage. You control yourself.

Take for example, something very simple. You live in the same dormitory with people. You share the same refrigerator and all have limited funds. You buy your breakfast, your bread, your butter, etc. Somebody comes and says, "Praise God, I love peanut butter," and you never ask the owner of that peanut butter. You say, "Well, we are brothers in Christ. We are one family." And that was the last he ever saw his peanut butter. What happens is you claim to have love but your love have taken advantage. You know the brother won't mind, you know he is a kind hearted brother but if it had been another brother who have come and punch you right on your nose, you wouldn't dare to touch that person's peanut butter anymore. So what is happening here? You are allowing others to set the standard for you. Love knows how to set its own standard. Love is maturity. Love is not childish. Why do you have to wait for another person to come and say, "Look here! This is my tenth peanut butter that you finished in two days." Then the person has to tell you, "If you want to take the peanut butter, please just take two don't take ten." What is happening here is the other person has to tell you how to behave. The other person has to tell you what is the limit of your conduct. Look at it very carefully, it is just an adult who has grown up in the flesh but has not grown up in the soul. Childishness is still there.

Love does not take advantage. Love knows its limit. For example, as a minister of God, let me tell you how it can affect the ministry. If I travel and stay in somebody's house, I will know my limit. I don't have to wait for you to tell me what my limits are. For example, I come and stay in your house and I empty your refrigerator. You bought a bunch of grapes and you say, "Hi brother, help yourself." If I really take your word and I helped myself to the bunch of grapes, I didn't consider you might have bought it to share with your whole family. And you came to take some fruits for your children and you found there was nothing left in the refrigerator. What is happening here? I have taken advantage of your love. I have no self-control, no self-restrain. Love has self-control. So even when a person offers, for example, a person says anytime you have a need, just let me know. Doesn't mean that everyday you phone up and say this is what I need. But do you know that some people would do that? This is what I mean - these people are childish. They have no agape love because agape love does not take advantage. If you behave that way in the ministry and if you travel and people host you, they will never want to be the host again. So when I stay in people's house, I don't want to inconvenience them. I have to know my

limit. They have inconvenienced themselves to a certain extent. So I don't want to overstep the boundary. I don't wait for them to tell me what the rules are. I have to set the own rules if I have love and maturity. There is self-control in love.

Now in the ministry of God we have to learn the same thing, otherwise our ministry will have a bad reputation. I have people come to me and say if you have any needs just let me know. But I have never asked one cent. Why, because I set my own standard. Why should I ask? I don't want to take advantage of love. Can you see the limitation of love? Love must know its limitations but many times I have to help another ministry to come up. Some of them would grab at every opportunity, which is where you know their love has not developed.

Do you know people appreciate you if you respect the boundaries? People will lose the respect of you if you don't set a boundary. They will see you as a child. Paul says, when I was a child, I spoke as a child. When I grow up, I know the limitations. And sometimes some of those ministers will come and say I want to join the ministry here because the way we set up the church we are opened to many ministries. And many times when I sit down and talk to them, I talk frankly and openly with them. I pulled out things that people will hide. I said, let's talk about financial arrangement because if we don't talk it out, it's going to come up somewhere in the future and then we are going to have a quarrel and it's not going to glorify the Lord. I don't want the person to come into the ministry and say I am on this church's payroll. So for that reason, sometimes people don't know their limitations. But if you have agape love, you would set limitations on yourself.

## 16. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF SOULS

Eph. 3:14-19 “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

So the purpose of our study on love is because if we are rooted and grounded in love, we will be able to comprehend, that is to understand the greatness of God’s love. And when that happens we will be filled with the fullness of God. The result of being grounded and rooted in love is to be filled with God’s fullness. The bible declares in I John God is love and he who knows God will know love. He who does not know God will not know how to love. So the bible tells us that love is the greatest. In I Cor.13 there is hope, there is faith and there is love and he concludes by saying the greatest is love. This love we are talking about is not some emotional feelings but it’s the love that we choose to do. The agape love is more than emotion. It is a voluntary act of choice and a benevolent attitude towards all. This love that God has given onto us is not a love that we have seen last week, where love does not take advantage of people. It is a love more than we give ourselves than we take advantage. Neither is it a love that would run all over the place to be taken advantage of. There are two sides of a coin. There is one side when love takes advantage of others. That’s not God’s love. That’s is human love at a human level. On the opposite side is that the love of God will not allow you to be taken advantage of by others. You know human love is more like human sympathy where people take advantage of you. The love of God is full of wisdom.

Phil.1 in his prayers for the Philippians, he mentioned. Phil. 1:9 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and in all discernment.” What’s the purpose? Verse 10, “That you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.”

So your love must grow in discernment. This means the discerning love of God in you will not take advantage of others neither will it allow others to take advantage of you. What do I mean by letting others take advantage of you? Some people misquote the bible where they say give to all that ask from you and if anyone in need then you are obligated to help them. They pull the bible to the extreme and so what happens is that people start taking advantage of them and it end up actually not helping a person. You end up destroying a person. For example, some preachers say that if a drug addict asks for money, they will always give. I think that will destroy the drug addict because that is not love. Love thinks in terms not of the immediate but of the eternal. See immediately you say this guy has a need, but on the eternal side in the long run it’s different. Love always thinks in the long run. How do you help the person? Love thinks of helping the person feel. It thinks of helping the other person in a long run not in the short run. And so in the long run you see that by giving money to the drug addict it will not help him. Perhaps all you can do is just share a meal with him and share the gospel to him. Feed him and give him the gospel. That would have been



better than giving him money and then he would spend it on drugs and may have an overdose and destroy himself and die.

In the same way sometimes there are Christians who are conmen. What they do is they take advantage of Christian's love, so they will keep on coming to you for a need and especially take care of your Christian sympathy. They are actually making use of you. If you look at their lives, you would not help them. If you help them to maintain that habit of borrowing, what happens is that you are looking at them in the immediate. They come to you with a sob story and say we need this and we need that. And they keep coming to you and in the end you keep helping them. You don't actually love them because you are only thinking of the immediate. Love thinks of the eternal and the future. If you teach someone to fish, it is much better than giving him or her a fish. If you give them a fish, they eat it and then the next day they come back for another fish. The best is to teach them to fish then they won't come back to you because they know how to catch their own fish. In the same way, love teaches others to fish and not give them the fish. You must think in long terms. So you have to pray. If people come to you and bring forth a need you have to pray. Lord will I help this person if I just give what this person wants. You know that our Father does not treat us that way also. Our Father won't just rain down everything on us and spoil us. Father God trains us before He pass something to us. I am sure you all know this. To receive a certain type of anointing, He tests you and when you are ready then He blesses you with that. In the same way, when you pray for financial blessing, God won't simply pour it down on you and destroy your life.

If you give a small child one hundred dollars, I can guarantee you the small child will spend it all on chocolates and ice cream. What happens? The child does not know the value of money and so the child destroys itself. The same way our Father knows what we can handle and He trains us before He pass it to us. That is why a lot of rich millionaires destroy their own children by just passing the inheritance to the children without training them to handle the inheritance. So many of them grow up not knowing how to work. They have no maturity in handling social life. No maturity in learning how to handle the affairs of life because they have it in an easy way for their whole life. They had never been trained. They have not gone through difficult time. They have not learned to make decisions. They have not learned the appreciation of what they have received, so they end up destroyed. So love does not take advantage nor does it allow others to take advantage of you. Love will discern. Let your love grow in discernment. So we are going to see the preciousness of the soul this morning.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

He says God so loved the world. I want you to know that when he says God so loved the world, although the word world is in the Greek 'cosmos', it refers to the people on this earth. God loves people. Love has a high value of the sanctity of human life. God loves the world. He loves every child; He loves every man and woman on this planet earth. It is never God's intention for anyone to be lost or to go to hell. In fact God never made hell for human being. Hell lakes of fire were designed for the devil. It was not designed for human beings to go in. I Tim. 2:3-4 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved." You see that the doctrine of double pre-destination is wrong. The doctrine that says some are to be saved and some are to be lost. That's wrong because here the bible says all are to be

saved. God wants and God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. It is God's will for every single person born on the planet earth to be saved and to go the heaven to enjoy the goodness of God and to enjoy the blessing of God.

Look closely at Matthew 25, Jesus when He talks about His second coming makes mention of this, when He talks about judgment in verse 41, "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, your cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." See God never prepared the lake of fire for human beings or human souls. It was designed as a judgment place for Satan. But what happens is Satan is now pulling human beings there. Just think about the love of God. His love is so great that He never wanted a single human being to be lost. He wants all to be saved and He designed a plan for every human being. Every soul that goes into hell is not going by the intention of God. Hell is not designed for human souls. Why did God judge the devil and his angels and give human beings a chance? There is a great difference. The devil and his angels fell without temptation. Human beings fell by temptation. That is why human beings were given a chance. There was no devil to tempt the devil. Of his own free choice, he chose to go against God. And even human beings when they chose to go against Christ, it says in the book of Hebrew, there is no way to come back. See God honors our choice. The vast majority fell into sin by temptation and not just merely by free choice. They did choose in a temptation but their will have been weakened through temptation. The devils' will were never weakened at all. It was the same strong will. That is why God designed the lake of fire and hell for the devil and his angels. What happens is that the devil is pulling people there. The devil is pulling souls into hell, pulling precious souls into hell where God never intended for them to land at that place.

So this morning we are going to see the preciousness of a human soul. If I were to ask you, what do you consider the most valuable thing on this planet earth? Your answer will depend on your knowledge of the word. Your answer will also depend on your life principles. If your life principle is to go after money, then you would say silver and gold or jewel is the most precious thing on this planet earth. But if your life principle is changed and conform to what God mentioned, then I want to tell you that the bible says, God so loved the world. As you look at the world, do you know that He sees the gold, He sees the diamonds, He sees the jewel, the precious stones, He sees everything that human beings consider valuable. When He looks at the whole world the most valuable item to God is the human soul and it worth more than six millions dollar. Man is worth much more than that. So it's not the six millions dollar man.

In Mark 8, lets see how much a man is worth. Verse 36-37 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his own soul?" Do you realize how Jesus is valuing the soul? Jesus says the soul is worth more than the whole world. I can assure you that the whole world is worth billions and billions of dollars. Your soul is worth more than that. Jesus says what can a man give in exchange for his soul and He says what will he profit if he loses that soul and gains the whole world. In accounting term it would still be a loss. It's not even equal. He says there is no profit here. What is the profit? Nothing. That means it is counted as a loss. If you put on the credit side the world and on the debit side a human soul, you will still get your accounts in the red. The value of a human

soul is more than the world. God has put a great investment on the human soul. The most expensive computer in the world today can not even match one tiny little bit of what the brain can do. God had designed all of our human parts. Preciousness He has placed on the human soul. We need to get a grasp of this preciousness of the soul so that when you look at another human being, you would realize that that is billions of dollars walking about.

Some people go by making friends depending on what the person has or what the person owns. I think if they are Christians they need to be renewed. Some people make friends based on what the person's background is. Some people make friends based on what comes after your name. I think all these things are worthless because this human attitude is based on evaluating how much a person is worth by what they own and by how much they have earned. This is not the way Jesus evaluates a human being. Every human being is worth more than the whole world. Every single soul, whatever comes after their name, whether they own lands and houses or they own nothing but the shack they live in, they are worth the death of Jesus Christ.

If you find yourself having low self-esteem and you say, "I am not worthy," let me tell you Jesus spent His life for you. Do you believe that Jesus would not put His blood on something that has no value? Jesus bought you with His blood. Jesus did not buy something without value. Jesus values you and whether you value yourself or not it's a different matter. But Jesus values you enough to pay for you with His blood. If you were the only one in sin and the rest of the world were saved, Jesus would still come down from the cross and die on the cross for you. How do you know Jesus would do that? Remember the parable of the 100 sheep. Ninety-nine were all right but one sheep went astray. Jesus said He the shepherd was willing to go for the one sheep. That is the love of Jesus. That's the heart of Jesus. That's the value that Jesus has on each human soul, whether the human soul has come to know God or not. He looks at each other human soul with love.

Kenneth Hagin when he was brought before Jesus at the throne, he bowed down before Jesus and He cried at Jesus' feet. When he cried and cried he said, "Lord I am not worthy to look at You," and Jesus told him in a firm voice, "Stand up, I have made you worthy." And when he looked up, he looked straight into the eyes of Jesus and that was the first time he looked eyeball to eyeball at Jesus. He said Jesus' eye was like a river of love flowing inside. May we all grow to love people the way Jesus loves us.

Smith Wigglesworth says that he always trains himself and he always makes himself conscious to look at people with the love of Jesus, with the eyes of Jesus that when people look into his eyes people may see the love of Jesus.

When people look into your eyes can people tell that you love them? Did you know that the eyes are very interesting? People who study human character said they have discovered something about the human eyes. When people love you and look at you with love, the iris of the eye open bigger. One day as I was looking at the science book, there were two pictures of a person exactly the same except for the eye. But they never tell you what it was first. So they put two pictures of the same person and they said which person do you like? Which picture are you attracted to more? When I looked at those two pictures I said this one. They put 100% of the time people are attracted to the one on the right side. Why, because the picture on the right side of that

person, the pupil was open bigger. Of course, you and I don't study the pupil and see whether the pupil is big or small. But our sub-conscious mind picks all the invisible signals.

Do you know that your sub-conscious mind or even your conscious mind can be trained to pick up whether people are angry with you or not through your voice? Children can pick up through the tone of your voice what's your feeling towards them. And sometimes you are at the sub-conscious level. In the same way somehow in the sub-conscious mind we register when we look into that person's eye whether they like us or they don't like us. If you ever seen people who are angry, do you know sometimes hate comes into their eyes. You could literally see hatred in the eyes. But the eyes of Jesus are full of love. We want to train our eyes until our eyes can look at people and radiate the love of God just flowing through the eyes. Jesus said the eye is the light of the body. People can tell whether you like them or you love them by the eyes. Jesus puts value on the soul and every soul is precious. But do you know when a child comes into this world and the child is nursed and grows up, the child tends to pick up what attitude the adult has subconsciously.

The majority of adults place more value on material things ever since the fall of Adam. When man fell into sin in Genesis 3, human has placed more value on things than on souls. There is a poster I like, it says, use things and love people. Don't love things and use people. The people of the world go by the second part. They love things and they use people. As long as you are an advantage to them, as long as you can be an object and asset to them, they will be with you. But the moment your liability, the moment you cause a minus to their lives or to what they want, you will be dropped off. Their friendship with others is based on what they can get. Whether it's position or things, if it profits them then they spend time with you. If it doesn't profit them you are neglected. They are the people who go by this life principle saying love things and use people. So if they have a chance to get over your head and get promoted, they will still step over your head. You are just used as a stepping-stone. They love things and use people.

But the Christian life principle is love people and use things. So you must know the right things to use. Don't use people. Use things. When Adam fell into sin, Adam begins to put a priority on things and all men after that begin to put a priority on things too. Did you notice that when Cain killed Abel and he was driven out to be a vagabond, the bible says he began to build cities and his descendants began to build cities? They began to be skillful in the arts and in metallurgy. See they began to put more value on things. What God has valued first was the soul. Human beings put more value on the things, on possessions than they have on the human souls. If you don't believe, you go to the insurance company; you ask how much is your life worth. They look at you and ask, "How much are you earning?"

In Luke 12, people who love things and use people, many of them get scolding from Jesus because Jesus' life principle is different from them. Luke 12:13, a very innocent request, a request that many people in the world will be doing when they confront a lawyer. Something that many modern pastors probably are confronted by the same situation too – family squabbling over inheritance. Verse 13, "Then one from the crowd said to Him, Teacher, tell my brother, to divide the inheritance with me." Look at it very carefully, his brother and he had a problem. If it is a modern church situation, they will still come to the same area. And he said tell him to do it. He has a

right. According to the Old Testament law, that brother has a right. That brother has a right to the inheritance. He is right and what he says was correct. He deserves the inheritance and it was his by choice and by right at birth. Jesus Christ puts no value on things. Do you know in heaven they use gold for the roads? Do you think you can hold up a sack of gold and think to yourself, "Praise God, I have achieved all these wealth," and you go and you knock on the gates of heaven. Then St. Peter opens the gate to you and you said, "I brought my earthly possessions." St. Peter asks, "What is that?" You say, "Gold." He said, "Sorry, we use gold for the roads here. There is no use as a medium of exchange. No value in heaven."

And Jesus Christ says in verse 14, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you." Jesus said I am not a lawyer and I don't intend to be a lawyer to sue your brother and He said to them, Verse 15, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." Did you see that? Do you know whom Jesus was hitting at? That brother came and said, Jesus, tell my brother to divide the inheritance. Jesus said don't be covetous. Jesus puts no value on things. Which is why many times I mentioned and counseled some and it fact has turned the opposite way for them. One brother wrote a teaching book and the publisher didn't pay him. He had the right to sue. He counseled with me and I prayed and I felt the Holy Spirit said, "Don't sue, just let it go. See you can sue and get the money but you may lose that person's soul. If you don't sue, you go to that fellow and say, I am a Christian and I am not suing you because I am a Christian. I want you to know why I am not suing you. If I am not a Christian you are finished because in the court you will lose." So what happens? After many months without doing anything, the money just came to him. He didn't even have to pay lawyer's fee. The Holy Spirit is the lawyer and He does not charge any fee.

See the love way is better. It works. So here we have Jesus saying "take heed, beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Now isn't it completely contrary to the world. The world's principle is this, one's life consist in what one possess. But Jesus' principle is, it does not consist in that. If Jesus went by the world's standard, He would not have chosen His twelve disciples. He would have chosen the Pharisees because by the world's standard they were far richer. They were far more intellectual, far more educated. Instead He chose the tax collectors and He chose fishermen, people who were nobody in the world. He did not choose the titled men of His days. In fact it was the titled men who crucified Him. He chose all the common carpenters. People from the streets and that is why we run this church differently. We don't care what comes after your name. We don't care what you own. But all we are concerned about is if God has called you. Whatever gifts God has placed in your life, just function in it. Even if you live in a shack but if the gift and anointing of God is on your life to be an elder, you still can qualify as an elder. We don't care what you have or what you don't have because Jesus doesn't care too. It's more on what value He has placed in your life and what He wants you to do. That is the most important. We also say the same thing to everyone who comes, that if it is not God's will for you to function in a certain area in the church, we are not going to place you just for position because a church is not a place for position. It a place to serve and it would be like putting a square peg in a round hole if you are fitting in an area where God never chose you to fit. This is why if you are not an evangelist, don't be an evangelist, be something else. God surely has something for you. After all God has a plan for your life.

So Jesus said to this man, “Don’t be covetous. For life is not just what you have and possess.” See for this man who came and said, “Jesus tell my brother to share my inheritance,” for him this is his life. He needs it. He wants it. This is what life consists of gathering more. Jesus said don’t do that. Jesus said life is more than that. And then Jesus said the parable of the rich man. So he had everything but you know one thing he did not have. He never loves. You can have everything on this planet earth but if you have never love others, when we talk about love, we can give without love but you can’t love without giving. This man always thinks about himself. So when he had all the blessings he said, eat, drink and be merry. Let me build a bigger barn and the next day he died. See life consist of loving others. Do you know what is the greatest investment you can have that you can bring to heaven? It is when you have helped another soul. It is something that can not be measured. When your life has helped another, it adds into your heavenly credit. These are the things that you can bring to heaven. Those are things of value. I put it in a different way. It is when you have loved others that you have made a heavenly investment. See love is the greatest investment we can have in our life. This man here has not loved others. He has not deposited love into others life. The more you love the more reward is in heaven. The more you have established other souls, the greater your reward. The greatest investment you can have in your life is in other souls. I pray that through this word this morning it may change your life’s goal and what you are investing your life in.

All these things in life God knows you need them. We know you need to pay your rent. We know you need to pay your house installments. We know you need money to pay for your car and we know you need money to buy food but remember what Jesus said, all these things will come automatically without you going after them if you will love others. Put His kingdom first. Use your life to invest in souls. In other words, Jesus is saying, what the world is going after is fringe benefits.

Have you ever seen people going for a job? All they go is for is the fringe benefits. They forgot about the job. These people sometimes are the useless workers. You know why? They are thinking of what they can get and not thinking what they can give. They join the company and they will be a liability to you because they are thinking what they can get. They forgot that if they get into a company, they must produce. Not just think of what they can get but what they can give, so that by their coming into the company, they can be an asset to the company. The life principle and goal is worldly because they are not established in the love of God. See the love of God does not think of getting or receiving but thinks of giving. Change your life’s goal. Put your life’s goal to invest in the other lives. That is why sometimes I face choices like that. Sometimes we have a sum of money and we think if we keep it in the bank what’s the use. I am not thinking about canceling all these things but I am saying that the major portion of what you have, you must think how can I use it to invest in souls. So sometimes we use all we have to publish books so that the books will go and touch lives and change souls. Sometimes we think of how to use it in order to invest it into life. Convert the cash into souls. The world is trying to convert cash into diamonds. We are trying to convert time, convert cash, and convert everything into souls. Souls are the most valuable investment you can have. If you invest your life into another life, you have a great reward. Even one life. Mothers, you that are bringing up your children, if you could bring up one child to be like Billy Graham who win many millions of souls, you will have great reward. The time that you spend on souls, the children, you give them money is not as valuable as what you

put into their souls because when you put something into their souls, money can come to them later, they can get money easily, but if you give them money and you don't train them in their soul, they will lose everything you give them. The soul is more valuable than anything on this planet earth. Jesus puts a high priority on soul.

There is another story in Mark 10 and this was another man who has great possession. Mark 10:17 "Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? So Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments:

Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not be defraud, honor your father and mother. And he answered and said to Him, Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth. Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, One thing you lack:

Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Jesus gave him an offer. Verse 22, "But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

Jesus said, come and follow Me. He was sad and went away grieved for he had great possessions. He was too tied to his possessions. Examine it very carefully. Do you know how he got rich? Let me tell you how. He kept the commandments. Remember what the bible says in Deut.28, if you keep My commandments you should be the head and not the tail. Remember what the Lord said? This man has said, I have kept all the commandments. Do you know that was how he got rich in the first place because he kept the commandments of God? But now Jesus is pointing to the purpose of the commandments and Jesus was saying he has kept all these Old Testament commandments and now God has blessed him. God was the one who has blessed him. But Jesus said in spite of all your great possession, one thing you lack. Jesus said he had a need. He had a lack. Now if he was today in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Time, Newsweek, Forbes magazines would extol him as the man who is successful and has no more needs. Jesus said, "You have a need. In fact you lack one of the most important things." Jesus said, "You have kept up everything for yourself; you have invested all your time unto all these great possession, that's how you got more and more." Jesus said, "You have not invested it in souls," and He said, "Sell all you have and give it away. Come and follow Me and be like Me. Invest your life in souls. Give yourself to teach others. Give yourself to disciple others." The man was sad because he was one who love things and use people. He can not forget about himself and give himself to other people. He can not think about all these areas. He loves things and he uses people. Jesus was telling him to use things and love people.

When he went away sad, the disciples heard all these things and it must have been Peter. Jesus made this statement in verse 24, "How hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God." Notice it is not for those who have riches. Don't misunderstand me. I have a series of tapes on financial prosperity. God wants you to be rich. God wants you to be blessed. God wants you to have abundance. It is not wrong to have but it's wrong when it has you. It's not wrong to have money but it's wrong when money has you. That's the difference. See Jesus was not saying it is hard for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God, but it is those who trust in

riches. And the only way you can stop yourself from trusting in riches is by making a covenant with God and say I will make my life a life that love people, invest my life in people and all the money, silver and gold achievement are fringe benefits. Fringe benefits are those things you can do without if you are not there. When Jesus made the statement and say it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, He is not talking about just the ordinary rich man. He is talking about the rich man that is tied to riches. You know why the camel can not go into the needle eye? It is because the camel is too fat, so the rich man that trusts in riches is like someone who has a shell. It's like a snail that carries a big shell. The shell is bigger than the snail. That's why the snail can get into the shell, then the snail tries to get into a hole and could not get in because the shell is blocking. They are tied, they hold on to the shell so they could not get in.

Do you remember Aesop's fable of a little boy who saw the candy and it was inside a bottle? So the boy reach his hands in and grabbed hold of a handful and he could not get his hand out of the jar. He would not let go what he held. The whole jar is stuck to his hand. Then somebody come and said to him, put down that jar and take one by one then you hand can come out. So when he took one by one, he could have twenty but have it one at a time. So in the same way, sometimes those who trust in riches and holding on and that prevent them from going further. But if they were to let it go, all their needs will be met.

Do you know that man missed his biggest blessing? Because Peter came to Jesus after Jesus made that statement and said, what about us? We have given everything. So Peter said in verse 28, see we have left everything. We have left our possession. We have left our boats; our nets and we are here. What about us? Jesus said in verse 29, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecution, and in the age to come, eternal life."

Do you know the rich man who walked away just missed a hundredfold blessing? The rich man heard the first part come and follow Me. Too bad he didn't get to hear the verse 30 because verse 30 will only be spoken to him after he had done the first part. The rich man that walked away sadly, just imagine, suppose that rich man had one hundred millions dollars, suppose he gave out everything and followed Jesus and verse 30 would come true. He would have one hundred millions times one hundred. It is not given in heaven, as it's no use in heaven. Jesus said now in this time he will be blessed. Do you see that God never cheat you? God never shortchange you and God never rob you. That's the wonderful thing you can trust God. See God is not going to tell you to give up everything and then when you are in need He is not going to help you. God never shortchange you. In fact let me put it this way; you can never out give God. Kathryn Khulman learned that lesson. She found the more she give God keeps giving more and more to her. Put that in your life. You can never outgive God. God is a better giver than anyone of us. And Jesus is the one who said in Matt. 6:33 "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you? You know what the kingdom of God is? Souls. Souls are the business of the kingdom of God. Put your life into that.



There is something strange about this principle God gives. If your eyes are on the money and you run towards money, money runs away from you. But if your eyes are on helping people and loving people, money runs to you. Do you know that in the world today they are discovering that big new companies that are coming out and in many business magazines, they are discovering that unless the company is concerned about serving people, that company can not make good business? That company will not survive. But when the company put the customers first and in some of these board meetings of the big business company, they put the word customer there, because they must always think in terms of how they can benefit the customers. They are having a tiny little bit of the principle of God. Those companies that never think of serving others after sometimes nobody will come to them. Think of those companies that really give service to people. People could even feel that this company wants to take care of them. They keep going back to the company for business. If there is another rival on the other side where business is business and don't care about customers, I can assure you, you won't go back to that company again. Why, because they don't show love. They don't show care. They don't show service and concern. So the world has discovered a little bit of that principle. But the bible goes further than that. The bible not only talks about service, but talks about loving them with agape love.

Did you know in Deut. 28 it says that when you keep all the Old Testament commandments, you shall be the head and not the tail? You shall have all the blessings of God. And did you know in Romans it tells you that all the commandments are summed up in one word love your neighbor. That means when I love my neighbor, all the blessings of Deut. 28 come on me. Deut. 28:1-14 says blessed are you and all these things, your house, your cattle, your land. You shall be the head and not the tail if you keep all the commandments of God. There are so many commandments in the Old Testament. Then in the New Testament everything is shortened to this. Book of Romans tell you that it's all summed up in one word love. Love your neighbor. That means that when I love my neighbor, I receive that too. See if  $a=b$  and  $b=c$  then  $a=c$ . If the blessing of God are based on keeping the commandments which is  $b$  and in keeping the commandments is by keeping love which is  $c$ , then  $a=c$ . When I love, all these side benefits will come.

Paul had made that goal in his life, which was why he achieved great things and achieved greatness. And a lot of those great men in history have changed the face of the planet earth both among unbelievers and believers. Great men, I am talking about men who have given up their life for a goal and a task and a purpose. Part of that goal involved giving their lives to others. Some give their lives to change nations. Some give their lives to bring forth something, an invention or something else. And they get persecuted like anything. Some give their lives in medical discovery to bring service to mankind. But the only sad thing I feel is that if only they also knew the love of God. There are some who knew the love of God and give their lives for some goal of serving mankind and God has blessed them in this world and in the world to come.

II Cor. 5:14 "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One die for all, then all died." Paul says the love of Christ is compelling us. Paul could have an easy life. He could have lived a comfortable life. He was well educated. Brought up under the feet of Gamaliel. Came from a good social home. But Paul went through shipwreck; he went through persecution, stoned, beatings, etc. Why did he go through all these? The love of God compels him. Do you know what Paul was after? He was

after the human souls. Paul may not have left this earth as a multimillionaire, which he could have, Paul did not leave behind a house, a home or great assets in his bank account but Paul left behind churches and souls that he has found. In heaven he received a great reward. Jesus when He left this world He did not leave any physical inheritance for anyone, even the robe He had was gambled over by the soldiers. He left no houses. He left no bank account. Jesus could have been a very rich man in the natural.

## 17. THE RELATIONSHIP OF PAUL AND BARNABAS

I Jn. 2:3-5 “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandment. He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word; truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

I Jn. 4:6-11 “We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

It tells us very clearly here that when we say we love God and when we say we abide in God, that our vertical relationship is tested by our horizontal relationship. It's not possible to say that we love God without saying that we love those whom He has begotten. So let's ask the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal to our lives of His love.

We know that in salvation when we are born again we have a new revelation of God. We understand God better and we have a new relationship with God. Our eyes are opened to know God. We received a revelation of God. In the same way salvation also involves a revelation of fellow man just as we see God with new eyes. We began to understand that God is a God of love. He is not a God who seeks our destruction but a God who seeks our edification. So when our eyes are opened to know this mighty God our Father, our eyes also are opened to know our fellowman. A revelation of God always produces a revelation of our fellowman. We will see others in the way God sees them if we truly have a revelation of God. By this we can test all revelation because all revelations that come from God are born of His nature. His nature is love. For every revelation of God always produces a new revelation of man and it causes us to relate to man better, to relate to our fellow brethren better. See a false revelation that comes to people produces a lack of relationship. That means it produces pride. They claim to be this, they claim to be that but it ends up isolating themselves from their fellowmen. It ends up isolating themselves from loving others. But a true revelation from God will cause you to be more loving to others for the source and the end of all revelation is love. Revelation is born of love and revelation leads you into love. They are one and the same spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

We need to build our horizontal relationship because if you are not able to love others it hinders your relationship with God too. In fact the Bible calls us a liar if you say you know God and love God but do not love others. The two go together. They are developed proportionately. So we look at some Bible examples to understand our relationship.

Human relationship is one of the most difficult areas for people to handle and there is no way you can get out of it because in this life you will have to relate. Everything you do you relate to people in various categories and how much more to relate within the body of Christ. So we are going to specifically look into relationship in the body of Christ. We have said that an inability to love is because of an inability in yourself.

Not so much the other person but yourself. So we should judge ourselves and not judge others for Jesus was able to love everybody. Many times as we walk in our Christian life, we reach a time we feel we are not able to walk in His love. At that point you should recognize that it is not the other person who is at fault but your own self is at fault. Your own inability to draw grace; draw love so you could walk in a new way and in a new realm.

Acts 9 Paul was born again, baptized in water, and baptized in the Holy Spirit. In Acts 9:19 “So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.” He started preaching the Word. Paul was a doctrinal man. He was a man who was very analytical about it and when he was born again, he started looking at Christ in a new way. He is very well grounded in the Hebrew Scriptures so he could relate it all to his experience of Jesus Christ. And we see how people try to kill him. He was let down in a basket. In verse 22, “But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.” Now Paul is quite a new Christian but you can see that he started preaching from the time he was born again. The reason is because it’s a gift of God in his life. He was called to be a teacher. So from the time he was born again the gift started operating in his life. Do you know that the gifts of God operate in your life regardless of your maturity in Christ because they are gifts to you? They are by grace not by works. However the operation of those gifts if you grow more mature in Christ they become more refined. But the moment you are born again you can operate in the gifts of God. They come by grace. Paul started preaching and he was growing in strength. That means spiritual strength and he confronted all the Jews. That was a gift operating in his life.

Verse 23, “Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.” So they let him down in a basket. After he came down from the basket, between verse 25 and 26 is about 3 years, it’s not mentioned in the bible but in verse 25 & 26 if you read it as it is, it looks as if the disciples took him by night and let him down in a large basket and when Saul had came to Jerusalem, it looks like immediately he went to Jerusalem but there is a large gap between verse 25 & 26. Gal. Chapter 1 it says about his conversion in verse 16 “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among then Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and return again to Damascus. Then after 3 years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter.”

So it was three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem and that was the first time he met Peter and all the apostles. So by the time he landed in Jerusalem in verse 26, he was three years old as a Christian, a three years old believer. So in verse 26, Saul, three years old Christian came to Jerusalem and he tried to join the disciples but they were afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. Imagine three years had passed, they must have heard that he was born again but suddenly here comes Paul the one who was known as the persecutor, the one who caused a lot of havoc among the churches. In verse 26, they did not believe that he was a disciple. And so here a beautiful partnership begins between Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas was different. Imagine all the other Christian will not believe. Here comes this Barnabas and of all the people he reached out to Saul. That would be considered dangerous

work by the rest because if Paul was not really born again, Barnabas was heading for prison. He must have spent some time talking to Paul to find out the true situation.

What would you have done if you were in that situation? The bible tells you to love. Most people go by the majority. They don't find out things by themselves. In the vast body of Christ many people go by what other people say. They never take note and bear witness for themselves. They don't examine the facts. Their hobby is jumping to conclusion, which is very wrong. This attitude is of the world. We must get this kind of attitude out of the kingdom of God. Always examine the facts yourself. No matter what story you hear you must examine it yourself otherwise you could end up among one of those who hinder others from moving on with God. By not examining the facts we can end up as stumbling block to others. The bible calls those scandals, those who stumble others from further progress. We must watch out that we do not become scandalous.

Barnabas was different. He examined the situation. He had a talk with Paul and brought Paul to the apostles. He found he was genuine. He had a good rapport with the apostles. In chapter 4 we find that he was the one who became a leader among the people. He was among those who started the giving movement. Chapter 4:36 "And Joseph, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought money and laid it at the apostles' feet." So he was an encourager. That was his nature. So Barnabas comes and encourages Paul and takes Paul to the apostles and he declares in verse 27 how he had seen the Lord on the road and that he had spoken to him and how he had preached boldly in Damascus in the name of Jesus. So when that happened, in verse 28 Paul received the right hand of fellowship.

Now that is the ministry God has called all of us to be. We should be peacemakers and not dividers. We should be bridge builders and not wall builders. Do you know it is easier to build a wall than to build a bridge? A lot of Christian subconsciously become wall builders. When two people are sitting there, they will build a wall between them. How do they build a wall? By their words. By their actions. They end up isolating everybody. Isolating from others whom Jesus calls the sons of peace. They are the ones who build relationship between people and Jesus pronounces a blessing on these people. They are the bridge builders. They build bridges for people to reach to one another in love. So we are talking about the horizontal relationship and in building bridges. We have to understand some principles so that we know how to build bridges. So he built a bridge and Paul's ministry started. Paul could fellowship with the apostles freely all because of the man Barnabas. Why was Barnabas able to do that? Because he had love. He was a man of the individual. He was a man who was concerned about injustice being done. Paul was having injustice. Three years as a believer he came to join the people. No one wanted to join him. Now that was discouraging. He was an encourager so he poured encouragement inside that situation. If there was no Barnabas, the world may not have seen Paul.

Acts chapter 11, in case you do not know it, in Acts chapter 10 there is no more mention of Paul because in Acts 9 towards the ending, the opposition in Jerusalem and also the unbelievers try to kill Paul. Acts 9:30 "When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus." Tarsus was his hometown. So when persecution started against Paul in Jerusalem, again all the brethren took him and sent him back to his hometown. And for the next chapter there

is no more news about Paul. It was about ten years later in Acts 11, all bible scholars call that the ten silent years, nothing is heard about Paul. Some of you are preparing for your ministry in your life but you are not prepared for the silent years. There will be a time when nobody knows you but that's the time when you prepare. By the time people knows you, you won't have much time. Many times people in their silent years make a lot of noise. They will ask, "Why don't people use me? Why don't somebody recognize me?" Well you are still in the silent years. Let God promote you. Don't promote yourself. Have you heard of people promoting themselves? I can do this and I can do that. I am good here and I am good there. I mean all these are self-promotion. That will hinder more than help. Paul went through ten silent years. Nobody heard of him. But there is one guy who never forgets relationship. There is one guy who always remembers people. People are not numbers to him. The Jerusalem church probably numbered about 20000 or 30000 people but there is one person who never forgets the individual. He loves people as they are. That is Barnabas.

In Acts 11:20 see there was a revival that broke out in Antioch in verse 20, Some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they came to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Revival broke forth. After the revival the first thing you must bring is the teacher. World revivals come and go because of the lack of teachers. The revival in many places died off because they didn't bring in the teachers. Then it wanes and then there is another revival again. But if they don't bring in teachers the revival can never be tapped. They can never be consolidated to move on to greater things. So the moment there is a revival they bring the teachers in.

In verse 22 "Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord."

Again you see the word encourage. Why does he do it? He is an encourager. He is called the Son of Encouragement. How can you encourage? Because of love. He is a man of great love. He loves people personally. Then it says in verse 24, "For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord." See he helped to continue the revival. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus. Tarsus was where Paul was enjoying his silent years. Barnabas remembered there was a man who was a good teacher. He never forgets how Paul preached the moment he was converted. Paul made an impression on Barnabas. Let me tell you that you have to be faithful wherever and whatever God tells you to do because there are eyes that are looking at you. There are eyes of God and they are men of God who can pick up those small things. Men of God don't look at big things you put forward and the mask you put forward but they look at what is inside because God is the one who look at the inside. If you are a man of God, you look at the inside of people and not the outside.

In verse 25, "Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Paul." He never went anywhere. He was a great teacher, a preacher. But there was no open door for his ministry. Imagine Paul's ministry started so insignificantly, so quietly but God has His ways. Wait upon God. Don't rush ahead of God. Some people they get prophecy on Sunday, within the next Sunday they must start their ministry. We think in term of days and weeks but God thinks in terms of years. Don't worry you are ninety years old. God can add another ninety years to you. It makes no difference to Him. So don't

worry about that. God is watching. I have found out something of God. God always think in terms of year. So when God says something, you better hang on to it. It may take years for it to come to pass. Don't rush ahead of Him.

In verse 26, "And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."

Paul and Barnabas started their ministry together. That was a nice relationship they have formed with one another - a relationship of love, encouragement and ministry. Now they are partners in the ministry together. Remember Paul was a great person. When it comes to argument he is a person that deals with doctrine. You can see that in Acts 9:22 "Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews." Confounded means he defeated them in debate. He is a great speaker. He defeated them and out argued them. He is a great man when it comes to argument and apologetics that is the defense of the faith. Then in verse 29, "He spoke boldly in the name of Jesus and disputed." He argued with them regarding the doctrine. So he was a doctrinal man. He was a man who argues the Word, a man who will put line upon line, precept upon precept. Barnabas was a guy who looks more on a person than the doctrine. He is a guy who looks at the individual. He likes to encourage them. He likes to love them. To bring them out like from a seed, to a plant, to a flower. That's the kind of guy he is. That was his strong point. Paul's strong point was that he was a great man when it comes to doctrine. Barnabas' strength was that he was a great man when it comes to encouraging individuals. So they worked together very well. One guy does the doctrinal and the other guy does the follow up. Very well matched. They flow together like twins.

When they went on their first missionary journey, they went together. In Acts 13:2 "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away." So here starts the first missionary journey. They have been associated together for many years. They have known each other for about twelve years. They even worked together in Antioch church for about one to two years before they went out. So they have known each other weakness and strength and personality.

Do you know that every one of us has a different personality and God works through your personality? He will keep changing your personality by His Word, by prayer and the years come, the years go, He will keep changing you. Your personality changes with the years and experience. The anointing also changes your personality. But there is a basic characteristic to each one of us.

Just as the fingerprint, every one of us is different. That is why it makes it more difficult to love. Now you understand why to love is an important thing to learn because you confront all kinds of character. People with weakness here and there. Some with strong points here and some with strong points there but everyone have strong point and weak point.

One day after their first missionary, Paul and Barnabas came back. They both have strong points and weak points. It's a different thing to meet each other in the church and say, "I love you with the love of the Lord," and after you have stayed under the

same roof. You have seen all the sharp ends of the other guy. You have seen all the weaknesses in the other guy. The next time you come to church, when it comes to singing the song, "I love you with the love of the Lord," you will turn the other way. You will say, "I rather love someone else." When you stay together in the dormitory, you meet all kinds of character. Sometimes a guy who is a great preacher, he could preach until heaven come down and hell open up but in the dormitory they behave like some dumb Alec. You meet all kinds, strong points, weaknesses that is where when we gather together as a body of Christ we talk about horizontal relationship. Sometimes it is easier to love people whom you don't know that well. You only see all the good points about them. And you say, "I love you with the love of the Lord." And after you have stayed together for one or two years, you look at each other and say, "I can not see in you the glory of the Lord but I have to love you with the faith of the Lord." It's harder to love the people when you know their weaknesses. But yet the love of God remains the same. Do you know that before you express anything, when God loves you, He saw your weaknesses and your strong points?

There was this guy Lyon Fox, he was taken in the spirit to heaven and he was brought before the throne of Jesus Christ. He was kneeling at the throne and that was the first time he met Jesus face to face. Jesus was sitting at the throne looking right at him. He could feel the love of Jesus and Jesus never spoke one word. Jesus looked at him and studied him. Jesus looked at all his inward life. Looked at his character. Looked at every part of him. And he could see Jesus' eyes looking at him with love. Then Jesus starts looking at all his bad points. He could see Jesus' eyes changed. Then after Jesus' eyes was filled with love again. Jesus knows everything good about you and He knows everything bad about you. But He still loves you. That is what Jesus wants us to be like. You can know everything good about the person, everything bad about the person and still love the person.

So in Acts 15, the two comrades who were buddies just before they start their missionary journey, now by this time they know each other for about 15 to 17 years. In verse 36, "Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing. Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark." Paul in verse 38 "insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work." You see, one was determined and the other was insistent. When you come to relationship, you have one guy determine and one guy insist, you might as well put them in a boxing ring. Now these are born again Christians. They are apostles. If apostles quarrel, they were fighting over one guy. If you understand the story in Act 13, when they went on their first missionary journey, they went to Cyprus. Mark intended to go with them the whole journey but Mark did not keep his words. Mark also did something wrong. He did not follow through on what he said he would do. He was like what Jesus said that I will do but didn't do. Paul did not like people who are inconsistent. He did not like people who say I don't do. He wants people who say I do. He was a man of the word. He insisted not to take Mark but Barnabas said can. Lets analyze what's happening here. There are a lot of principles you can learn from here how to love each other.

See here was a situation where there was a clash. It was a personality clash. That's no.1. Paul was a man of principles and doctrine. Mark has broken the principle. That principle is 'you say it you do it'. He said it but he did not do it. Paul did not want this



kind of inconsistency in the ministry. He had a point. Barnabas was a guy who was an encourager if you give him a chance. Now here you see their characters were clashing. Second, it was a clash over the issue and the issue was Mark. That was no.2. Then no.3. There was a clash of principles also. Barnabas's principle is based on his understanding of being an encourager. Paul's principle was based on his understanding on doctrine. So there was not just one clash. There were three clashes. Now Barnabas could have also been learning on his relationship with Mark. Sometimes when people can not love each other, it could be due to personality. They can not see as the other person sees. The moment you start quarreling, you are saying I don't see the way you are seeing. It's not easy to try to put yourself in the other person's shoes but God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit has the ability to get into your shoes and see as you see. It is a skill to be able to see as the other person sees. Sometimes if you are in a middle position, if you are the middleman, it's easy to see both sides. But when you are involved it's not as easy. So they were quarreling over a personality, quarreling over a subject. Actually the quarrel is over the subject and they were quarrelling over different course of action. Barnabas says to continue taking Mark. Paul says don't take him. So what did they do? The bible tells us that in verse 39, "And Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus but Paul chose Silas and departed to Syria." They took two different directions. They split and they went two different ways. Why did Barnabas take Mark to Cyprus? He was revising with Mark the whole journey. Taking him through all the hardship that he did not want to face. That is Barnabas. He makes sure you go over the same areas that you failed until you overcome. Paul did not want anything to do with that. He went on to fresh ground that is Syria. Nothing is mentioned after that about Barnabas.

From that incident we see a few things here, that they kept their disagreement to the issue. See their personalities are different. But they never ever bring it into the realm of the personality. They kept it to the issue. The issue was to take Mark or not to take Mark. Sometimes when people quarrel, they begin to take it out of the issue and bring it to the personality. When people are quarrelling instead of keeping to the issue, let say they disagree on predestination or free will, so they quarrel over the doctrine. Sometimes they quarrel so hard that they can go off and say that guy is proud. Now what is happening here? They have taken it out of the issue and taken it to involve personality to form a conclusion about the other person. Or the other person could come out and say, that guy is a deceiver or that guy is a snake. And I find that people who are the worst at relationship are those who jump at concluding on another person's personality. They are very fast to conclude. These are the people who have a difficult time loving others and who also others find hard to love. These are the people who, once they quarreled they are forever separated. They never want to see the other person's face anymore. When you meet that person in the street, you quickly turn the other side. These are the people who write off others. You are not obeying the bible that says love each other with the love of God. What is the key here? Keep to the issue. That is where we come out with this phrase, 'you can disagree without being disagreeable'. In other words, you can agree to disagree. Now you can not do that with essential doctrines. You can not go to a Jehovah Witness and say never mind, lets just all go into the same boat. There are essential doctrines that the bible tells you don't even entertain people who run down Jesus Christ. In fact in the epistle of John, it says don't even eat lunch with that person. Now there are certain standard in the bible that says about heretics and people who are against the gospel of Jesus. You don't encourage them. But there is certain non-essential doctrine, for example it's not

very important whether you believe you are going to be rapture before the tribulation or half way through the tribulation. Not that important for you so that you won't have to hate each other. Or for example, in ministry, whether to lay hands this way or lay hands that way. There is nothing to quarrel about. We need to develop a great degree of tolerance.