

# LOVE'S RESPONSE

We are being made holy on a daily basis through sanctification. It is a work that is not yet complete, but it is being completed. I Thessalonians 4:1-3a says, "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification..."

The righteousness of God in Christ has made us in right standing with God Himself. We are holy people, according to the Bible, because of the blood of Jesus. Sanctification involves thinking on that daily, and acting upon that so we become more and more like Jesus in thought, word, and behavior.

## Brotherly Love

*"That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel and sanctification in honor, not in the lust of filthiness, even as the gentiles which know not God. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have warned you and testified." (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:4-6)*

In other words, you don't do wrong to brothers or sisters. What is more, God himself is looking out for them. You can understand the importance of this as you look at verse 7: *"For God has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God who has given to us His Holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love, you need not that I write to you; for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another."*

If we wrong a brother or a sister, we wrong God. God looks at that other person as if it were Himself.

In Matthew 25 *"Jesus said, 'If you did it unto the least of these, you did it to me.' Then the people asked, 'When did we see you in prison, and when did we see you sick, and when did we see you in need?' And Jesus*

*answered, 'When you saw your brother or sister sick or in prison or in need, that is when you saw me in need.' "*

I have to understand that if I wrong my wife or child, I am wronging myself. If I wrong you, I am wronging myself. Not only that, but I am wronging God. My motivation has to be... I want to be pleasing to my Lord.

I don't want to ruin relationships by thinking, *We won't ever get together because I don't like where they go, and they don't like where I go, even though they are Christians and I am a Christian.* Is God in that? I want to be where God is. However, you cannot be everywhere that God is. Put your roots down where you are led of God to be -- wherever that may be.

God's love is about relationships. He is always building bridges, not blowing them up. He is always reaching out and being considerate of everyone. He is never pushy, and He will never violate someone's will. God has given us a choice, and He will not violate our free choice.

For many years I have been considering the importance of preferring others more important than myself. I have thought that if I didn't say something to certain people, they would be hurt. They would be lacking. Then I began to think, *Maybe they don't want my help because I never see God forcing His help on anyone.*

Jesus gave Himself because He loved the world. He never demanded that we follow Him. To the contrary, He said, *"This day I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death; choose life."* In other words, "I love you, and I am encouraging you to make a stand for that which I have provided for you in My love because that is what will give you life. I will not push you or shove you, and I will not drag you into it." Glory to God, I am growing to understand that truth.

## Helping People

What will really help people? My loving them will help them. Then when they get to know me, they know what I stand for. I don't mince words about it. I believe in salvation in Jesus Christ through faith in His precious blood. I believe in speaking in tongues by the Holy Spirit of God. I believe that everyone can be healed in the name of Jesus. I believe

that everyone can be delivered in the name of Jesus. I believe that Christians can have devils and be freed from them. I believe in holiness in thought, word, and deed. I believe in trying to live that way by the power of God in me; so it's not trying anymore -- it's doing it. I want to set my heart and mind in agreement with God.

Spiritual gifts operate in my life because God has put them there. I can't take any credit for anything. Much of what God shows me was never intended to be told to people, though. The tendency is to go and straighten people out. We do want to help them! It says in Proverbs 16:2 *"A man's ways appear right to a man, but God searches the intentions of the heart."*

Is there a better way? Of course, everyone wants to help. God wants to help these people, but if we are going to help them, we have to do it God's way.

What is God's way? I firmly believe that enough light is shining out (and people know where I stand, they know what I believe) that if they want help, they will come and get it.

We don't have to go around pushing ourselves on others. Since we believe in divine healing, some people wonder why we don't go into the hospitals, lay hands on (or pray over) everyone, and get them out of there.

Many sick people simply do not believe, and I don't want to go around being obnoxious. That is not love. However, I know that everyone we lay hands on has the potential to get healed. I have seen it. There is not enough space in this booklet to recount all the wonderful things that God has done. God is faithful to perform His works. We thank Him for the privilege to work His works in this world. (John 14:12)

One day God healed a lady who had been deaf in the left ear. The next week a lady who was deaf in both ears was healed. (Faith is contagious.) We often see bones and joints healed. We have seen God heal every part of the body. There was another lady whose jaw went out of place whenever she opened her mouth. She couldn't talk, but God healed her jaw while she was in the prayer line. What was she doing? Praising the Lord, just the way God wanted her to. Then she could praise the Lord more after He touched her through prayer. God healed her as we prayed. Glory to God!

Love draws people, and if you let the light of Jesus shine out by loving and being considerate, preferring others and counting them more important than yourself, then you don't have to be concerned that God will not touch them.

*"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man be willing to lay down his life for his friends."* God calls His enemies friends. That is the way He works. He transforms our relationships, and we start to look at people in a different light. We don't look at them as unbelievers anymore. Jesus died for them all.

According to the Bible, all people have been provided salvation. We are just waiting for them to receive the salvation, the healing, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit that God has already provided. That is how we help somebody.

I don't want to run around with my emotions on my sleeve either, just waiting for someone to come and offer me advice that I didn't ask for. In times past, I have been known to tell people, "I appreciate your love and concern for me; thank you, I did not ask for any help."

Let me tell you, many times that was wrong, but on the other hand, it may be that God was working something within me, and I had to do it God's way. What they were saying might have been totally correct. It might have been exactly what I needed to hear, but maybe at that point I was not willing to listen. We need to be patient with one another, and God will enable us all to become willing to hear and receive from Him.

You might say, "But the zeal of the Lord has consumed me, and I have to tell the world!" True, but why not consider this first? Isn't it finer to pray in the Spirit first about needs you have recognized in other people? Let God deal with their hearts before you talk to them. *"Be slow to speak, swift to hear, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man does not accomplish the purposes of God."* (James 1:19-20)

I have to put myself in another person's place. It is a part of preferring people over myself. I ask myself, *What do they want me to do to them? How do they want me to respond to them?* As I do so, it looses God into the situation to do something. I have seen God do such beautiful things as I approached others in this way.

## Pray With All Your Heart

Several years ago, I purposed something in my heart, and I am still working on letting it develop in me. That purpose is to refuse to talk negatively and critically about anyone, including any minister. I refuse in the name of Jesus. If I see that there is an area that is out of line in a ministry or a person, I purpose in my heart to pray for them, whoever they may be.

I will pray. I will pray with all my heart. I will believe God that He will make the changes because I have no right to judge. You have no right to judge. There is only one Judge, only one Lawgiver, and if you are speaking badly about people, then you are subject to judgment. (James 4:11-12)

I believe that we should not ever get together and start talking about others. If I recognize some people's problems, I will not tell them because love covers a multitude of sins. I will commit it to prayer.

As I pray, I expect things to change. I know how to believe God, and you know how to believe God, and we are getting better at it every day. We will expect mountains to move. (Mark 11:22-26)

I don't always have to get in agreement with another in prayer, and you don't have to get in agreement with me. If you see a problem in your husband or wife, in your child or neighbor, pray about it. Get in agreement with God. Pray in tongues. I am an advocate of praying in tongues. You will get God's perfect will, God's perfect working, and God's perfect results. (Romans 8:26-28)

In the past I did things much differently. I believe that God has shown me a better way. I believe today, that if everyone of us would put this into practice, we would see the power of God come into the Body of Christ. The love of God would get so strong that people would come in off the streets, fall down on their faces, and want Jesus in their hearts. Like Jesus said, they see the love that is among God's people wherever they are.

## Loving and Caring

Because one person fellowships in one church and I in another doesn't mean we are so different. We have the same Jesus. We have the

same Lord. I do things differently than someone else, but I won't push my way on them or criticize them.

Don't worry; God has not finished with us yet. He is still moving, working, and loving every day. When we build up one more area of our lives to the Lord, He draws us and causes it to happen. He is wooing us; He is not pounding us over the head.

I wonder that any married couple would ever come together if they were beating each other into submission with, "You will be my wife," or "You will be my husband."

Instead, this is the way a man receives his wife: "I want to be your husband, I love you, I care about you." In a similar way, Jesus wants to be our Lord. He loves us, He cares about us – so great a love that He gave Himself for us that we might have life and have it abundantly. He wooed us, and He is drawing us to Himself every day.

Each day I find areas of my life that are still in a little dark closet. The Holy Spirit comes in and turns on the light. He never says in anger, "Now get rid of that!" In love He says, "That won't help you!" As soon as the light goes on, I think, *Oh, God, forgive me. I was wrong.*

He doesn't need to send a prophet to tell me, "You're out of line in your life." That message comes to those who have hardened their hearts against God and His Word.

Thank God for a loving wife. Since wives are really close to us, they can see all of those dark corners. I thank God for a wife who prays for me rather than nagging. Let me tell you what I will do with nagging. I will pray for my wife. She will pray for me. We will pray for and forgive each other. There is less to seize and pound on. Bless God!

Prayer is so powerful that it will change the world. We should begin to pray for one another. If we see something wrong with someone else, the natural tendency is to think, *I have the answer; I'll go tell them.* However, pride often motivates us. It is not helping; it is pride. We need to be led by the Spirit of God.

There are times when we tell people things about themselves that God shows us, and there are times when we keep our mouths shut. Let God direct. Ask Him to help you. (James 1:5-7).

According to the New Testament, nobody brings a word from the Lord (and it be a word from the Lord), except it already be in the heart of the hearer. All I do is confirm what God has put in a person's heart. This is important. In other words, God deals with an individual in a certain way, and then the word comes to confirm it. It encourages and strengthens the person.

I don't see God coming to people and saying, "You're going to hell." God never tears down except to build up something finer. The bruised reed really is not going to break off. (Isaiah 42:1-4)

Who is able to crack the rocks? (I call stubborn, rebellious people rocks.) God is able to. (Psalms 18:24-27) You cannot crack them or change them yourself.

I find that if people want to have devils in their lives, I cannot cast them out. Jesus Himself didn't go around soliciting business. He let His light shine for God, and those who wanted help came. Boy, did they come.

You don't have to tell people, "Okay, lay down your life." The Holy Spirit of God will do that. We need to share and help people make the changes. That is why you see people coming up to the prayer line for help time and time and time again.

Sometimes people get upset, "I don't want to go up there; what will people think?" Who cares what people think?

### Reach Out With Love

One time I was praying over a man, and God showed me an artichoke. (I don't like artichokes – Maybe because I haven't given them a chance. Many times we hate people and things because we haven't given them a chance. You never know, you might love them. My mother used to say about the food she served, "Try it; you might like it.")

In this example, the Lord was peeling off the outside of an artichoke down to the heart. He was doing that in the man's life. He was peeling off the outside because it was not worth much, and He was getting down to the heart. He did that in order to fill the man with His presence, His purity, and His holiness. Then the power of God would go in.

We have to get rid of all the veils, or self, that try to hide what the perfect work of God is really doing. We have to let go of anger, fear, unforgiveness, confusion, strife, the tendency to want to be perfect at everybody else's expense, or the tendency to want to put ourselves as more important than somebody else so we can be recognized.

If you have to tear down somebody else, you do not feel confident in yourself. You are working out of an insecurity. When I realize that God is in me, and I am holy, I am powerful, I have the life of God, and I am very special and loved in God's sight, I don't have to run around tearing down anyone else.

Do you see how that works? The Lord loves you more than you can imagine. When you look at another person (believer or unbeliever), who should you see?... Jesus. Galatians 6:10 says to do good to all men, especially to those in the household of faith. We want to treat all people with love especially because God deals with everybody with love. He lets the rain fall on the just and the unjust. He loves everyone the same: there are no favorites with God. (Matthew 5:43-48)

God does not love me any more than he does you. I thank God for that every day. Helping others has nothing to do with puffing yourself up. It says, "I will reach out to that person with love, right where they are. I'm going to accept them right where they are. I won't try to change them. I will love them and God will work in their hearts." I won't pick on their words or actions.

People are hard enough on themselves, let alone me coming along and making it worse. There are so many fruit inspectors that I believe the Spirit of God is retiring them. Hear me now. I have no business going around inspecting your fruit in the Lord. If anybody would, I would. God has appointed me to an office in His ministry, and it is intended to oversee.

You will find that God also shows you how to operate in the authority which He has given, and you will get His results. Thank You, Jesus, for gentleness with those who are bruised and hurting. They don't need someone to say, "You see, I told you so. I told you if you did what you did, something would happen."

Look at the "I" in the phrase, and you will see where the heart really is. It is not God's love. God's love says, "That's where you are. I love you. Let's get you out of here." Together, you pick up and move on.

I don't believe in badmouthing other ministers or ministries, and I don't believe in badmouthing you or myself. God forbids people to do that. You limit the power and working of God in your life when you do.

Get free from fear. You can shout, "I am free from fear" for as many days as God gives you life, and I believe that is at least seventy or eighty years (Psalm 90:10) or whenever Jesus comes back. When you're free from fear, you can see the shining light of God coming out of your face. You don't need to be self-conscious because you know Jesus did it for you. He takes your fears away. (Psalms 34:4-6)

A flower won't be able to bloom if you trample on it every day. People don't grow in faith when we always pick at them and tell them where they have missed it. Spend time concentrating on what they did that was pleasing to God. As we dwell on that, then God takes care of everything else. The next thing you know, there is a beautiful flower growing to God's glory -- His Word, His workmanship.

*"We are created unto good works."* Ephesians 2:10 We are God's workmanship. I surely do want to be standing before God someday and have Him look at me with love, "You loved My people well, My son. You acted on and spoke My truth in love!"

I don't believe the work of God can be messed up. It can be slowed down by our disobedience, but Philippians 1:6 says, "It is God that has begun the good work in us. It is God who is going to perfect it and complete it as we open our hearts and yield ourselves to Him." We want to get ourselves out of the way. We want to get all stubbornness and rebellion out of the way. We want to open our hearts to all that God has and then go for it.

If you see a brother or sister fall by the way, run back, run back, run back. If it means going back and getting them, do it. Okay? You are not compromising your faith. You are putting your faith to work. How does faith work? Faith worketh by love. (Galatians 5:6) Love says, "I will not let people fall. I am going to stand with them." Believer and unbeliever alike, God loves His people. Sometimes people fall because they willfully

choose to disobey God's Word. We cannot help them, and God cannot help them until they purpose to obey God. We cannot carry a care for them, but we can pray for them and not give up on them. If they don't want you around, respect that desire, but don't give up.

### No Meddling

Two fellows came to Jesus. One said, "Master, I want you to come with me to my brother and help divide our inheritance." Jesus looked at him and said, "Who appointed me your judge?" In other words, "It is none of my business what you and your brother are doing. Go back to your brother and work it out between you and him alone."

It says in Proverbs 26:17, "*He who meddles in another man's strife takes a dog by the ear.*" Many things are just nobody else's business. Don't get entangled in others' strife. Don't be a busybody, involving yourself in affairs that are none of your business.

Would you spread this around town? "A certain person did this. Did you know about it?" Gossip is a trap of the devil to hinder us spiritually, as well as hinder God from working.

What should we do the next time information about someone else comes to our attention? Pray! Have you ever wondered why Jesus said, "Let them who have ears to hear, let them hear?" I don't want anybody finishing this booklet without "hearing" what was written – And not only hearing, but doing it.

What we are dealing with is the truth of God. It is not my responsibility to watch whether you are doing right or not. It is my responsibility to communicate, and then it is your responsibility to do what you hear.

### God's Love Changes People

When you see a fault in somebody, you should pray, and then thank God every day that your prayer request is happening. That is the faith that works by loving God. You will see results. We have prayed for people, as I am sure you have also, and before long they are growing in the Lord. They don't even know that they were prayed for.

God draws people, and He does it in ways that we can never begin to imagine. The moment you put your faith out there or say a prayer asking for the power of God to come into their lives, God begins to touch, love, and change them. He starts drawing them to Himself.

The change is not the emphasis, however. God's love flowing through us is the emphasis. The change will happen! Those who get a touch from God will be changed.

Many people enter marriage thinking they will change the other person. People will not change just because you are trying to change them. If anything, they will get more set in their ways. If we love people right where they are, God will make the changes from inside, and they will not even recognize all that is happening (because it is so wonderful). They will think, *Glory to God. God did all that for me, and I am so thankful.* The love of God works!