

THE LOVE DISCIPLE

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter One</u>	
A Call to Love.....	2
The Way of Love.....	6
The Relationship Between Love and Obedience.....	28
Mobilizing the Disciples to Love.....	38
The Purpose of God’s Blessing: Ministry.....	44
The Disciple.....	51
The Son’s Heart.....	60
The Life of Praise and Holiness.....	70
Love’s Application.....	79
Love’s Wisdom – Taken from Proverbs.....	82
Ministering Disciples’ Attitudes and Actions.....	85
The Love Disciple’s Relationships.....	90
Love’s Unity.....	93
The Love Disciple’s Honors Banquet.....	97

THE LOVE DISCIPLE

Chapter One A Call to Love

I cannot think of anything greater for us than the love of God. We would be nothing without it. We would have no hope. We would have no victory. This God, who loved us so much that He sent His only son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for us while we were separated from Him, is still loving us today.

The love of God goes beyond all barriers. I did not deserve His love nor His peace. As the word of God says, I was His enemy, apart from Him, but His love bridged the gap. He loved us while we still sought our own ways, desiring the things of the world, and not even caring about Him.

He stepped forward into this world that we might have a way back to Him. He knew that without reaching out in our behalf, we would have no way to fellowship with Him again, and we would be lost. God did not desire that we should be lost, so He sent Jesus Christ to make us worthy to be His sons.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, *“As the Father has loved me so have I loved you; continue in my love. If you continue in my commandments, you shall abide in my love even as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.”* (John 15:9-12)

God wants our joy to be full. Jesus tells us, *“In my name ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”* (In John 16:24) (See our **Victory** book which deals with how to receive and share the promises of God for the abundant Christian life in Jesus Christ.)

In this book we want to deal with another way that *“your joy may be full.”* (John 15:11) *This is my commandment – that you love one another as I have loved you.”* (John 15:12)

As we continue loving God and loving each other, then God will make our joy full... and it will increase. The love of God goes beyond man's way of thinking.

Jesus said, "*You have heard it has been said, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' ...*" (In the Old Testament the payment of the law was do to them as they did to you.) This is also the way the world operates. If someone does something to you, you do something back to them. You can try to make it worse than what they did to you, or preferably you try to get them before they get to you. This is the world's way! (Matthew 5:38)

However, our Lord Jesus brought evidence of how God operates. God is love.

Jesus brought us a new covenant (or promised way of life). "*But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*" (Matthew 5:38-42)

Jesus' own life taught this principle. He was Lord of all and King of kings, yet he humbled himself and became like us in every way that he might know what we go through. However, Jesus did not violate God's principles in order that we might be set free to love God and each other. His life is the example revealed, for He gave his own life that the life of God could be ours. "*Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*" (John 15:13-14)

Jesus sacrificed himself for us. Without His blood being shed, none of us would be able to come back to God. It is interesting that Jesus called us friends even while we were enemies. God's love through Jesus made us into friends and sons of God.

We who believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ know that He said, "The love of God now lives within you." If we truly are his disciples, we will continue in

His word, and we will know that God is within us. Because God is love (1st John 4:8), our nature is now love. We have the ability to love as Jesus did.

The people of the world and carnal believers think this is totally ridiculous. “Why should I stand there and take it if someone hits me! Why should I turn the other cheek? If someone hauls me off to court, why should I give them more?”

God is saying that this is precisely what He has done for us. If it were not for God going extra for us in giving His son, we would not have any life.

Jesus says to us, *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love your neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans (unbelieving) the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans do the same? Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”* (Matthew 5:43-48)

Jesus Christ is calling us to love our enemies, to love those that abuse us, to love those who do not understand what we believe in Jesus Christ. The way of Jesus is the way to reach them – total love to the point where you would be willing to give your own life for your enemy as well as your friend. (See 1st John 3:16-17). The love of Jesus is a total love: being willing to give of our goods, time, and energy to meet the needs of someone else.

The same love that saved us will save someone else through us. Do we care enough to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? This is what being a Christian is all about – reaching out to someone else in love. It is not just reaching out to those who are easy to love, or to those who love us, or to those who are believing the same things, but reaching out to everyone – all mankind.

This is what it says in Matthew 5:45, *“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”* God did not put restrictions upon His love.

God did not choose one and not another. God is no respecter of persons. At the cross, Jesus Christ died for all. God's desire is that all men be saved, healed, and delivered.

That must mean that I cannot pick and choose who I am going to love. It means that if I truly have given my life to Jesus Christ, I need to start overlooking faults. I need to start forgiving people as my Lord has forgiven me. I need to start moving in love in the name of Jesus, recognizing that if He had not given His life for me, there would be no hope for me either.

The fact is that Jesus has given His life for you and me. After we have received Him as Lord and Savior, we desire to let the love of God flow through us. We know this is the way God will reach the world. As we start reaching out to others (like our Lord first reached out to us), then we will see our families, friends, neighbors, yes, and even enemies transformed by the love of God.

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Two
The Way of Love

Faith is what moves God. It is impossible to please Him without faith, and He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:16) How do we seek God? By faith in His word.

We now want to add to faith that which will turn us to the Lord and strengthen our relationships with each other. God's word says that without this ingredient, our faith and all spiritual gifts will not profit anything. The necessary ingredient is LOVE.

We need to add to our faith the virtue of love (2nd Peter 1:5). Otherwise someone proud and arrogant would say, "I can do this – I can do that." We can say, "It is Christ who strengthens me," but without love it appears we are getting the attention, not Jesus.

The qualities of virtue extend to all the fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

For study purposes we will define "virtue" as love. In the Greek, the usage means "excellency." Paul shows us "*a more excellent way*," referring to the way of love. (1st Corinthians 12:31)

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

*Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” (1st Corinthians 13:1-8)

The love we share for each other will cause the people of this world to know that there is a Lord who has something they need. Contrary to what we may think, the people of this world are not seeking power, they are really seeking and needing love. Jesus Christ is the perfect example of love in action. As we walk in Jesus, we will let our love shine out to others. It will enable them to receive the Good News we have to share. If you want to be a powerful witness, start loving as Jesus loved. Love will turn people around.

The following foundational scriptures are essential.

- *“And he [Jesus] said to them, Is the lamp brought in to be put under a peck-measure or under a bed, and not [to be put] on the lampstand? [Things are hidden temporarily only as a means of revelation.] For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything [temporarily] kept secret except in order that it may be made known. If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening, and perceive and comprehend.*

And He said to them, “Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you – and more [besides] will be given to you who hear. For to him who has more will be given, and from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away [by force].”
(Mark 4:21-25 Amplified)

The Lord Jesus was telling us that there is nothing hidden from us that will not be revealed. As we seek an understanding of God’s word, it may appear to be hidden. We may read the same scripture over and over a hundred times and nothing is

shown to us. However, as we continue to seek, God will reveal it to us, and the passage will come to life.

A secret is to be told or revealed. God will reveal His word to us in the same way. For years it may have been a secret to us, but as we sought the Lord, heard His word, and responded, it was revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

- *“If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening, and perceive and comprehend.”* (v. 23) Many times people are dull of hearing. They may be Christians, but their Christian walk will come to a standstill. They will stay babies in the Lord. It is sad that people get tired of hearing and desiring the word of God. Every time it goes out, Satan attempts to steal it from people. Don’t let him do it! We need to be eager to desire, listen to, perceive and comprehend God’s word that we might grow in the Lord.

- *“Be careful what you are hearing.”* (v. 24) Make certain that what you are hearing is the word of God. Make certain that what you hear builds faith. Do not respond to anything else.

- *“The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you...”* (v. 24) I want to key into this fact. Virtue and knowledge come as we meditate and grow in God’s word. For instance, if someone were to hit me, the world says to hit him back. God says, “Turn the other cheek.”

The measure of meditation we put upon what God says to do, rather than the world’s wisdom, will have a major influence upon what we choose to do. **It takes faith in God for virtue or love principles to operate as we obey God’s word.** Our motivation to love is: God first loved us.

I cannot “turn my cheek” on my own. My mind must be renewed by God’s word before I am able to respond with love actions the way God would have me to. If you and I are to fulfill the purpose of the Christian life — to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ – it is essential that our minds be renewed. People will then no longer see us. They will see Jesus through us.

As we get into our spirits what God says to do as a love response, then we will start to be obedient in action. Jesus said that God’s nature is love. When we were “born again,” our nature became love. We are love. Love is our new nature!

Why don't we always love? Our minds need to be renewed to act the way God says to act. How do I do this? *"The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you and more [besides] will be given to you who hear."* (v. 24)

To begin with, we must get God's word into us. We must desire it as much or even more than our desire to breathe. Where is life found? In the word of God: Jesus Christ.

- *"Let us be not only hearers, but doers of the Word."* (James 1:22) Before I can be a doer, I need to know what to do. God's word tells us what to do.

"Praised (honored, blessed) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)! By His boundless mercy we have been born again to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;

[Born anew] into an inheritance which is beyond the reach of change and decay [imperishable], unsullied and unfading, reserved in heaven for you,

Who are being guarded (garrisoned) by God's power through [your] faith [till you fully inherit that final] salvation that is ready to be revealed [for you] in the last time.

[You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations,

So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to resound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.

Without having seen Him you love Him: though you do not [even] now see Him, you believe in Him, and exalt and thrill with inexpressible and glorious (triumphant, heavenly) joy.

[At the same time] you receive the result (outcome, consummation) of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The prophets who prophesied of the grace (divine blessing) which was intended for you, searched and inquired earnestly about this salvation.

They sought [to find out] to whom or when this was to come which the Spirit of Christ working within them was indicating when He

predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow [them].

It was then disclosed to them that the services they were rendering were not meant for themselves and their period of time, but for you. [It is these very] things which have now already been made known plainly to you by those who preached the good news (the Gospel) to you by the [same] Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things [the very] angels long to look!

So brace up your minds; be sober (circumspect, morally alert); set your hope wholly and unchangeably on the grace (divine favor) that is coming to you when Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is revealed.

[Live] as children of obedience [to God]; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires [that governed you] in your former ignorance [when you did not know the requirements of the Gospel].

But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living.

For it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. [Lev. 11:44, 45] And if you call upon Him as [your] Father Who judges each one impartially according to what he does, [then] you should conduct yourselves with true reverence throughout the time of your temporary residence [on the earth, whether long or short].

You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold. But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah), like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot.

It is true that He was chosen and foreordained (destined and foreknown for it) before the foundation of the world, but He was brought out to public view (made manifest) in these last days (at the end of the times) for the sake of you.

Through Him you believe (adhere to, rely on) God, Who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him honor and glory, so that your faith and hope are [centered and rest] in God.

Since by your obedience to the Truth through the [Holy] Spirit you have purified your hearts for the sincere affection of the brethren, [see that you] love one another fervently from a pure heart.

You have been regenerated (born again) not from a mortal origin (seed, sperm) but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God.

For all flesh (mankind) is like grass and all its glory (honor) like [the] flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower drops off.

But the Word of the Lord (divine instruction, the Gospel) endures forever. And this Word is the good news which was preached to you. [Isaiah 40:6-9] (1st Peter 1:3-25, Amplified Bible).

Insights

Around those who are seeking God is a garrison or fortress. We cannot be touched by the enemy unless we open the door. We are tempted and suffer trials *“so that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”* (1st Peter 1:6, 7)

When we are tested, what is being tested is our faith. As we respond in faith upon God’s word, in any trial or temptation, God will move in our behalf and deliver us. (Psalm 91:14-15) Trials work perseverance which works experience, which works hope *“and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* (Romans 5:5)

As we are tried and tempted, if we respond in obedience to God’s word, God honors that faith stand. Perseverance is developed so that no matter how long we are in a trial we are able to have victory, because we know and are convinced that God is faithful and will see us through. *“...but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able [to bear], but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* (1st Corinthians 10:13)

Perseverance works experience. You know that each time something comes up against you: The fact is God has done it so many times before that He is certainly able to take care of it again. This is God's promise.

The purpose of the exhortation in 1st Peter 1:3-25 is to brace up our minds (which is the area of our will). It is in this area that we will either be made or broken as disciples of Christ concerning faith, virtue, and knowledge.

Is your will set on working with and allowing God to perfect you?

Jesus did not revile when he was reviled. He did not gossip about Caiphus. He did not give Pontius Pilate trouble. He responded in the authority of the believer, but he did not revile or defame anyone.

This is important! Jesus responded in total love even while being persecuted for the sake of God's word. Jesus is our example. The same people that Jesus died for were the ones responsible for killing him. On the cross Jesus said, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

As we start to understand the love of Jesus, and we see how God says we are to respond in situations, our lives will be transformed to become in action and words who we really are in Jesus Christ — new creatures with old things being passed away. We want to love like Jesus loved.

Following the direction of the Holy Spirit, we want to follow God's order of teaching. This order is found in 2nd Peter 1:2-12.

"May grace (God's favor) and peace (which is perfect well-being all necessary, good, all spiritual prosperity and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts) be multiplied to you in [the full, personal, precise and correct] knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. For His divine power has bestowed upon us all things that [are requisite and suited] to life and godliness through the [full, personal] knowledge of Him who called us by and to His own glory and excellence (virtue). By means of these He has bestowed on us His precious and exceedingly great promises, so that through them you may escape [by flight] from the moral decay (rottenness and corruption) that is in the world because of covetousness (lust and greed), and become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature. For this very reason, adding your diligence [to the divine

promises] employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue (excellence, resolution, Christian energy)... ” (2nd Peter 1:2-5)

Note: In the **Victory** book on faith and the promises of God, we noted that faith is love in obedience — total trust in God — love in action. We are “*to employ every effort in exercising your faith to develop virtue.*” In other words, the more we exercise faith in our lives and the more we trust God in our situations and dealings with each other, the more we will develop virtue. **Virtue is developed by knowing what God says to do and responding in faith by doing what God says to do in obedience to Him.** We are dealing with love (moral obedience).

“And in [exercising] virtue [develop] knowledge, intelligence.” (v. 5)

People are taught to move in this order:

1. Knowledge
2. Love
3. Faith

Knowledge — How many cattle crossed the red sea? How many kings are in the Old Testament? People are taught details about the Bible. They know all about the Bible, but not how to move in faith or love.

Faith — Faith may be taught on its own. Then people begin to get proud in their “faith walk.” If someone does not understand what the person is saying or doing, the “faith” person comes down hard and may begin to belittle “You must not be a believer because you’re not responding to the promises of God!” (Not considering that the other person may not have learned and begun to apply the word like they have) It is easy for an arrogant and proud spirit to develop if one has just received a little faith teaching but has not yet learned that “*faith worketh by love.*” (Galatians 5:6) **We need to help and encourage one another to move into a place where we can receive what God has for us.**

We must never compromise the word of God or our testimony of it. However, it may be that the other guy isn’t as fast in having it sink into his spirit. God’s word is sinking into all of our spirits! Praise God! We are all growing.

Again and again God’s word says that Jesus had “compassion” for the people. In the Greek, “compassion” means “to have the bowels yearn, feel sympathy, pity, inward affections and tender mercy.” (Strong’s Concordance).

Jesus understood the needs of the people and the desire of his heart was to help them at any cost, even giving up his own life. Jesus knew that the Father was able and willing to meet the needs of the people. In many cases, Jesus was first moved to compassion (love). Then by faith in God, the miracle was accomplished.

“He [a high priest] is able to exercise gentleness and forbearance toward the ignorant and erring, since he himself also is liable to moral weakness and physical infirmity.” (Hebrews 5:2, Amplified Bible)

The high priests were able to have compassion because they recognized that they too were subject to the same temptations and sins as the rest of the people of Israel. In the New Testament, we are called “a royal priesthood.” (1st Peter 2:9) Jesus Christ is our high priest.

“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning.” (Hebrews 4:15, Amplified Bible)

Jesus overcame for us! Let us help each other overcome. **Compassion is that quality which meets a person where they are and, coupled with faith, boosts the other person to victory.** Faith without compassion can work harm to people. However, faith with compassion can do nothing but bless.

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” (1 Peter 3:8)

We are to teach people to move in this order:

1. Faith
2. Virtue
3. Knowledge

God’s order is first to get people moving in faith so they are able to receive the promises of God. This will enable them to move in virtue.

In order to move in virtue, we need to know what God says. I have known new believers who were filled with the Holy Spirit, yet they were living in adultery. They did not, so they said, know what they were doing was apart from God’s

word. We shared with them what God's word says about immorality. They responded by repenting and asking God's forgiveness (see 1st John 1:9), and they discontinued their immoral behavior against God and each other.

It is important that we teach virtue so that God's people begin to act like the sons of God which He has declared us to be through Jesus Christ. We have been made righteous by Jesus (2nd Corinthians 5:21), so let us now live like the sons of God.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
(Matthew 5:48)

The measure of holiness in behavior will be measured by the amount of diligence and desire that we have in meditating upon the ways that God says to respond based on His Word and promises, and to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

I am not talking about us earning salvation. *"We are justified by faith."* (Romans 3:28) God has declared us not guilty. Jesus has made us righteous before God. (2nd Corinthians 5:21) God sees us as holy through the blood of Jesus when we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. We were given a new spirit which is holy. (1st Peter 1:23) However, our mind and our body need to be renewed and brought under subjection to our new spirit's control. (Romans 12:1-2, 1st Corinthians 9:27)

We are being made holy in mind and body each day as we yield our will to the Lord's will. Each day we become more and more like Jesus Christ in thought, word, and deed.

Some people are moving in compassion, virtue, and love, but they are not moving in faith. Faith and love must work together. They are compromising the word of God, thinking that it is love (and not wanting to offend someone).

Jesus said, *"Go show John those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. **And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**"* (Matthew 11:4-6)

Jesus walked in total love. He wanted everyone blessed. Yet again and again many people were offended by what He said because they could not agree with it. However, Jesus continued to speak the truth because He wanted people to be

blessed and delivered. Jesus recognized it was the people's choice whether they wanted to be healed and delivered.

We need to learn how to speak the truth of God's word in love so that God's people would grow up to receive all that He has for them. (See Ephesians 4:14-15)

In the following situation God was ministering to a family whose little child had foot difficulties. The doctors said he would need surgery to correct it. The parents requested prayer. Within a few days, one foot straightened out. However, after a few weeks the mother became concerned about the other foot and decided to go to the doctor. (There is nothing wrong with going to a doctor for confirmation of a healing. However, if we are going out of fear or worry that God is not performing His word, then we have a problem and had better get to the doctor quickly) At that point, I could have said, "All right, if you want to move in unbelief, fear, and worry that is permissible." However, I knew that would do this mother more harm than good because it would have been agreeing with her fear, and consequently weakening her faith and mine. It would be even more difficult for her to believe God for anything.

God's word must be true 100% of the time, or it is not true at all. We cannot do anything other than speak what God says to each other if we are to grow up to maturity. We will receive what we are believing God for.

I could have said, "I'll let it go. I don't want to offend her." That would not have been compassion and love. I might as well have told her, "Go play on the railroad tracks!" She never would have received God's victory. The Holy Spirit revealed that she was believing God to heal through surgery. God's people agreed for a speedy recovery, and the child recovered before the doctor's designated time. The woman received the victory and her faith was built up to believe for God's higher way.

The compassion and love of God is very strong. It is based upon His word. It is because God loves you and I love you that I help you to stand upon what He says. I expect you to do the same thing for me so that together we might have the victory which Jesus has provided for us.

In another situation, the mother of a newborn baby was informed that her child was jaundiced and would probably have to be hospitalized. Confusion came against her and she moved into fear and worry. The Lord revealed that the

confusion and condemnation about being a “faith” person (while still going to the doctor) had to be removed in order that she would be able to take a stand of faith to believe God. The Lord directed my wife and I to simply explain what was happening and to leave the choice to her. I went and laid hands on the child, believing God. I reaffirmed God’s word and told her that there was nothing wrong with going to a doctor as long as she was not going out of fear and worry. She decided to go to the doctor the next day. Later that evening, she called and said, “What is the sense of going to the doctor if my child is healed?” I praised God, for her spirit was beginning to take control of her emotions and reasoning. She went to the doctor the next day, Friday. When she came home, she stated, “I don’t care what the tests show. I’m not going back! Then she began to share her confession that God had healed her child and began to speak the word of God. On Monday, the doctor called and said, “Good news. The baby is healthy.” She needed no confirmation because she knew that God had healed that child because God’s word said so!

The Lord has taught me that it is important to encourage and help others to remove confusion and condemnation so that they are able to take their stand of faith to believe God and see His promises clearly. Each individual must make the choice whether or not to stand in faith. It is not for me to condemn them but to speak God’s word and encourage them to believe God. I want them to be blessed, but the responsibility of their decision is theirs alone. I will love them whatever they decide. We each must make our own decision.

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgements, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

Too often believers want people to have God’s blessings so badly that they take a care about the situation, and then they come under condemnation as they attempt to defend God’s word. They may get hostile towards other people, and relationships are lost as a result. We are not to become an offense by getting ourselves in the way. We simply present His word in love.

We do not need to defend it, nor is it a reflection upon us if someone does not want to receive. It is their choice alone. We are not to stop loving them.

Remember: *“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-29)* Our getting angry is not going to help others receive God’s truth.

“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.” (Matthew 11:6)

We are not talking about some milquetoast love. We are talking about being concerned with one another to the point where we have to say to someone in sin, “You are living in sin. I love you and God loves you and wants to forgive you. I want you to have all of God’s blessings, but He says this situation has to change!” We are not to judge the world but believers only. God will judge the world. (See 1st Corinthians 5:12-13)

At this point, true believers will respond to your love in calling them to repent and receive God’s forgiveness and blessing. As we begin to move in the love of God, it opens up the opportunity for His grace to move into the situation to change things.

Often we may feel we are right and they are wrong. Until Henry comes to us and asks forgiveness, we won't have anything to do with him. We can be totally correct in the stand that we have taken for God's word. However, God says, *"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone..."* (Matthew 18:15) If I say I am correct according to God's word, then my attitude toward my brother will agree with what God says.

Even if I am totally right in the situation, God calls me to make the first move (in love) to make things right. Am I willing to ask forgiveness and to forgive? God wants no barriers between us. How easy Satan makes it to go to others and tell them about what the person has done instead of going to the person himself. That is not God's way. God says, "Go and work it out between you and him **alone!**"

I believe that God is more concerned with people being at peace than He is about who is right and who is wrong. This is the whole point of the cross. *"But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8)

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceable with all men."
(Romans 12:18)

We are called to be "ministers of reconciliation." (See 2nd Corinthians 5:18-19) I cannot afford to have walls between you and me. If you and I allow walls to separate us from each other, we are moving outside of the Spirit of God. I need to do everything out of a love commitment to you and to God to maintain the unity between us.

I am excited about God's word. If the first person I share with rejects it, saying, "That's your interpretation!" I could very easily answer, "I'm sorry, it is what God's word says." (Doing fine, so far!) "If you don't believe it, you're lost!" (Oh, oh!)

Although everything I was saying would be true, the attitude in which I was conveying the word is what the other person was offended by. Many people are not offended by the word we share as much as by our attitudes. The attitude of "I'm right, and you're ignorant and unbelieving" has done more harm to the witness of Jesus Christ than anything else, short of the devil from whom such "wisdom" came.

When I failed concerning this, the Lord told me, “You can be totally correct in what you are saying, but totally wrong in the attitude or spirit in which you are sharing My truth. Add My love to My word.”

“Brethren, if any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual – who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit – should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also.

Bear [endure, carry] one another’s burdens and troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill and observe perfectly the law of Christ, the Messiah, and complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it].

For if any person thinks himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another’s load], when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself.

But let every person carefully scrutinize and examine and test his own conduct and his own work. He can then have the personal satisfaction and joy of doing something commendable [in itself alone] without [resorting to] boastful comparison with his neighbor.

For every person will have to bear [be equal to understanding and calmly receive] his own [little] load [of oppressive faults]. (Galatians 6:1-5 Amplified Bible)

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle shewing all meekness unto all men.

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but

according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” (Titus 3:1-8)

We **must** remember who we **once** were and what we thought – not for condemnation purposes because we are new creatures now – but so that we are able to minister God’s word with a spirit of gentleness and meekness, realizing where people are coming from, where we once were, and where we are all going together because of the love of Jesus Christ!

“Pride cometh before the fall.” (Proverbs 16:18) For me to be arrogant and haughty when a brother or sister falls into sin or disbelieves the word of God is not of God. You may say, “They violated and rejected God’s word, and they have it coming to them now.” True. However, our attitude is not to be proud or glad, but grieved. The Holy Spirit grieves for fallen believers and the unsaved. The Spirit is also grieved by those who have proud attitudes about themselves saying, “I wouldn’t ever do that!” Remember Peter. Jesus grieved over Jerusalem because they rejected the prophets. (Matthew 23:37-39)

When Jesus was rejected in Samaria, James and John wanted to call down fire to consume the city. Jesus said to them, *“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”* (Luke 9:55-56)

In life we must do everything we can to share God’s truth so that people can be saved, healed, and delivered. If we have offended someone by our actions, we must go and ask forgiveness. Everyone wants to have others ask for forgiveness. It is a humbling and a blessed freeing experience to ask forgiveness of God and people when we have wronged them. Normally, when people are offended, the first thing we should do is go to them and ask (if we do not know), “How have I offended you? I want us to be right with each other.” If the person lists some action or attitudes that were wrong, say, “Will you forgive me?” It is up to them whether or not they will forgive you. Your part is to seek reconciliation and ask for forgiveness.

If they say, “I just don’t like you talking about Jesus all the time,” then you are dealing with offense for the Word’s sake, not because you committed wrong. Share with them, “I love you! And it is because I love you that I want you to have all the life, joy, peace, and blessings (health, prosperity, etc.) that I have in Jesus Christ. God wants you to have it because He loves you too. We talk about what we love the most. I am not ashamed of Jesus and I love Him before anything or anyone else. This is why I talk about Him. Please, don’t be offended but share in my joy that it may be yours also.”

Love the person no matter how they respond and continue to believe God that they receive and rejoice in Jesus with you. Again, believe that it is important that relationships be maintained on our part. If persecutions (physical harm, friendships end, family ties break) come for your love for Jesus, rejoice in God, but do not take offense at those whom Satan is using against you. Pray God’s blessing on them, love them, and move on. Understand, the spirit that is motivating them (Satan) is against the Spirit that is motivating you. Therein is the battle. We represent Jesus Christ in an enemy zone. We are not fighting “flesh and blood” (people) but all powers of Satan (Ephesians 6:12). If we can keep this perspective, then it will be much easier to love each other. We do not need to defend ourselves. God is our defender as we respond in obedience to His word.

As we go forward boldly in the name of Jesus, speaking forth God’s word faithfully and uncompromisingly, people will be offended. God’s word will offend those who are blinded by Satan and their own reasoning. However, let them not be offended because of an ungodly attitude or action on our part.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (2nd Timothy 2:24-26)

We are dealing with people who have fallen into a snare of the devil by giving into temptation, disobeying God, or ignorance, false reasonings, and teachings. Many believers fall into this category. They base their belief

about God on what they have experienced or been taught as a child, whether based on God's word or not, correctly or incorrectly interpreted by tradition.

Job fell into this category until he was confronted with God himself.

“Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that thou canst do every things, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:1-6)

Job did not have God's word the way we have it now. Many believers have heard about God and responded to Him, as Job did. Yet, they really have not diligently searched God's word for themselves to know what He says and then applied it by faith to experience the results that God intends for them – victory and a blessed live.

Job repented of his ignorance, *“uttering that I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not.”* (v. 3) By lovingly showing what God's word says, we will enable people to come to the point where they will be free to repent of ignorance, accept God's truth, and experience God's blessings.

It is not our place to condemn God's people (to tell them they are ignorant), but to help remove stumbling blocks in their minds that they may see God's truth clearly and experience His blessing. The enemy is trying to blind our minds from receiving God's abundance. (2nd Corinthians 4:4) The end result is that we actually can be “opposing ourselves” by our own thinking and talking.

By encouraging one another to think, talk, and act on God's word alone, we will be able to help each other to awake to what Satan is trying to do *“that they may recover [awake] themselves out of the snare of the devil.”* (2nd Timothy 2:26) We can help each other to get out of Satan's snares.

Oh, but it is so much fun seeing Johnny suffer! After all, he chose not to believe God's word. He chose to disobey God. He has it coming! Friends, the Lord showed me the following scripture in this regard. "If any man sees his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." (1st John 5:16)

God says that we can actually pray to Him to forgive brothers or sisters in the Lord who we know are in the snare of Satan, and God will give them life because we interceded for them. This is what Jesus did for us! We can now set each other free because of what the blood of Jesus did for each of us.

But maybe they committed the unpardonable sin! A safe rule is let God be the judge of that. Unless God tells you otherwise, be very swift to pray His forgiveness for others and then be swift (in love) to share His word of truth in a spirit of meekness lest you also be tempted to fall. (Galatians 6:1) Thus, you allow the person who has sinned to repent and receive God's full forgiveness and peace (1st John 1:9). While we are under oppression, we often "can't see the forest for the trees." We can help each other in Jesus' name to see clearly.

Love is not a compromise of God's word, yet God's love builds bridges. It does not tear them down. We must always keep the door open for people who have been "opposing themselves" to be free to come back into relationships with us. We do this by loving them, but not by doing what they have been doing or believed falsely.

Many people are ashamed after they have found out that what they were doing or believing was wrong. If we have been arrogant in our stand, they will not be free to come back and admit their error.

I love the story of the prodigal son, especially the part where the son was returning home after he had discovered the error of his ways and repented. The father saw him on the road and went to meet him with outstretched arms. Before the boy ever said anything, it was obvious that his father had accepted him back. This is God's love for us.

In Corinth, a believer was living with his stepmother. Paul exhorted the body of believers to remove this man from the church lest the rest of the believers be corrupted. (Read 1st Corinthians 5) In a spirit of meekness and

gentleness, we are to carry out the steps of Matthew 18:15-17. The goal of such action is that a person repents, asks God's forgiveness and stops living in sin. *"To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord, Jesus."* (1st Corinthians 5:5)

The goal: to restore and save people, not get rid of them!!!

Paul said, *"Your glorying is not good."* (1st Corinthians 5:6) These people were being prideful and did not show love towards God or the individual when they allowed him to willfully continue to sin against God in such a way that even many unbelievers were disgusted with it, thus presenting an abominable witness for the church of Jesus Christ. (v. 1) God's desire is to keep His church united, pure and holy, and living in the truth of God's word. (v. 6-8)

The man did not immediately repent. **In love** the believers turned him over to Satan (v. 5) removing him from the church, and would not associate with him any more (v. 13). The church is not to judge the people of the world (unbelievers), but the church is to judge by God's word those who call themselves believers. (v. 9-13) **This is not an individual's responsibility, but the church's responsibility.**

Later in 2nd Corinthians 2, Paul addressed the situation after the man had repented and sought forgiveness, and stopped living in sin.

"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." (2nd Corinthians 2:6-11)

Paul exhorted the believers to forgive him as if nothing ever happened, to comfort him, and to confirm their love towards him (v. 7-8). This is to be

done lest Satan “*swallow him up with much sorrow [condemnation]*” because of what he had done.

It is time that believers stand together in loving, comforting and forgiving one another that Satan not be able to take advantage of us.

Every one of us will have to decide for ourselves that this will be our purpose.

The degree of our commitment to Christ in obedience will be determined by the degree of our diligence in God’s word to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Is it our desire that our entire being – spirit, soul (mind, will, and emotions), and body – be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?

The amount of diligence and obedience to God’s word will determine the amount of fruit that God produces in our lives.

We must start somewhere. Take one area of your life that needs work. If you have a problem with pride, start there. Search out scriptures that deal with God’s love (1st Corinthians 13) and depend upon God (Proverbs 3:5-7). Meditate on God’s word. Obey what He says to do in a given situation.

Allow God to do His perfect work within you. The amount we are yielded to Him in obedience to His word will determine the amount of our maturity in the Lord. How far do you want to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? Are you willing to **be** the new creature which God has declared you to be in Jesus Christ? Do you want to yield the area of hostility which you may have towards someone who has wronged you to God? Or do you want to hold on to it?

Jesus Christ wants to free us to be reconciled to him and to each other as His ambassadors, reconciling this world to Himself. (See 2nd Corinthians 5:18-20)

All believers want to be right with God. The question is, do we want to be right with each other? This is the love of God if we love each other. Let us return to 2nd Peter 1:5-12.

This is the pattern for a disciple’s growth:

1. Faith
2. Virtue
3. Knowledge
4. Temperance (self-control)
5. Patience (steadfastness, endurance)
6. Godliness (piety)
7. Brotherly kindness (affection)
8. Christian love

As we develop in each area, we will become more and more like Jesus. The goal is to exhibit the love of God.

“For as these qualities are yours and increasingly abound in you, they will keep [you] from being idle or unfruitful unto the [full personal] knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). For whoever lacks these qualities is blind, [spiritually] shortsighted, seeing only what is near to him; and has become oblivious [to the fact] that he was cleansed from his old sins. Because of this, brethren, be all the more solicitous and eager to make sure (to ratify, to strengthen, to make steadfast) your calling and election; for if you do this you will never stumble or fall. Thus there will be richly and abundantly provided for your entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So I intend always to remind you about these things, although indeed you know them and are firm in the truth that [you] now [hold].” (2nd Peter 1:8-12, Amplified Bible)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Three
The Relationship Between Love and Obedience

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”
(Matthew 24:12)

As sin abounds and license is given in this world, the love of many grows colder and colder, and disobedience increases. It is important to understand there is a relationship between love and obedience to God and to His word.

As we draw closer to the day of the Lord’s return, iniquity will abound even more, and love will grow colder in this world. However, even more grace will abound amongst believers because God will be giving more grace as well as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days. God will move even stronger.

Many believers run around saying, “I am the righteousness of God in Christ!” This is a true statement. We have been made worthy by the blood of Jesus Christ. *“Whosoever believeth upon the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved.”* This is God’s promise to us. However, they are not being and living who they are. Their lives are not consistent with their profession of faith.

We can say, “I am the righteousness of God in Christ...,” which is true. We are sons of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and we have communion with Him, praising Him. However, our minds and bodies must operate consistently with who we are in our new spirit. In other words – **what you see had better be consistent with what you are professing!**

Here is a strong statement Jesus gave to us in Matthew 5:17-20:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but

whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Often people think, *I am saved. I have the love of God. I can do whatever I want to do now!*

I could tell you, “Fine. You can do whatever you want to do, but it says here, *‘Whosoever therefore shall break one of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven’* ” (v. 19). I don’t want to lose my place. Now I am being selfish when I say this. Not only is it the desire of my heart, but also any servant of God’s heart, that you grow in the word of God so that you can have all that Christ said is yours in Him.

We cannot forget to be obedient.

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father and I will love him, and will manifest [reveal] myself to him... If a man love me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” (John 14:20-21, 23-24)

Jesus says that whoever has (hears and keeps) His commandments is the one who really loves Him. Whoever has the commandments and does not keep them does not love Jesus. Jesus will reveal himself to those who are obedient to Him. **The life of the Spirit of God is a life of obedience. In that obedience we are expressing our love for our Lord and Father.**

If we truly are His sons, we will do what our heavenly Father tells us to do. It is our love response to do what He tells us. We are not grieved or burdened down to keep God’s commandments, but we want to be obedient because it is our delight to do His will.

These are basic truths. When they are applied, God will transform the world through us. The world will know God through our revealing His love in words and actions. The world will know whether we are children of God or not by the love which we show. The way to love is to obey God's word.

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”
(1st John 2:3-6)

The goal of the Christian walk is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ – to obey and to do the word and works of God.

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” (John 15:9-14)

The Lord Jesus is found here. He came to do the will of His Father not his own will. Jesus walked in perfect obedience to the Father. He did not do the works on his own, but the Father did the works through him.

Why was Jesus obedient to his Father? Because he loved Him.

God has declared us to be sons of God. In the same way, we, too, desire to keep God's commandments.

“If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love.” (John 15:10)
When is the love of God flowing in our lives? It is flowing when we walk in His way, His word, His commandments. When we do what God says to do,

that is when we are able to love Him and His people. We do this for the simple reason that God told us to do it. We honor and love Him and we know that He is true. His way is the BEST for us! Whether our minds or our neighbors tell us differently, we know that God's way will accomplish His purpose in any given situation.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11)

When we are obedient to God's word, the joy of the Lord becomes our strength. Our joy is full and increased. As we abide in Jesus and his words abide in us, we can ask whatever we will, and Jesus will do it for us. (John 15:7, 14:14) This is God's promise.

*“Ye are my friends, **if ye do** whatsoever I command you.” (John 15:14)*

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (1st John 4:6)

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1st John 5:5)

God is love. What nature do we have living in us from the moment we confessed Jesus as Lord and we believed He is risen from the dead? – God's nature.

God's nature is LOVE! Now, our nature is love!

The word of God says that our minds need to be renewed by God's word. Our mind's nature and body's nature is not love. If we let our minds and bodies go on their own, we would end up where we began. However, if we renew our minds by God's word to understand how He would have us respond in any given situation, then our response will become godly and we will think and act like Him.

We need to understand that before our actions will change, we must begin to find out what God wants us to do. The goal of any true son is to find out

what his father wants him to do. Why? We must know what our Father wants before we can obey. Our desire is to obey because we love Him.

God really wants to see a yielded and obedient son doing whatever He has for him. He will then teach us about our calling in this life. Every one of us has a purpose. God will direct us in how to fulfill that calling. Our purpose comes out of God's love and is based on His commandments.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1st John 5:3)

Why aren't they grievous? – Because we love God and we know they are for our good. It is a joy to be obedient to God.

Have you done something with a desire to help others? Do you remember the joy that came to them (and to you) as you helped them? There is such a blessing that comes with a joyful response from the heart.

If it were not for God's love first coming to us, we would not be able to love. Originally, we were not able to keep God's commandments either. Jesus had to come because God knew we could not keep His commandments perfectly. Jesus had to keep God's commandments perfectly for us, so we could be declared right with God.

Because Jesus has come, we are able to do His commands. Do we have to measure up to His standards to be saved? No! Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of not fulfilling the law of God. What does that do for us? – It frees us to joyfully know that as we are obedient to God in love, His power will help us. God is the one who has begun the work, is doing the work, and will complete the work in us (Philippians 1:6), as we continue to do what He desires first.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."
(Philippians 2:12-13)

God produces faith in our lives. How does faith come? – By hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). Before any of it became real to me, I had to receive Jesus. Someone had to share the Word with me, so I could receive Him. The sharing of the Word manifested the need within me for Jesus more than anything else in this life. I would and did forsake everything to follow Him. My life is God's life.

If I am moving in faith, I am operating by the word of God. When I start to apply His word to my situation, He will move. Many of His promises involve an obedient response on our part in order to receive the promise. (See **Victory** book) **Obedying the word of God puts the promise into effect for me.**

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” (1st John 4:18) Where does fear come from? – Satan. Fear is the opposite of faith. Perfect love casts out fear. If I am moving in faith, I am moving in love. What overcomes the world? *“Even our faith.”* (1st John 5:4) As I move in faith, I am moving in the nature of God which is love. If a man says he loves God and does not keep his commandments, he is a liar. (1st John 2:4) If a man says he loves God whom he can't see, and hates his brother who he can see, he is a liar. (1st John 4:20)

How can we love a God we can't see, if we do not love a brother we can see? God says we don't love Him if we don't love each other. God's nature is love, so great a love that He sent His son to die for this entire, underserving world (which included us) that they might have His life.

Fear is the opposite of faith. Faith, which is love in action, casts out fear. When we are moving in faith and love we are being obedient to God's word.

Jesus says, *“If you love me, keep my commandments.”* Obedience is the test of whether we really love the Lord. It will be evident in our obedience.

Jesus warned the church in Ephesus because it had lost its first love. (Revelation 2:4) The people were hearing the word, praying, and witnessing. They were taking care of the poor and needy, but they had lost their first love. Their first desire was not being obedient to Jesus Christ. They had lost that need for God more than anything else in this life. When you lose the desire for obedience, you lose the fine edge which allows the

power of God to move in your life. God must be our first need and love before anything or anyone else.

Let us examine ourselves to see whether we are in Christ Jesus.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”
(2nd Corinthians 13:5)

We can do all kinds of things for the Lord, but if He is not our first priority, we need to adjust. He is not to be replaced by something else in our lives.

Sin which is equated with fear brings torment. Sin is rebellion. It will separate us from God and cut off our fellowship with Him. We can be saved and out of fellowship with Him because of disobedience in our lives, but God has given us a way back. *“If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1st John 1:9) We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. However, God’s desire is that we not sin (be disobedient), but that we walk in love. As we are walking in love, sin cannot be present.

Fear or rebellion produces disobedience. We become disobedient to God’s promise. For instance, the scripture says, *“Don’t worry about what you will eat, drink or wear. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.”* (Matthew 6) Let’s say you start to worry. Worry produces fear. What is the fear based on? In your mind you are really saying, “God, I don’t believe you will supply my needs!” At this point, you are moving in disobedience, and you may even have to step on somebody to make certain your needs are supplied. You may even lie to get a job.

Fear provokes us to violate God’s principles. Love or obedience is fellowship with God. The result is that the fruit of the Spirit is produced in our lives: love, joy, peace, etc. We are able to love our enemies. If we are able to love our enemies, we must certainly be able to love fellow believers!

It is important to understand this dynamic. I can say I am God’s child, but if I am not doing what he says, maybe I am not a true child. Do not let the enemy steal this.

You are a child of God when you received Jesus as Lord and were baptized. The old died and God made you new. You came up out of the water dedicated to walking in newness of life (Romans 6:4). When you were filled with the Holy Spirit, praising God in a new way, the power of God came into your life so that you would be able to be obedient and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

If I see that I am not walking in obedience to God's word, I will do some repenting. "Father, forgive me for this attitude or behavior that is not obedient to your word. I thank you for forgiving me in Jesus. I thank you that I am able to be obedient."

We are able to be obedient to God's word and grow to maturity in the Lord; otherwise the Lord Jesus would not have told us, "*Be ye therefore perfect [complete and mature], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*" (Matthew 5:48) If we were not able to do it, God would not have told us to do it.

Obedience comes with understanding the relationship between faith, love, and obedience. **If I say I love God, I will keep His commandments!**

Where do we begin?

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is *"Like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self."* On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)

We begin by loving God, and the byproduct of loving God is loving each other. To love a God whom we cannot see is to believe that His word is true. The evidence of believing His word is loving one another according to His way.

Jesus said about the last day: *"When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was in prison, you visited me. When I was sick, you prayed for me."* ("Well done!")

He told another group that they did not do these things. They responded, “Lord, when did we not do these things for you?” Jesus said, “When you did not take care of my people, you did not minister to me.” (See Matthew 25:34-46)

The Lord Jesus equates ministering to the needs of his people with ministering to Himself – loving God and loving others as we love ourselves. The love of God will begin to abound in our lives as we do this principle.

Start with an area in your life where you have difficulty obeying the word. No blessing comes with loving the lovable. The blessing comes with loving the unlovable as Christ loved us and made us lovable.

Recognize that Jesus Christ loves the person whom you are having difficulty with as much as he loves you. Jesus died and forgave him or her as much as He has forgiven you.

“Him to whom little has been forgiven, the same loves little. However, to whom much has been forgiven, the same loves much.” (Luke 7:47) This is the power of God to set us free to love people – that we have been forgiven much. As we are grateful to God, we will respond by being obedient to His word.

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (1st John 3:22-24)

For me to tell you that God is all loving and forgiving, which is true, but that you and I do not need to keep His commandments any more would be false. When does the power of God transform our lives? The power flows when we are obedient to His word.

Not being obedient to God’s word is really fear. You cannot expect anything from God because you do not know that He is true. As we obey

Him, we are walking in faith. As we walk in faith, we will say to that mountain, *“Be ye removed and cast into the sea.”* If we do not doubt, it will go! We can expect God to do exactly what He says He will do. Why? – Because He said, *“You are my sons as you have received my son Jesus.”*

Jesus said, *“He that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”* (John 14:12)

With the Father, Jesus is saying to us today, *“If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.”* (John 14:14) The Father receives glory. Our joy is full.

A person who is not walking in obedience to God’s word cannot expect one thing when he prays. Our desire is to be conformed to Jesus’ image. Then Satan will have no place as God’s people become obedient to God’s word. *“...Perfect love [obedience] casts our fear [disobedience]...”* (1st John 4:18) (See 1st John 2:15-17, 5:17-21)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Four
Mobilizing the Disciples to Love

The fruit of the spirit is *“love, joy, peace, long suffering [perseverance] gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”* (Galatians 5:22-25)

The first of the fruit of our new spirit is love. Jesus said, *“I am the vine and you are the branches.”* Picture yourself as a branch attached to a vine. The branches can only live as long as they are attached, and they can only function as they are attached. If we separated a branch from the vine, it would wither and die. No fruit would be produced.

The fruit of our spirits, not the Holy Spirit, will come from us as we abide in Jesus. This fruit is a natural yet supernatural result. Do we have to try to produce fruit? Do we have to try to love? Do we have to try to be gentle? No! These qualities will simply develop as we abide in Jesus and His word.

*“Now ye are clean [pruned] through the **word** which I have spoken unto you.”* (John 15:3) God will prune (discipline and instruct) us as we are in His word. He will get good quality fruit from us. As we are in God’s word, we find out what to do to be obedient and what not to do. **We do not want to be disobedient anymore.**

If we are reading God’s word, and He calls us to forgive someone, but we are not forgiving, we say, “Oh, oh – I’m out of line. I’ll confess this unforgiveness as sin.” Thus we are pruned and disciplined by the word. Thank God for forgiveness.

Our attitudes and values will change as we continue in God’s word. *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”* (John 15:4) Unless we are vitally united to Jesus Christ, there will be no fruit produced in our lives – no love, no joy, no strength, etc. Apart from Jesus we can do nothing. If we are trying to love in our own strength, we might as well forget it. We

have no strength apart from Jesus. However, in Jesus we can do everything – we are and have everything.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing.” (verse 5)

If we are in Jesus, there will be much abundant fruit coming from us. We do not try to make it happen. It will be produced without effort on our part.

Here is the key to this happening:

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” (verse 7)

The key to producing the fruit in us is “abiding in God’s word.” Not only are we to be hearers of God’s word but doers as well. **Love is a natural, spiritual outgrowth of walking in the Spirit by being obedient to God’s word.**

This principle also applies to producing all the other fruit of the Spirit.

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” (verse 8)

As the fruit (or evidence) of our faith in Jesus is being produced in our lives, other people will see a difference. They will want what we have. We will reap what we sow as we sow seeds. Every fruit has seeds in it. For what purpose are the seeds present in the fruit?

An entire mustard tree will grow from a little seed. Apple seeds, produce apple trees. Like will produce like in the natural and spiritual realms. If we sow a seed of love to someone, it will produce love within the other person towards others.

Producing fruit is a matter of remaining attached to Jesus. If I have difficulty loving someone, I will want to get back into God’s word. By not loving that person, I have been disobedient to God, cutting myself off from the vine (Jesus). I get back into God’s word to see what He, not my feelings,

would have me to do. I need to understand that I am part of the Vine. God has given me His nature which flows through me, and my nature is now love. Love is what I am made of in my spirit. I need to tell my mind and body repeatedly that my new nature is love, so I will love others as Christ loved me. Then the power of God is able to flow through me to produce the fruit of love towards the person I “could not” love.

This must happen. It is impossible that it not happen as we are obedient to God’s word. As we meditate upon the love of God in us (1st Corinthians 13, Romans 12, Matthew 5, and 1st John), we can get excited. We will be able to do as God’s word directs because our nature is that of our Heavenly Father. Since God lives in us, we are love. **Just imagine the real you is love:** Anything else coming out is not the real you because your nature is love.

We are vessels for God power and love to show through us to produce fruit. I am believing for a 100 fold production of fruit in each of our lives. I may even be so bold to believe for a 1,000 fold fruit production. Keep believing! I know that you want to be the most fruitful tree you can be, allowing yourself to be “pruned” by God’s word. We will be fruitful because you and I are attached to Jesus Christ.

Let’s do some **Application.**

Jesus said that he did not come to do away with the law of God, but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17-20) If I were to teach you that you could live any way you wanted to live, I would be held accountable. “Oh, but we have freedom in Christ!” Yes, but not freedom to violate God’s eternal word and principles.

What is in the Law? *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath... Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain... Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet...”* (Exodus 20:3-17)

These are the commandments of the Law which we know as the Ten Commandments.

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:8-10)

“Jesus said unto him, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’” (Matthew 22:37-40)

The first of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship to God. Jesus summed it up above. The next seven commandments have to do with our relationship with each other, which Jesus said in the above quotation.

How would you like others to treat you? It would be a worthwhile **exercise** to make a list of the things you want others to do to you.

One group included love, kindness, understanding, patience, honesty, faithfulness, sincerity, and unselfishness as desirable qualities. From 1st Corinthians 13:4-8 some qualities are: not keeping records of wrongs, not thinking evil, not provoking others, being joyful, forgiving, friendly, building each other up in the Lord, not being judgmental but being supportive, reproving and correcting in love from God’s word, gentleness, helpfulness without reservation, availability, confidence, and willing to lay down one’s life.

Take the list which you have made concerning how you would have others treat you and turn to Matthew 7:12.

Read it this way – **“Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you [insert your list and the list above], do you even so to them for this is the law and the prophets.”** LOVE!

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
(Galatians 6:7-10)

The Spirit of God would impress us that the body of believers need to be aware of being available to do good to others and letting God’s love flow out of them. It is time for the “bless me” Christianity (which is centered upon whether or not I am being blessed and focuses on myself) to turn around to God’s intention for blessing us. We are to stop looking out for ourselves, and how we are being blessed, and start looking out for others. In other words, it is time that God’s people grow up! The Lord would impress us to look out for the needs of others “counting others as more important than ourselves.” *“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”* (Philippians 2:3-4)

This is the fulfilling of the Law. As Jesus came to fulfill the Law and gave his own life that we might have the life of God, so He expects us to let that same love touch others through us. It is high time to get out of our shells and start moving out in a love response towards all men, not growing weary in well doing.

If we are sowing love, we will reap love. The same principle applies to honesty, cheerfulness, kindness, understanding, faithfulness, etc. We will reap what we sow. We need to make certain that what we are sowing is what we expect to get back. If we are not sowing love, but unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, and envy, then we can expect to get these things back.

How can we fulfill this word from the Lord in regard to husbands, wives, children and neighbors? Make a specific list of how you can fulfill his call to love others. Ask the Lord to reveal to you how and to whom you can fulfill His call to love. Let God show you how He can fulfill that person’s need through you. We are to bear one another’s burdens together, bringing those needs to God.

The way to get love is to give love. *“We love God because He first loved us.”* (1st John 4:19)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Five
The Purpose of God's Blessing: Ministry

After we have confessed Jesus as Lord (and that He is risen from the dead), been water baptized, been filled with the Holy Spirit, and are praising God, what is to happen to us now?

Often believers feel that the entire purpose of being a Christian is to get blessings from God. I know that Jesus is my Lord and Savior, I am filled with the Holy Spirit, and I praise God in new tongues. I know the power of God rests within me so I know I am "blessed going in and blessed going out." I know that all of God's word is true for me. I have the victory of God, and so do you.

For what purpose do we have this victory and every blessing? It is not that we simply receive blessings. I can be so bold as to say that it is not at all that we seek to receive blessings, for God **already** considers us to have a blessing. I do not need to seek blessings at every turn. "Am I going to praise God in the Spirit today?" "Am I saved today?" "It's a new day. Will I still be blessed in God today?" Of course, you are blessed today. God's word is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We do not need to run around seeking blessings. We already are blessed in Jesus Christ.

God now has a purpose for each of us to fulfill as the result of His having blessed us.

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." (2nd Timothy 1:6)

Paul was telling Timothy (and us) to stir up the Holy Spirit. We have not been given all these blessings for no purpose. We do not have the power of the Holy Spirit in us to just sit around or hop from one church to another to be blessed.

Paul told Timothy (and us) to get busy and stir up the Holy Spirit. He will not stir up Himself in us. Once we stir up the Holy Spirit, then He will begin to minister through us. Unless a person prays in the Spirit, the Holy

Spirit is not free to minister. Unless we are walking in faith, believing God at His word, nothing will happen through us. The ministry that God has for each of us will not happen unless we stir up the gift that is in us.

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” (1st Timothy 4:14)

Timothy was called of God for one of the following ministry offices: *“And he [Jesus] gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”* (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Not all of us are called to these ministry offices. However, these offices are to prepare and equip the rest of the body of Christ for the work of the ministry. Each of us has a part in God’s ministry.

Paul was exhorting Timothy not to neglect, but use, the gift that was in him. We have a choice to use or not use the gift (Holy Spirit) that is in us. God will not force believers to do something they do not want to do. We must desire to be used of God and believe for the things of God. Then the ministry of God will begin to manifest itself in and through us. *“Neglect not the gift...”*

After people have been filled with the Holy Spirit, many stop praying in their new tongue. They are neglecting the blessing that God has given them. God does not give blessings to be neglected. God gives blessings to be used and practiced.

The people of Israel grumbled and complained against God and cursed Moses as God’s representative. (Numbers 11:10-13) Moses said, *“I am not able to bear all these people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.”* (Numbers 11:14-15)

“Lord, I can’t take this burden anymore!” Moses cried. (Read Numbers 11:16-17)

In the Old Testament, the only ones who had the Holy Spirit were God's called-out individuals, like Moses, Samson, Gideon, Elijah, etc., who were servants of God for His ministry. The rest of the people did not have the Holy Spirit. They sought those individuals for "a word from the Lord."

The Lord told Moses, "I will take the same Holy Spirit that is upon you and put it upon these seventy elders." For what purpose?... *"and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."* (v. 17)

The Lord gave the Holy Spirit to these elders so that they might assist Moses in ministering to the people of Israel.

"And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:25-29)

Moses said that he wished the Holy Spirit was upon all of the people of Israel. We note again that only select individuals had the Holy Spirit for ministry purposes. Moses wished that all the people would minister to help bear the burden.

(An insight for ministers is Moses' attitude. (verse 29) He was not jealous or envious of his position, but rather encouraged the people to grow up to take their full place in God's church, not being dependent on him, but on God. Moses desired that others have the call of God as he had.)

We have not been given the Holy Spirit for no purpose. People have been taught for years to sit in the church pew with the pastor ministering up front. They say a few prayers, sing a few hymns. Everyone is blessed, and then they go home.

This is not the purpose for which people have been given the Holy Spirit.

*“And you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses** unto me... unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*
(Acts 1:8)

In other words, we are not “born again,” baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit for nothing. When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, the power of God is available for the ministry that God has for every one of us.

Believers will be held accountable and judged – not for their sins, but for how they use what God has given them. (Matthew 16:27)

We will be responsible for how we have or have not stirred up the gift that is in us. There will be rewards based upon how diligently we have used the gifts which the Lord has given.

This is exciting! When you are filled with the power of God and you have a ministry, you will begin to find out how God can use you. You may not know at this point what your ministry is, but you will know where you fit into God’s plan.

Like Moses, I am asking God that His people be able to receive the Holy Spirit which He has already provided to this world at Pentecost. You can help fulfill your calling to be a minister of reconciliation working with the rest of God’s people to prepare them for His return. Jesus wants to carry all our burdens! However, we are to bear one another’s burdens so that we can together give those burdens to Jesus. Jesus takes our burden, so that we can carry someone else’s to him.

Carry the burden with them in order to give the burden to God. To minister is to serve God and one another. Then the person who had the burden is free to praise and glorify God.

A few things involved in our Christian service or ministry in God's body are listed in Romans 12:3-8. Whatever the gift is we have been given, we must use it. The only way that we will find our ministry is to get out ministering.

The Spirit of God within me groans when I see people who say they are believers and filled with the Holy Spirit, but all they do is sit around waiting for the Lord to bless them. They go to every group around the country side "to be blessed." Sure they are blessed. They are so fully blessed they are ready to burst.

God wants these blessings to be used. Every blessing that we receive is to be used to encourage and help others to have God's best. I don't run around storing up treasures in heaven. "Oh, boy, I've got 5,000 in heaven. I'd better go out and do a few more good works, so I can have more!" NO! I do not concentrate on this. God is recording what is going on, but I am just to minister to His people.

We are not being blessed for nothing. We are God's disciples to minister in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are ministering gifts of the Holy Spirit which God employs through His people.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, I would not have you ignorant." (1st Corinthians 12:1) I am not teaching on the gifts of the Spirit right now, but simply making you aware of the ministry gifts of the Holy Spirit which are available.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." (verse 4) There are different kinds of gifts given by the Holy Spirit. These gifts are used for ministry situations. When I am ministering the word of God, various gifts of the Spirit operate. The Holy Spirit will begin to manifest in us the gifts that are needed for the situation. If we are not about God's business, we cannot expect these gifts to manifest.

"There are differences of administrations [ministries], but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (verses 5-6) The Lord may work in different ways in

different situations. God is the healer and miracle worker. We are vessels for God to flow through. God does the work.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (verse 7) The Holy Spirit has been given to God’s people that everyone might be built up. Each of us has a place in God’s ministry plans.

“Oh, I can’t speak!” Moses and Jeremiah said when they were called to be used of God. There may be some of you who feel the same way. That excuse didn’t hinder God from speaking through these men, nor will it hinder God from using you. When God calls people, He also equips them for the ministry. Remember, it is not us ministering, but God ministering through us. We are God’s point of contact with this world.

Read 1st Corinthians 12:8-11. These are the ministry gifts of the Holy Spirit. They operate in ministry situations. The gift of faith is not the same as the “measure of faith” (Romans 12:3) that has been given to all believers. The ministry of “different kinds of tongues” is not the same as the new tongue that is given to all Spirit-filled believers. The different kinds of tongues are for ministry to the church. The new tongue is for **personal** edification. (1st Corinthians 14:4)

The Holy Spirit is responsible for these gifts. I cannot decide, “Today I am going to prophesy.” This is up to the Holy Spirit whether I prophesy or not. The Holy Spirit determines through whom and when these ministry gifts will operate.

Jesus is the head of the body, and believers in Jesus are the body. We are one body in Christ Jesus. Each of us has a special function within the body. No one is any more important or any less important than the others. Each one fulfilling our function or ministry within the body is necessary for the rest of the body to be blessed. We need each other! (1st Corinthians 12:12-31) We need to share each other’s joys and sorrows, building up and encouraging one another, having the same care for every believer alike. When one is honored, we all rejoice rather than get envious or jealous. When one falls, we all seek to pick the person up.

We are not trying to get people involved in our ministry. Many churches feel if they get the people involved they will stay. **Involvement is each**

individual's concern, but God has prepared a ministry for every believer. We will be responsible for our availability and yieldness to be used in God's work. Stir up the gift that is in you to find your place in God's work. It is the responsibility of the apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists to equip you to take your place in God's ministry.

“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” (verse 18) God has determined a purpose for each of us, and even though each one of us is different and has a different part in the body, yet we are one, not divided.

“But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” (verse 31) As we desire to be used of God and begin to minister, the Holy Spirit will begin to manifest the gifts of the Spirit through us. However, the greatest force that is available to all of us for ministry purposes is LOVE.

God has blessed us to be a blessing to others.

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Six
The Disciple

People follow heroes, super-stars, and spiritual and political leaders. We must do more than follow Jesus Christ. Disciples of Jesus have been raised to a new order of Being. They have been raised by God to the position for which man was originally created. He is intended to have communion with God and have dominion and rule over all things.

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.”* (John 14:6) Jesus brought the life of God back to every individual who receives Him as Lord. Jesus became the first-born of a new race of men – the sons of God through whom the life and power of God flows into this world and to whom death has no more power.

I rejoiced one day as the Lord revealed this fact. I was reading through the Gospel of Luke and came across *“... which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.”* (Luke 3:38)

Adam was the son of God!

When Adam was originally formed, he was made in the image of God and was given dominion over every living thing. He would never die! However, when he chose to disobey God, the life (nature) of God left him. He became a servant and a son to Satan and subject to death. All mankind became heirs of death and Satan’s dominion.

Jesus is called the new Adam – the first born of God’s new creation to restore life and sonship to His people. Those of Jesus’ day had difficulty receiving him as the son of God.

“The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus

answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemist; because I said I am the son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.” (John 10:38)

Jesus is the Son of God – The New Adam! God then raised Jesus from the dead, honoring Him as Lord of all and King of kings.

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order. Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1st Corinthians 15:21-23) And so it is written, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus Christ] was made a quickening spirit.” (1st Corinthians 15:45)

Jesus said, *“I am the way, truth, and life.” “My words are spirit and they are life.”* Jesus’ words and actions bring the life of God to those who receive Him. Because our lineage from Adam brought death to us, Jesus said, *“You must be born again”* (John 3:7) if we are to have life abundantly now and eternally to come.

Disciples of Jesus desire and receive the life of God by confessing with their mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord and the Son of God, and by believing in their hearts that he is raised from the dead.

“But to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the authority [power, privilege, right] to become the children [sons] of God that is, to those who believe in [adhere to, trust in and rely on] His Name; who owe their birth neither to bloods, nor to the will of the flesh [that of physical impulse] nor to the will of man [that of a natural father], but to God. They are born of God!” (John 1:12-13 Amplified Bible)

We who have received Jesus are sons of God. All people since Adam and Eve desired to be God. Satan was removed from heaven because of his

desire to take God's position. This was the same temptation he brought to Eve. (Genesis 3:5)

The disciples of Jesus, however, lay no claim on earning their position. This is the difference between Jesus' disciples and the religious of the world. We are not worthy nor have we earned our position as sons of God. **God has declared us sons, as we have received Jesus.** Apart from Jesus we have no right or privilege to be called sons of God. Apart from Jesus, we are nothing and have no life of God in us. In Jesus, we have authority and dominion over all things, even to the point of judging the fallen angels and the world at the last day. (1st Corinthians 6:2-3)

Disciples' lives are submitted to God. Their fondest goal and purpose is to live for Christ in thought, word, and deed. Such a privilege has been granted to them to be available and yielded to the leading of God Himself. Disciples recognize that they are no longer their own, but they belong to God for His service. Joy unspeakable belongs to the disciples. They hope and wait upon their Lord's every word and direction, resting in His love.

"For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me," Jesus said. (John 6:38) *"My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work."* (John 4:34) So it is with Jesus' true disciples. They do not seek for themselves but for what God desires. They are not dependent upon themselves or others to supply them, for they look to God as their defender, protector, provider, counselor, and teacher. The disciple does not lead, but looks to God for direction that he might fulfill God's purpose for his life. The exaltation of Jesus through his life is his calling.

The disciple seeks to give glory only to God. If he would seek glory and try to please men, he would not be able to please and give glory to God. He recognizes that men will not always love him as a result of his living for God, but he is not deterred from seeking to live to the glory of God. He knows this is why he was created. He knows that to seek to be recognized and favored before men means that he must compromise God's word and lose his reward from God. He is in this world, but not of this world. The disciple's citizenship is in heaven. Our allegiance belongs to God, not to men. The disciple honors this world's authority because of his love for God

from whom all authority is established. (Romans 13:1) However, he seeks honor only from God.

“I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.”
(John 5:30-32)

“I receive not honor from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?”
(John 5:41-44)

“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.” (John 7:16-18)

The disciple realizes that only as he lives for God, following and obeying God’s word, is he really free to realize God in him, the mystery of ages, and fulfill his calling to be a minister of reconciliation in this world. Being free from bondage to self, others, Satan, sin, sickness and death, he can set others free by the name that set him free – Jesus.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever. If the Son,

therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:34-36)

The disciple will continue to meditate upon God’s word and promises day and night, and everything he does will prosper – to God’s glory and the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus. He will study to show himself a workman approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth. He understands that it is his responsibility to use the faith that God has produced in him by acting in obedience to what God says to do. By so doing, God will perform the work. For instance, God says, *“Lay hands on the sick and they will recover.”* The disciple understands that God is talking to him and he goes and lays hands on the sick (or those he is directed to pray for). God is responsible to do the work.

The first time I ever laid hands on someone to pray for his healing, a voice came to me (in my head) saying, “Randy, what if he isn’t healed? – You will make a fool out of yourself!” I rejected this and prayed the prayer of faith saying, “It is your word, Lord, and I know and am fully convinced you are able and will do that which you have said you will do!” My responsibility is to lay hands and pray the prayer of faith. God’s responsibility is to heal. The person was healed!

The disciple continues in God’s word because he is convinced and knows that it is the truth and it brings life into every situation. The word of God sets people free. The disciple knows that his persuasiveness does not and cannot do what God’s word can, for the word is spirit and life, and it will deliver God’s people as it is spoken. The disciple not only seeks to know God’s word for himself and to share with others, but he is convinced that it is the only way to victory and life. Therefore, he walks by faith in God’s word and not by what he may see in a situation or what men may tell him. He knows it is impossible that what God says not happen when he acts in faith and obedience upon God’s word.

The disciple knows that he can come boldly before the throne of God because the Father loves him and Jesus is his great high priest. He knows that as he abides in Jesus, and His words abide in him, he can ask whatever he will, and it will be done for him that the Father would receive glory, his joy might be full, and others might be delivered. Praise God! Prayer and

praise is important to the disciple because this is how he communicates with his heavenly Father in Jesus' name.

The disciples' desire is to be abundantly fruitful in their lives to glorify God. They realize that for fruit to come from their lives they cannot be any way but yielded and obedient to God's way of doing things. By doing so, they are blessed, and everyone who comes into contact with them will glorify God.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that he bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” (John 15:7-2)

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34-35)

The disciple himself is blessed as he is obedient to God, and others are blessed as the disciple is about his calling – to be a minister of reconciliation or ambassador for Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:19)

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; the works that I do

shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:10-14)

The greater miracles which Jesus said his disciples will do are people becoming “born again” and filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not do either of these works in His ministry. However, this is the purpose of the disciple’s ministry – to proclaim the good news (gospel) that this world might receive the love of God in Jesus and the reconciliation which God has provided for all mankind.

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 10:8-11)

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:13-15)

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

The disciple has been sent out for only one purpose – to make disciples by teaching God’s word and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The disciple realizes that he is not alone. God is with him and will empower him for this calling. *“And you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be my witnesses... to the uttermost parts of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8)

The disciple understands that by sharing Jesus in word and action, people will receive the life of God as they, too, confess the need in their lives and ask the Father to forgive them. *“Come unto my life, Jesus. I confess Jesus as my Lord, and I believe in my heart He is risen from the dead.”*

The disciple understands that he cannot hide his light under a cover. His actions alone will not present salvation to others. They must **hear** the Good News of Jesus. *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Romans 10:17) Every disciple is to know the plan of salvation of God for His people and be willing and able to share with others what Jesus did for them personally as well as for other people.

The disciple’s life of love will call attention to there being something different about him. There will also be signs confirming God’s word (that God reveals) as every disciple goes out in Jesus’ name sharing God’s word boldly.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
(Mark 16:17-20)

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:19-20)

The potential for each disciple to fulfill his calling is based on his obedience to God's word which is not grievous but a joy. As a disciple acts on God's word, God's power and victory flows into his life and the life of others accomplishing His purpose.

No disciple will ever forget that it is God which works in him both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13) *“Being confident of this very thing, that he [God] which hath begun a good work in him will perform [complete] it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* (Philippians 1:6)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Seven
The Son's Heart

As every disciple desires to be “great” in the kingdom of God, many wonderful things will happen in this world. We know that to become great in the kingdom of God means that we become the servant of all. (Matthew 23:11, Luke 22:24-27, Mark 9:33-35) *“If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all,”* Jesus said. (Mark 9:35)

Remember, to be a minister of God is to serve Him and His people – to be a servant, putting aside one's own will to follow the will and purpose of God in behalf of others.

Since we have now been declared “friends” and “sons” of God through the blood of Jesus Christ and are no longer called servants, we willingly become servants to perform God's purposes for others as Jesus did for us. We humble ourselves before God and people, as Christ did, that God's purpose might be accomplished to His glory.

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not, what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that he should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.” (John 15:12-17)

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:4)

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:1-11)

“We who are strong [in our convictions and of robust faith] ought to bear with the failings and the frailties and the tender scruples of the weak, [we ought to help carry the doubts and qualms of others] and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us make it a practice to please (make happy) his neighbor for his good and for his true welfare, to edify him [to strengthen him and build him up spiritually]. For Christ did not please Himself [gave no thought to His own interests] but, as it is written, The reproaches and abuses of those who reproached and abused you fell on Me. For whatever was thus written in former days was written for our instruction, that by [our steadfast and patient] endurance and the encouragement [drawn] from the Scriptures we might hold fast and cherish hope. Now may the God Who gives the power of patient endurance (steadfastness) and Who supplies encouragement, grant you to live in such mutual harmony and such full sympathy with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus. That together you may [unanimously] with united hearts and one voice, praise and glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). Welcome and receive [to your hearts] one another, then, even as Christ has welcomed and received you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ (the Messiah), became a servant and a minister to the circumcised (the Jews) in order to show God’s truthfulness and honesty by confirming (verifying) the promises [given] to our fathers, And [also in order] that the Gentiles (nations) might glorify God for His mercy [not covenanted] to them. As it is written, Therefore I will praise You among the Gentiles and sing praises to Your name.”
(Romans 15:1-9 Amplified Bible)

To have a servant’s heart, we must prefer or count others more important than ourselves. We are to have the mind of Christ. Jesus was to become a servant, offering his own life for us that we might have the life of God. He did not consider Himself. He considered God and others. He knew that if he did not offer his own blood, we would have no hope of salvation and God’s plan for us would not be fulfilled. Jesus was willing to become a servant to all men. The Father God then highly exalted Jesus’ name above every name in heaven and earth.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”
(James 4:10)

“He who would be great in the kingdom of God must become the servant of all.” (Matthew 20:26)

We are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. He has set before us the example or image of a servant of God to minister to others that they may have God’s life. This may mean that we must give up what we want to do or think or feel. We will not give up God’s word, but we will have to give of ourselves.

Someone may need some help. The servant does not seek himself. In 1st Corinthians 13 we find that love does not seek its own self. (verse 5)

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he [Jesus] died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again... “Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2nd Corinthians 5:14-15, 17)

In Jesus, God has made us new. We no longer serve our old selves anymore. God has given us a new self. The new self wants to seek and do the things of God, fulfilling its calling to be an ambassador for Christ.

The son’s heart desires to be obedient to God’s word because of love for Him and others. Jesus said, *“If you love me, you keep my commandments.”* “The measure of our love for God is our obedience.” Jesus said to them. My Jesus says that his life consists in doing the will of His Father and completing His Father’s work. Jesus was obedient to all that his Father had told him to do and say.

God has given each of us a calling. We need to find out what it is and be faithful to fulfill it. Our life consists of Jesus who lives in us.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

A son’s heart is faithful and loyal. *“Confidence in an unfaithful man in a time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint.”* (Proverbs

25:19) If a servant is unfaithful to fulfill his duties, nothing gets accomplished and projects are ruined.

When God tells us something, we will be faithful immediately to do what He tells us that His plan be accomplished. When we are obedient to go the “extra mile,” it allows God’s grace to flow through us to touch people to change their lives by encountering Jesus through us. The people will see that there is really something more available to them for abundant life – Jesus.

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17)

We can hinder the work of God through us if we are not obedient. Because we love Jesus, we desire to be obedient.

Say with me, “My desire today is to do God’s word!”

The son’s heart trusts and is trustworthy. *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy path. Be not wise in thine own eyes. Fear [reverence] the Lord and depart from evil.”* (Proverbs 3:5-7)

If you went to your servants and told them to do something, do you expect them to stand there and say, “Why do you want me to do this?” or “I don’t understand what purpose this will serve.”

What kind of servant would that be? – unfaithful, disobedient, disloyal, untrusting. Many times the Lord may tell us to do something. “Stop the car, pull over and meet these people.” If we don’t stop, God can’t do the work there. We are not to ask, “Why?” – but to do it! After we follow God’s leading, we often find out why He was prompting us to see the person or do what we were led to do.

After we are obedient we may understand why God wanted us to do what He said to do. We must trust that God knows what He is doing. A son’s heart operates by faith.

The son's heart is "*He [God] must increase, and I must decrease.*" Jesus must increase in our lives and we must decrease. This attitude gives a disciple balance. As we go out, God is doing the work through us. We are not doing the work. All the glory must go to our Master, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our Lord! However, we are no longer His servants, but friends. (John 15:15)

We do not have to serve Jesus. He gives us the choice. At the cross, He defeated the power of Satan, sin, and death. All bondage was broken. Before the cross, we were not free to serve anyone but Satan who is the lord of this world. When we received Jesus as Lord, we entered into God's family.

Jesus said, "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.*" (John 15:16-17)

God will never violate our will or coerce us into anything. "*Today I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; choose life!*" (Deuteronomy 30:19) God wants us to have life and blessing. He has already provided the choice for us. All we need to do is receive it.

Once we have received Jesus as Lord, God will not force us to be obedient. Yieldness is to be freely and joyfully our response of love to God. He will not force us to be yielded and receive blessings. It is our choice.

The son's heart is grateful. I now serve the Lord Jesus because I am grateful for his love. Joyful obedience flows out of a thankful heart to God. How great is God's love for us.

"To whom much is forgiven the same loves much." (Luke 7:47) As we recognize the depth of God's love for us (God did not have to do it), gratefulness and thanks well up within us and the strong desire to do what our heavenly Father would have us to do.

If the love of Jesus does not mean much to us, then we will not love others much. I believe the degree of our love and obedience is the measure of how grateful we are to God. Jesus died for all men, as much as he died for me.

Jesus paid the debt that he did not owe. It was our debt. Jesus took our place and gave us his right standing with God. (2nd Corinthians 5:21) I know of nothing so wonderful!!!

Jesus then arose from the dead. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us who believe. (Ephesians 1:19-20) Praise God!

“What does the Lord want me to do?” you might be asking yourself.

“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He [God] hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy [and kindness] and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:6-8)

In the Hebrew, it means “humble thyself to walk” with thy God. Jesus has already paid the price for us not to be separated from God by giving his own blood.

“What are we to do for God?” people ask. “What can I give?” – Understand, God has already given His finest. He is not looking for us to give things to Him. Nothing we give could even begin to measure up to what He has already done for us.

God wants us simply to be yielded to His purposes, that He might reflect His love to others through us. God desires us to reflect His qualities: integrity of word and deed, justice, mercy and kindness, love, etc.

The son’s heart says, “Lord, I am willing and available. Send me!” God searches throughout the world for someone through whom He can move. Are you willing and available when God calls?

A son's heart says, "I'm ready Father! I'm willing and I'm able!" Show me what you want to be done and I will do it." The Father does not have to run around looking for His son. The son is waiting upon his Father.

The Lord is challenging each of us to wait on the Lord. To "wait" does not mean to sit around doing nothing. To the contrary, a waiter serves. We are to be about our business, yielded to God in whatever position or situation we are in, and God will begin to direct us – God will start using us right where we are in the situations we are in and the people we are with.

In summary, the son's heart prefers others more important than himself. His love is so great that he is willing to lay down his life for his brother. Jesus Christ is our example. He does not seek himself, but is joyfully obedient, faithful, seeking God's goals and purposes. He trusts and is trustworthy, willing to carry out orders even if he does not understand the purpose behind them.

The son's heart is grateful to his Father. This is the key to being a son, for we are not forced into being slaves. There was a time when we were forced to be slaves. Satan could run us around at his will to do his bidding, and he would do anything he wanted to do with us: afflict our bodies, minds, etc. We were in bondage, facing the second death where we would burn with him. However, Jesus Christ entered into this world and gave His own life for us, breaking the bondage of Satan over our spirits, minds and bodies. Out of a grateful response we now say, "Satan, I'm free to switch masters. I choose Jesus Christ as my Lord, and I'm His servant." Jesus has freed us and we now choose out of gratefulness to serve and live for Him before anyone or anything else in this world.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest happily, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down

first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Luke 14:26-35)

“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you. There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s. But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10:28-31)

The son’s heart is humble, recognizing his place before God and his place before fellow men as God’s ambassador to them to serve them in love.

“So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John 13:12-17)

“Who among us will be the greatest of the disciples? And he came to Capernaun: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be

first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.” (Mark 9:33-35)

“But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Eight
The Life of Praise and Holiness

As I was studying and meditating upon God's word, the Lord revealed to me what all his disciples' purpose for existence was.

*“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: **That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:9-14)*

What a privilege! What a high calling! God has made us to be sons of God *“that we should be to the praise of his glory.”* It dawned on me that if my life as one of God's disciples is consistent with His word (as to whom I have become in Jesus, a son of God), then people will see what I do and say, “Your God is really wonderful!!”

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:4-10)

I knew that I was the righteousness of God in Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:21). I had His life because of His free gift in Jesus. I rejoiced in that fact. However, the Lord began to show me that there is more to it now because of being declared the righteousness of God in Christ. **The Lord showed me that I must begin to act like who I am. If I am a son of God, then I must begin to act and respond like a son of God.**

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1st John 3:1-11)

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48).

“For we are his [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which

had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1st Peter 2:9-10)

God’s disciples are created to give God glory by our good works which are the fruit of obedience produced from God living within us. I began to see myself as a vessel dedicated and set apart only for the use of my heavenly Father through which the Holy Spirit of God would flow to manifest the love of God in this world.

The Lord told me, “Remind people to be submissive to [their] magistrates and authorities, to be obedient, to be prepared and willing to do any upright and honorable work; To slander or abuse or speak evil of no one, to avoid being contentious, to be forbearing (yielding, gentle and conciliatory) and to show unqualified courtesy toward everybody. For we also were once thoughtless and senseless, obstinate and disobedient, deluded and misled; [we too were once] slaves to all sorts of cravings and pleasures, wasting our days in malice and jealousy and envy, hateful (hated, detestable) and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of god our Savior to man [as man] appeared, He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity and mercy, by [the] cleansing [bath] of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Which He poured out [so] richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. [And He did it in order] that we might be justified by His grace (by His favor, wholly undeserved) [that we might be acknowledged and counted as conformed to the Divine will in purpose, thought and action], and that we might become heirs of eternal life according to [our] hope. This message is most trustworthy, and concerning these things I want you to insist steadfastly, so that those who have believed in (trusted in, relied on) God may be careful to apply themselves to honorable occupations and to doing good, for such things are [not only] excellent and right [in themselves], but [they are] good and profitable for the people.” (Titus 3:1-8, Amplified Bible)

Read 1st Corinthians 10:12-24, 31-33; 1st Corinthians 6:9-20.

Since God made us new creatures (2nd Corinthians 5:17), and we (and the lusts and passions of the flesh) have been crucified with Christ (Galatians

5:24-26), God freed us to have life in the Spirit. Now we must choose to walk in the Spirit in our daily lives.

Read Romans 6:3-13

God is calling us to exhibit Himself in this world by our living to His praise and glory. We are to offer from a thankful heart the sacrifice of praise from our lips and do actions towards others that reflect our faith in God.

“Through Him therefore let us constantly and at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name. Do not forget or neglect to do kindness and good, to be generous and distribute and contribute to the needy [of the church as embodiment and proof of fellowship], for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Hebrews 13:15-16, Amplified Bible)

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul’ then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” (Isaiah 58:6-11)

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlieth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit

the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:25-27)

I praise God for His love for us. If believers are to be holy in actions and thought, I am becoming increasingly aware of the importance of dealing with our minds and bodies. Many believers wonder why they are still controlled by their fleshly desires and bad habits after receiving Jesus. Let me tell you what was revealed to me.

One morning just before I arose for the day, I was meditating upon the things of God. As I was resting, a vibrantly loud voice inside me said, “*Be NOT conformed to the world!!!*”! It was as if my whole body shook. I sat straight up and shouted out loud. “Be not conformed to the world!” Which of course woke up the entire household. I thought everyone had already heard this voice which shook the house, but apparently no one else had heard it. Later, I understood it to be the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking within me.

God was instructing me not to be conformed to the world. Later He reminded me about that portion of His word.

“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude] so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].” (Romans 12:1, 2 Amplified Bible)

I began to understand the importance of our entire being – spirit, mind, and body – being dedicated to God’s purposes. I was to dedicate my body to be used only according to His word. My mind was to be renewed and transformed by the Word so that I would no longer seek the world’s ways or respond to situations the way the ungodly would respond.

It arose in my spirit that my life truly was no longer my own, but all of me belonged to God since I was purchased with a price – the blood of Jesus – and then I received Jesus as my Lord.

As God had freely given Himself for me, so I freely had given myself to Him. I have never regretted it. God is so good! I realized that only as I daily brought my body under subjection to God and allowed my mind to be conformed to His word and ways, only then could God really begin to fulfill all the abundance which He had in store for my life. Even more important, only then could I in thought, word, and deed be to the praise of my heavenly Father's glory. This is a daily process as we allow ourselves to be conformed to Jesus Christ.

I believe that God would challenge all believers today to begin to think His thoughts and to do His deeds by the power of the Holy Spirit in them.

“If then you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead], aim at and seek the [rich, eternal treasures] that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth. For [as far as this world is concerned] you have died, and your [new, real] life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ Who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in [the splendor of His] glory. So kill (deadens, deprive of power) the evil desire lurking in your members [those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed sin]: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry

(the deifying of self and other created things instead of God). It is on account of these [very sins] that the [holy] anger of God is ever coming upon the sons of disobedience (those who are obstinately opposed to the divine will). Among whom you also once walked, when you were living in and addicted to [such practices]. But now put away and rid yourselves [completely] of all these things: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses and slander and foulmouthed abuse and shameful utterances from your lips! Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old (unregenerate) self with its evil practices, And have clothed yourselves with the new (spiritual self), which is [ever in the process of being] renewed and remolded into [fuller and more perfect

knowledge upon] knowledge, after the image (the likeness) of Him Who created it. [In this new creation all distinctions vanish]; there is no room for and there can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, [nor difference between nations whether alien] barbarians or Scythians [who are the more savage of all], nor slave or free man; but Christ is all and in all [everything and everywhere to all men, without distinction of person]. Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's own chosen ones picked (His representatives), [who are] purified and holy and well-beloved [by God Himself, by putting on behavior marked by] tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of yourselves, gentle ways, [and] patience [which is tireless, long-suffering and has the power to endure whatever comes, with good temper]. Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference (a grievance or complaint) against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has [freely] forgiven you, so must you also [forgive]. And above all these [put on] love and enfold

yourselves with the bond of perfectness [which binds everything together completely in ideal harmony]. And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from the Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds in that peaceful state] to which [as members of Christ's one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always]. Let the word [spoken by] the Christ, the Messiah, have its home [in your hearts and minds] and dwell in you in [all its] richness, as you teach and admonish and train one another in all insight and intelligence and wisdom [in spiritual things, and as you sing] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to God with [His] grace in your hearts. And whatever you do [no matter what it is] in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in [dependence upon] His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:1-17, Amplified Bible)

You might say it is difficult to be like God wants you to be. After all, Paul said, "The good that I want to do, I don't do," and Jesus said, "*The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"

Today I want you to know that you and I have been created and “born again” to be to the praise of God’s glory, and we are able to be to the praise of God’s glory. How come? *“Because greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.”* (1st John 4:4)

God has redeemed (paid the price for) our entire being and has given us the power of Jesus Christ (His word) to overcome and do all things to His glory. We now **choose** what we want to think or what we want to do. Each individual chooses how far he or she wants to press into the Christian walk. Believers will be judged, not for their sins but for their faithfulness to God and how they have used the faith God has given them.

Once I understood that God has purposed all believers to be to the praise of His glory, I became excited inside. If God had purposed me to be a shining light (in darkness) and a salt (preservative) for Him in this world, then I must be able to do it. I purposed in my heart not to let anything stand in the way of my being and doing what God has declared me to be and do. I challenge you to do the same.

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste (its strength, its quality) how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a peck-measure but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble and good deeds, and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:13-16, Amplified Bible)

“Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves], that you may show yourselves to be blameless and guileless, innocent and uncontaminated, children of God without blemish (faultless, unrebukable) in the midst of a crooked and wicked generation – (spiritually) perverted and perverse. Among whom you are seen as bright lights – stars or beacons shining out clearly – in the (dark) world; Holding out (to it) and offering (to all men) the Word of Life, so that in the day of Christ I may have something of which exultantly to rejoice and glory in that I did not run the race in vain or spend my labor to no purpose.” (Philippians 2:14-16, Amplified Bible)

It is not difficult for me to be a Christian because my nature which is born of God is to be a Christian. It can be no other way. I simply need to bring my body and mind in line with God's word to understand and carry out His purposes.

How do we do this?

1. Your calling is to be to the praise of God's glory.
2. You are a new creature in Christ, old things being passed away.
3. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. God lives in you.
4. You are not your own, but God's.
5. The power of Satan, your own flesh and the worldliness is **already** broken from you.
6. Now seek what God's word says to do in any given situation.
7. Confess the Word with your mouth, meditate, and think over how God would have you respond in a situation. (Your new spirit knows and desires what you should do. It is your mind and body we are dealing with here.)
8. Purpose to do whatever God says to do, simply because He says to do it.
9. Maintain a continued consciousness of praise to the God who is in you. (Praying in the spirit and speaking God's word to yourself and others.)
10. Avoid the counsel of the ungodly (they may even be believers who are not counseling by God's word.)

Read Psalm 1:1-3 and Philippians 3:7-21

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
(STUDY SECTION)
Chapter Nine
Love's Application

Directions for action for New Testament Disciples:

GENERAL LOVE ATTITUDES – 1st Corinthians 13, Philippians 2, Ephesians 4:22-5:2, Romans 12, Colossians 3, Romans 13:8-14

TOWARD:

Authorities –

Titus 3:1; Romans 13:1-5; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 2nd Peter 2:10;
1st Peter 2:13-17; 1st Thessalonians 4:12-13

Body and mind –

1st Corinthians 3-16-23, 6:9-20; Philippians 4:8-9; Romans 12:1-2

Borrowing –

Romans 13:8; Deuteronomy 28:12; Psalm 37:21; Proverbs 22:7

Children –

Ephesians 6:1-3

Christian community life –

Romans 12:3-8, 14:7-9; 1st Corinthians 12:12-27; Hebrews 10:24-25;
1st Peter 4:10-11

Conscience issues –

1st Corinthians 8, 10:23-33; Romans 14; 1st John 3:19-22

Court cases –

1st Corinthians 6:1-8; Matthew 5:40

Division –

1st Corinthians 1:9-13, 3:19, 18-23; James 3:13-17; Ephesians 4:1-6;
Romans 16:17-20; Jude 16-19

Enemies –

Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 5:38-48

Erring Christians –

Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:11-20; 1st Corinthians 5; 2nd Corinthians 2:6-11;
James 5:19-20; 1st John 5:16

Fellow believers –

Philippians 2:1-5, 14; 1st Thessalonians 4:11, 14; Galatians 6:2, 10;
Hebrews 10:24, 12:12-15; 1st Peter 4:8; Jude 21-23

Fellowship with unbelievers –

Ephesians 5:6-17; 2nd Corinthians 6:14-18; 2nd Peter 2:7-8

Heretics –

2nd John 5-11; Romans 16:17-18; 1st Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 3:10-11;
Matthew 7:15-20; 1st John 2:18-29, 4:1-6

Husbands –

1st Corinthians 11:3, 16:13-14; 1st Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:28, 33;
Colossians 3:19

Judging –

1st Corinthians 4:1-5; James 4:11-12; Matthew 7:1-5

Laziness and sloth –

2nd Thessalonians 3:6-12, 15, 16; Romans 12:11; Hebrews 6:9-12

Making future plans –

James 4:13-16; Proverbs 3:5-6

Marriage and divorce –

1st Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5:22-33, Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 19:3-12,
5:27-32; Luke 16:15-18

Oaths and vows –

Matthew 5:33-37, James 5:12

Oppressed of Satan (sickness and demons) –

Mark 16:17-18; Luke 4:18-19; James 5:13-16; Luke 10:18-20

Parents –

Ephesians 6:4-5; Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:4-8; Colossians 3:21;
Matthew 18:10

Persecution for Word –

James 5:8-11, Philippians 1:27-30; Romans 12:14; 1st Peter 2:19-25,
3:13-18, 4:12-19; Matthew 5:10-12, 10:16-40

Poor and needy –

James 2:14-17; 2nd Corinthians 9:6-15; Romans 12:13, 1st John 3:16-18

Revenge –

1st Thessalonians 4:15; Romans 12:17-18

Satan's wisdom vs. God's Wisdom –

James 3:13-18

Seeking wealth and covetousness –

Hebrews 13:5-6; 1st Timothy 6:5-14

Sign seekers –

Matthew 16:1-4, 4:7; John 20-29

Strangers and unfortunate –

Hebrews 13:1-3; Matthew 25:34-46; 3rd John 4:5

Stronger or weaker Christians –

Romans 14, 15:7

Taxes –

Romans 13:6-7; Matthew 22:17-21

Those of position and common degree –

James 2:1-13; Romans 12:16

To God –

2nd Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 14:7-8; Matthew 4:4, 10, 16:24-28, 22:37; Hebrews 13:15-16

To the rich –

1st Timothy 6:17-19

To those who knowing the truth willfully reject God's word –

Matthew 7:6, 10:14-15, 15:12-14, 24:8-14

True religion –

James 1:26-27; Isaiah 58:6-11

Unsaved –

Philippians 2:14-16; 2nd Corinthians 4:1-6; 1st Peter 2:11-12, 3:15-16; Matthew 9:12-13, 28:19-20

Use of tongue –

James 3:1-12; Ephesians 4:29, 5:4-7; Matthew 12:34-37; 1st Peter 4:11

Users and abusers –

2nd Thessalonians 3:13; Matthew 5:41-42

When arguments arise –

Colossians 3:13; 1st Peter 3:8-12

When doing good –

Ephesians 6:6-8, Colossians 3:23-25; 2nd Thessalonians 3:13; Galatians 6:9-10; Hebrews 13:16; Matthew 6:1-6; 3rd John 11; 1st Peter 4:9; James 4:17

When someone prospers or grieves –

Romans 12-15; 1st Corinthians 12:26

When you are wronged or offended –

Matthew 18:10-35, 6:14-15

When you have wronged or offended someone –

1st John 1:9; James 5:16; Matthew 5:21-26, 18:7-9

Wives –

1st Peter 3:1-6; Titus 2:3-5; 1st Corinthians 11:3, 7, 9

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
(STUDY SECTION)
Chapter Ten
Love's Wisdom – Taken from Proverbs

Proverbs is a book of practical wisdom for the seeker of God. God is a searcher of the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. As His love disciples, we must learn the wisdom of God which will cause us to understand our motives and other's motives that we might prosper in God's way and avoid the pitfalls of Satan.

Included here are a few topics recorded in Proverbs. There are other areas which you can study on your own. How we detect and respond to wrong attitudes in ourselves and others will determine whether we succeed or fail.

Arrogance:

8:13, 19:25, 21:4, 21:24

Backbiting:

11:9, 25:23, 26:22

Contentiousness:

3:30, 10:12, 13:10, 17:14, 18:6, 18:18-19, 19:13, 21:19, 22:10, 23:29-30, 26:20-21, 27:15, 29:9

Deception:

6:17, 10:18, 11:18, 12:5, 12:17, 12:20, 14:8, 14:25, 19:1, 20:17, 23:6-8, 24:28-29, 26:17-19, 26:24, 26:26, 27:6, 29:13

Drunkenness:

20:1, 21:17, 23:19-21, 23:29-35

False Witnessing:

6:16-19, 12:17-19, 12:22, 13:5, 14:5, 14:25, 17:4, 19:5, 19:9, 19:28-29, 21:28, 24:28-29, 25:18

Fear:

3:21-26, 10:24, 20:2, 28:14, 29:25, 31:30

Flattery:

2:16, 7:5, 20:19, 28:23, 29:5

Forwardness:

2:10-15, 3:32, 4:24, 6:12-15, 8:8, 8:13, 10:31-32, 11:20, 12:8, 16:28-30, 17:20, 21:8, 22:5

Gluttony:

23:21

Greed:

1:19, 15:27, 28:22

Hypocrisy:

11:9

Meddling:

20:19, 24:21, 26:17, 20:3

Mocking:

14:9, 17:5, 20:1, 30:17

Nastiness:

14:29, 19:2, 21:5, 25:8, 29:20

Pride:

6:16-19, 8:13, 11:2, 13:10, 14:3, 15:25, 16:5, 16:18-19, 18:12, 21:24, 26:12, 28:25, 29:23

Scorn:

1:22, 3:34, 9:7-8, 9:12, 10:12, 13:1, 14:6, 15:12, 17:19, 19:25, 19:29, 20:3, 21:11, 21:24, 22:10, 22:24-25, 24:9, 25:8, 26:24-26, 28:25, 29:8, 29:22

Simple minded – foolishness:

1:22, 1:32, 7:7, 7:22, 8:5, 10:13, 12:15-16, 14:7, 16:22, 17:7, 17:10, 17:12, 17:16, 17:18, 17:21, 17:24-25, 17:28, 18:2, 18:6-7, 18:13, 19:1-3, 19:10, 19:13, 19:20, 20:1, 21:15-16, 21:20, 22:15, 23:9, 24:7, 24:10, 26:1-12, 27:3, 27:22, 28:26, 29:9, 29:11, 29:20, 30:32

Sloth:

12:24, 12:27, 15:19, 18:9, 19:24, 21:25-26, 22:13, 24:30, 26:13-15

Talebearing and lying:

6:16-19, 10:18, 11:13, 12:6, 12:19, 12:22, 13:5, 14:5, 14:25, 18:8, 19:5, 19:9, 20:19, 26:20-28

Unfaithfulness:

25:19

Whispering:

16:28

Wicked and evil people:

1:16, 2:12-16, 2:22, 3:25, 3:29, 3:33, 4:14-19, 5:22-23, 6:12-15, 6:16-19, 6:20-16, 7:10, 8:7, 9:7, 10:2-3, 10:6-7, 10:11, 10:16, 10:20, 10:25, 10:27, 10:30, 10:32, 11:5, 11:7-8, 11:10-11, 11:18-29, 12:5-7, 12:10, 12:12-13, 12:20, 12:26, 13:5-6, 16:4, 16:27-28, 17:4, 17:11, 17:13, 17:15, 17:23, 18:5, 19:28, 21:10, 24:1-2, 24:19-22, 28:1, 28:4-5, 28:12, 28:28, 29:6-7, 29:16, 29:27

Wisdom:

1:5-6, 2:1-22, 3:1-35, 4:5-7, 5:1-2, 7:1-4, 8:11-12, 8:33-36, 9:1, 9:8-12, 10:1, 10:5, 10:8-9, 10:14, 12:1, 12:8, 12:15-16, 12:18, 12:23, 13:1, 13:10, 13:14-16, 13:20, 14:1, 14:3, 14:6, 14:8, 14:11-12, 14:16, 14:18, 14:24, 14:32-33, 14:35, 15:2, 15:5, 15:7, 15:20-21, 15:24, 15:31, 15:33, 16:16, 16:21, 16:23, 17:2, 17:4, 17:10, 17:20, 17:26, 21:11-12, 21:20, 21:22, 22:17, 23:15, 23:19, 23:24, 24:5-6, 24:23, 24:26, 26:12, 26:16, 27:11, 28:7, 28:11, 28:26, 29:9-11

Wrath:

11:4, 11:23, 12:16, 14:16-17, 14:29, 15:1, 15:18, 19:19, 21:14, 21:24, 22:24-25, 24:17-18, 27:3-4, 29:8, 29:22, 30:33

THE LOVE'S DISCIPLE
(STUDY SECTION)
Chapter Eleven
Ministering Disciples' Attitudes and Actions

As ministering disciples of Jesus, it is important we develop attitudes and actions which suit our calling. Paul, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, instructed Timothy and Titus about practical guidelines for their personal discipline and the discipline of the ministry which God had given them.

Included here for your study are various attitudes and actions listed in 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus. We would encourage you to read through these books and underline in separate colors the different attitudes and actions listed. Then meditate upon how the attitudes can be developed within you. Determine the meanings of each quality.

Attitudes to Develop:

1st Timothy —

1. love out of a pure heart and good conscience and faith unfeigned (1:5)
2. pray without wrath and doubting (2:8)
3. be an example in charity, spirit, faith, purity (4:12)
4. be not neglectful of God's gift (4:14)
5. meditate upon these things (4:15)
6. take heed of (examine) yourself (4:16)
7. honor elders (5:1-3)
8. don't prefer certain people or show partiality (5:21)
9. keep yourself pure (5:22)
10. avoid and flee world and wealth (6:3-10)
11. seek godliness and contentment (6:6-8)
12. follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (6:11)
13. praise God (6:15-16)

2nd Timothy —

14. desire fellowship (1:3-4)
15. have confidence in others (1:5)

16. have boldness for the Lord and His word (1:8)
17. have boldness of conviction (1:12)
18. be strong in grace (2:1)
19. endure (2:3, 10)
20. be pleasing to God (2:4)
21. obey (2:5)
22. be teachable (2:7)
23. be dead to old self, alive to God with new self (2:11)
24. don't strive or quarrel (2:24)
25. be gentle (2:24)
26. be apt to teach (2:24)
27. be patient (2:24)
28. in meekness instruct others (2:25)
29. (Take the qualities listed in 3:2-5 and list the opposite qualities for the attitudes we need developed)
30. be willing to be an example to others (3:10)
31. be willing to undergo persecution for your faith when it arises (3:12)
32. be perfected in all good works (3:17)
33. have long suffering and perseverance (4:2)
34. be not vengeful (4:14)
35. be confident of God's deliverance (4:18)

Titus —

36. be blameless (1:7)
37. be not self-willed (1:7)
38. be not easily angered (1:7)
39. be not given to wine (1:7)
40. be no striker (not violent) (1:7)
41. be not given to filthy lucre (not greedy) (1:7)
42. love hospitality (1:8)
43. love good things (1:8)
44. be sober (1:8)
45. be just (1:8)
46. be holy (1:8)
47. be temperate (1:8)
48. rely on God's word (1:9)
49. don't teach Word for money (1:11)
50. desire consistency of belief and action (1:15-16)

51. have purity of mind and conscience (1:15)
52. in doctrinal matters – be incorruptible (2:7), grave (2:7), sincere (2:7), have sound speech (2:7)
53. don't purloin but show good fidelity (faithfulness) (2:10)
54. deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (2:12)
55. desire to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world (2:12)
56. anticipate Jesus' return (2:13)
57. be zealous of good works (2:14)
58. be gentle, showing meekness to all men (3:2)
59. have balance in witnessing by relying on God's love (3:3-7)

Actions to Perform:

1st Timothy —

1. Concern self with faith building and godly pursuits that edify, and avoid senseless questions, fables, genealogies, babblings, arguments or science. (1st Timothy 1:4, 6:20-21, 2nd Timothy 2:16, Titus 3:9)
2. Pray for all men, especially authorities (1st Timothy 2:1-2) lifting up holy hands (2:8)
3. (Directions for selection of church leaders) (3:1-12)
4. (Directions for dietary sanctification) (4:4-5)
5. Remind people with words of faith and good doctrine (4:6)
6. Refuse profane and old wives' fables, (worldly reasonings and ways) (4:7)
7. Exercise godly pursuits (eternal results). Exercise physically (temporary results) (4:7-8)
8. Let no one despise your youth – be example for believers in word and in way of life (4:12)
9. Pay attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine (4:13)
10. Stir up the gift that is in you (4:14, 2nd Timothy 1:6)
11. Meditate and give yourself completely to God's word and calling (4:15)
12. Examine self and continue in God's truths to save self and others (4:16)
13. Do not rebuke elders, but appeal to them (5:1)
14. Treat older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, younger men as brothers, older men as dads (5:1-2)
15. Honor widows (5:3)
16. (Directions for dealing with widows in church) (5:3-16)
17. Provide for one's family (5:8)
18. Honor and support God's laborers (5:17-18)

19. Do not accuse God's laborers, except by two or three witnesses (5:19)
20. Openly rebuke laborers who have publicly erred (5:20)
21. Do not ordain without proving (5:22)
22. Do not partake in other man's sins – keep self pure (5:22)
23. Flee worldly pursuits. Follow godly ways (6:11)
24. Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold of eternal life. Profess a good profession of faith. (6:12)
25. Obey this commandment (and all commandments) without fail (6:14)
26. (Directions to tell the rich) (6:17-19)

2nd Timothy —

27. Partake of affliction of gospel according to power of God (1:8)
28. Hold fast sound words in faith and love (1:13)
29. Commit what you learn to faithful men who will be able to teach others (2:2)
30. Tell people not to strive about words (2:14)
31. Remind them of truth (2:8-13)
32. Study God's word and rightly interpret it (2:15)
33. Depart from iniquity (2:19) Purge self to be pure vessel (2:21)
34. Flee youthful lusts. Follow God's qualities (2:22)
35. Avoid foolish and unlearned questions which try to create strife (2:23)
36. Do not quarrel with, but instruct, those that oppose themselves (2:24, 25)
37. Turn away from those listed (3:2-5)
38. Continue in truths of God's word (3:14)
39. Preach the word at every opportunity (4:2)
40. Reprove, rebuke, exhort (4:2)
41. Watch, endure afflictions, fulfill your calling, make full proof of your ministry (4:5)

Titus —

42. Delegate authority (1:5)
43. Stop mouths of subvertors of Gospel (1:11) Rebuke them sharply (1:13)
44. Do not follow commandments or traditions of men (1:14)
45. Speak counsel to various age groups (2:1-6)
46. Speak and exhort counsel (2:12-14)
47. Rebuke with all authority (2:15)
48. Remind people to obey authority, do good works, speak evil of no one (3:1-2)
49. Affirm to people to be certain to maintain good works (3:8)

50. Reject a heretic (person who has willfully, knowingly rejected truth) after two admonitions (3:10-11)
51. Instruct people to perform honest trade for earning living (3:14)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Twelve
The Love Disciple's Relationships

I have found in my own personal life and in counseling many others that we all have a basic concern for relationships. We have a desire to be independent, we have a desire to be dependent, we have a desire to be interdependent. The key to understanding the love disciples' relationships is that Jesus Christ be allowed to order their relationships.

At one time love disciples were independent of God, seeking their own way, relying on themselves, or dependent on others to fulfill their desires. They participated with and were interdependent only in so far as it benefited them. They were not able to have a meaningful and fulfilling relationship with anyone because of competitiveness and selfishness. They manipulated and used people so they could benefit. They could never be certain of what others were doing or thinking because they thought everyone else was motivated like themselves. As a result they could not trust or let their feelings out or confide in anyone. They were independent of people. Their outlook was "What can I get from them?" or "What are they trying to get from me?"

When love disciples heard the good news about Jesus, that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes on him will not perish, but have eternal life, they did not at first understand. This type of action was foreign to them. What would God get out of this by giving His only Son? What would Jesus get out of dying for them? What was the catch?

If love disciples (before they received Jesus) would have given up something, it would have been what they did not need or want, or in order to get something from the one to whom they "sacrificed." But God gave and did not ask for anything in return. God simply loves and desires a relationship with us.

We love because God first loved us. The key to the gospel is that God loves and desires relationship with us. When love disciples understand and receive God's love in Jesus Christ, they are transformed. They recognize that "*It is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me.*" (Galatians 2:20)

The three main areas of relationship (independent – dependent – interdependent) change from being self-centered to God-centered and others-centered. Love disciples daily become more and more dependent upon God's sufficiency and ability to meet their every need. *"Trust in the Lord, and lean not to thy own understanding."* (Proverbs 3:5)

They become independent of the world's standards and values as well as the people who profess such values. Their influence is broken, and love disciples do not seek to please men or follow those who do not follow God's ways. Love disciples are able to stand alone in God because *"Greater is He that is in him than he that is in the world."* (1st John 4:4) He is in the world, but independent of it and its ways.

In Jesus, love disciples have been freed to have a relationship with God and others that they have never had before. They do not look to themselves or others any longer for their needs. God is their source. Their delight is in the Lord and His people. They are seeking how they can encourage, support, build up others, and give of themselves as God has given for and to them.

God has given them worth, meaning and purpose, so they need no longer strive, achieve, or compete with others. They are now ministers of God to reconcile people to God and to each other. God is responsible for the increase in their lives and work as they are faithful, yielded and obedient to God.

Love disciples become interdependent as co-laborers with other believers in the body of Christ, each having a special place and function which God has determined. There is only equality and unity in the body of Christ. Harmony continues as each believer keeps his eyes on Jesus, is faithful to his or her calling, and encourages and supports others to fulfill their place and grow in the Lord.

I need you. You need me. We all need Jesus. I praise God for what He does in people, helping them realize His desires for them and this world. God's people are taking their commitment to Christ Jesus and each other seriously, together bearing one another's burdens to Jesus who has freed us to rejoice and be glad.

At this point, I am reminded about some wisdom that God gave to Solomon, *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor, For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. And if one prevail against him, two shall*

withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12)

In these wonderful last days that we are experiencing, we are learning so much about faith and the power of God on behalf of them that believe. God never intended for individuals to fight the good fight of faith alone. Ultimately each of us is responsible for the works we have done for good or bad. However, we are fighting the fight of faith together with the rest of the body of believers.

God’s word says, *“How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight...” (Deuteronomy 32:30)* Just imagine how much power is available when a room of believers are praising God!

The body of Christ is not independent of each other. We are family. In fact, we are closer than family. We are one in the Lord.

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

I thank God for the media ministries which have opened up for myself and other servants of God. However, especially in these last days, we need to understand that sitting in front of the T.V. or listening to the radio is no substitute for working side by side with God’s people in the work of the Lord. I am not talking about promoting churches or ministries. That is God’s business. I am simply talking about getting involved in praising God and encouraging others to grow in the Lord. I can’t encourage you, and you can’t encourage me, if we don’t ever see each other. God desires that believers fellowship in the word of God, the Lord’s Supper, and in doing the work of the ministry.

We are **independent** of the world’s ways. We are **dependent** upon God, not people. We are **inter-dependent** with each other, encouraging one another to look to God and walk obediently in love by faith in His word. We are, indeed, co-laborers with Jesus and each other.

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Thirteen
Love's Unity

As a pastor, one of the things that impresses me the most is people's acceptance of one another within the body of Christ. I thank the Lord that there is developing within His people a greater awareness to love and accept each other as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

In traveling from church to church, I found that there existed many different forms of worship. Some people fold their hands. Some people raise their hands. Some people shout. Some are quiet. Some people like candles, gowns, banners, and paraments. Others prefer simple surroundings. Some like "high church" services with liturgy. Others like "free style" with what appears to have no order. Some allow for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and tongues in worshipping the Lord. Others prefer a different way of their own choosing.

I thank God that people are worshipping Him and lifting Jesus Christ up as Lord, but He is concerned about the attitude of our hearts as we approach Him in worship and in our every day activities.

Some people worship on Saturday. Others on Sunday. Others during the week. Praise God! They are honoring God. Some people eat meat. Others only vegetables. Some drink beer, others do not. Some people dress formally for worship while others dress casually. Some churches hold rummage sales. Others do not.

Over the years, I have found myself surrounded by "traditionalists," "conservatives," "liberals," "charismatics," "denominational," "non-denominational," etc. It seems people often try to label others so they can deal with them. I have laughed and cried before the Lord about this matter.

I was raised in and pastored in a church which believed in and taught me that God's word is truth. However, they did not teach the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and the prayer language (new tongues for private worship of God). Others whom I knew who believed in and were experiencing these operations of the Spirit acted as if (and/or I felt) I was inferior or less "enlightened" than they.

As I purposed to know God more and seek and understand the truth in His word, the Lord began to show me that I too could have the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and the prayer language for my fellowship with Him. I loved God and believed Him, and I began to want these things. When I received, I was ostracized and rejected instead of being accepted for what God had done.

It seems that in our flesh we have the tendency to agree with those who agree with us and condemn, criticize, avoid, and not work with those who are not as “enlightened” as we are. However, this is not the way of the Spirit of God.

As the years have passed, we have seen God do many wonderful workings as a result of people receiving His gifts by faith in His word – salvation, the infilling of the Holy Spirit with evidence of tongues, healings, needs met, etc. We instruct the people always to remember what they once believed and continue to grow in God’s word – believe for all that God says in His word, and be willing to believe for even more because God is able to give far more than we are able to ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20) We instruct them never to put anyone down or criticize those who do not believe what they believe. A few years ago I was not believing the things I see God doing in His ministry today.

We often see people coming into fellowship meetings who have not been taught, nor have they studied or sought God in the areas of faith, prayer, healing, the infilling of the Spirit, etc. They often speak out against such things because they have not experienced them. However, these same people go away knowing that God does reward those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

It is important that we not argue or quarrel, but patiently teach, remembering that there was and still are times when we ourselves may be limiting God by our mind’s operation. I have seen God respond to my desire for closer fellowship. I have seen Jesus heal many people in response to believing prayer. We have seen God (through the laying on of hands) fill many people with the Holy Spirit, and they praise God in new tongues. We have confronted demons many times and seen people delivered. I cannot deny these things. I know they are for today by the power of God through faith in His word. Even if I hadn’t had the privilege to see these wonderful workings of God, it would not mean that they could not happen where people believe what God said. The bible says they will happen. (John 14:12-14, Mark 16:15-20) We will have what we are believing God for.

It is not my place or yours to judge and condemn other brothers or sisters because of what they believe God for. That is their choice and it is between them and God. Our part is to encourage, support, and pray for one another to grow in the Lord Jesus and God's word, and to believe all that God has for us in Jesus Christ. I want to be God's instrument and to have His best. I know that we are of like heart.

I know that at times I have, depending upon which side of the spiritual fence I was on, judged and condemned others because of my lack of patience and love, and lack of knowledge about God's working and word. **Whether we are believing in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit or not, these things are of God, yet they do not make us more spiritual. Acting by faith in obedience to God's word is what makes us mature in the faith.**

Like Job, I needed to repent and ask God to forgive me for judging and condemning that which I did not know or understand. (Job 42:1-6) I needed forgiveness for later judging and condemning others who were in the same place I once was. Praise God! Jesus forgives and forgets.

If you find yourself in the same place I was, on either side of the fence, I would encourage you to let God forgive and cleanse you too, so that we might be free to rejoice together in Jesus, knowing what is the hope of our calling, what is our inheritance in Christ Jesus, what is the exceeding greatness of His power in behalf of them that believe, and the depth of Christ's love towards us. (see Paul's prayers for God's people – Ephesians 1:17-23, 3:14-21)

In conclusion, let us look at **Romans 14-15:7**. I have found this chapter to be a great blessing in developing love attitudes and actions pleasing to God and man. I would recommend that you read it in several different versions. Note key verses. Meditate over those verses.

“Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth

not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitable. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we thought patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” (Romans 14 – 15:7)

THE LOVE DISCIPLE
Chapter Fourteen
The Love Disciple's Honors Banquet

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2nd Corinthians 5:10)

One of the greatest joys the love disciple will participate in is standing before the Lord Jesus Christ and hearing Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thank you!”

I am so excited about the privilege God has given us to shine the light of His love into this world. It will to be a glorious day when we stand before Jesus. I am looking forward with confidence to that day.

As Paul said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (2nd Timothy 4:7-8)

Because of the closeness of the Lord's return, there is even more urgency for us to be about our Father's business – sharing the good news of God's love in Jesus in word and deed. I praise God for the desire in our hearts to be faithful sons and daughters.

One day as I was meditating on how I could love my heavenly Father more, the Holy Spirit prompted me, “As you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.” (see Matthew 25:40-46) The Lord began to show me that every time I have loved one of His people, I was telling Him, “I love you.” He reminded me of how I am His workmanship, created for good works. (Ephesians 2:10) (A good work is a good deed done in the name of Jesus proceeding from faith and love of God.) He showed me that I would be judged, not for what I did before I received Jesus as Lord but for what I have done to His people and myself for good or bad since that time. (see 1st Corinthians 3:11-15, 1st Peter 1:14-25)

God desires to reward His sons and daughters. The believer's judgment is to be a time of rejoicing for those who have been obedient to God in fulfilling their calling

and meeting the needs of God's people. I am amazed at how much emphasis God puts on our meeting the needs of others. Then again, God is love and His desire is to meet needs. It is only faith in Jesus Christ that enables us to be saved. However, God's rewards for us are based upon how we loved others in thought, word, and deed.

I began to ask myself, "How am I using God's tongue, God's time, God's goods, God's car, God's job, God's house, God's body, etc?" It is God's desire that we not walk away empty-handed from the rewards banquet. However, we are like the people in the parable of the stewards. (see Luke 19:12-27, Matthew 25:14-30). There will be those who receive greater, lesser, and no rewards because of what they have done in this life with what God has given them and how they have loved others.

The Lord impressed on me that faith without any works is dead. Many people who call themselves Christians are going to be mistaken when the Judgment Day comes. Others will have no rewards because they neglected to do God's purposes in caring for others.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how swelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts

before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that we abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (1st John 3:10-24)

I believe God is challenging us, as His love disciples, to examine ourselves before Jesus Christ returns to see whether we are simply seeking to be blessed or whether we are fulfilling God’s calling for us to be a blessing by sharing the word and doing the works of God in this world. I believe that many believers are missing out on some of the greatest joys that God gives in this life because they do not want to get involved.

I have thanked God many times for the privilege to see people receive God’s life, the Holy Spirit, healing, deliverance from demons, families restored, needs met, all because they chose to get involved and bring God’s love and power into the situation.

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way: but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:12-14)

Getting involved is what being a Christian is all about. I praise and thank God that even though we did not want Him, He persisted (in love) to involve Himself with us to the point of giving His own Son’s life that we might be saved. Then He raised Jesus Christ from the dead and proclaimed him Lord of all.

“We now love Him [God] because He first loved us.” We involve ourselves with others because that is God’s nature to love, bless, help, encourage and deliver His people. Who lives in us? Jesus Christ lives within us. We are true sons and daughters through the blood of Jesus Christ. God’s nature is our nature! God’s desire is our desire. In the name of Jesus, God’s ability is our ability. Get ready,

world, to receive God's love. Jesus is our Head. We are the body. Here come God's Love Disciples! Have you joined the ranks?

Father, in Jesus' name, I thank you that I am your child. I dedicate to you my spirit, mind, and body for your purposes. Help me to be even more aware of the needs of those around me. I thank you that I am able to meet every need because greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. I thank you for your love, strength, comfort, forgiveness, and ability to accomplish the impossible in Jesus' name. I eagerly await to stand before my Lord Jesus and have Him tell me, "*Well done, thou good and faithful child of my Father.*"

Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Glory to your Name!