

*From Randall J. Brewer's book*  
**BORN TO LOVE,  
CALLED TO SERVE**

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# THE LOVE COMMAND

There is only one  
commandment that all  
others fall under:  
*the command to love.*

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**RANDALL J. BREWER**





# THE LOVE COMMAND

RANDALL J. BREWER

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- II. The Love Command
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TM

IT WASN'T EXPECTED

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God Himself wasn't expecting it, but it happened. No agent or resident in heaven's realm expected such treachery, but it still took place. The love of God was betrayed by man. And yet we see the evidence as we read about the day when the presence of the Lord came walking through the Garden of Eden in the cool of that day, *expecting* His daily conversation with His greatest creation, the Man and the Woman. But they hide themselves.

To much His disappointment, they had fallen and now He needed to teach the First Couple and their coming generations to how to love, because their disobedience was the physical evidence of their lack of love for God, themselves, and anyone else that was yet to come.

It has been said that the only visible evidence of our reverence *of* God, is our obedience *to* God. Adam and Eve had only one commandment to honor: not to eat of The Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil. And today, we too have only one commandment: to love. To love the Lord our God, to love ourselves, and to love one another.

Love is a living entity. It walks, talks and it heals. It listens when we speak, and it offers to shoulder our heavy loads. It is so powerful that it volunteered to die for our sins. Love is so honored by God that He gave it a name: Jesus, the Christ.

In this second excerpt from the book, *Born to Love, Called to Serve*, author Randall J. Brewer is faithful to continue to guide us on this six part journey of our understanding of God and His destiny of love for us.

Paul Baker,  
Publisher and friend of Randall J. Brewer

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE LOVE COMMAND

The world would be a better place and life wouldn't be so complicated if people would just learn to follow the instructions that govern whatever it is they are trying to do.

- Car accidents happen when people drive on the wrong side of the road or forty miles over the speed limit.
- People risk an overdose on medicine when they don't follow the doctors' instructions that are printed on the bottle label.
- Divorces take place and lives are shattered when the vow to stay committed to one another "till death do us part" is broken.

Instructions are everywhere, from the model airplane you bought your son, to the cookbook that lays on the kitchen counter.

The new lamp stand you just brought home from the store has instructions in it as does the power tools that hang in your garage.

These instructions are not given to make you feel restricted in what you can or cannot do. They are given to help you live a better life. Problems arise when people think they know more than the creator of the product and give no regard to the instructions given.

This is what happened in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve did not follow Gods' instructions to abstain from eating the fruit from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They cast aside what God said, they did things their own way, and this is why the world is in the condition it is today.

God's will for people is that they be willing and obedient <sup>Is. 1:19</sup>, to follow all the instructions

He gives us. Because of sin and rebellion, people have not done so and now Gods' instructions come in the form of commands.

Moses did not come down from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Suggestions; he came down with the Ten Commandments. Just like in the military, a command is an order that must be obeyed whether you like it or not. You have no say-so in the matter. It's not a suggestion, it's not an option, and it's not a high ideal. It's an order and you must do it!

The Old Testament law was a set of commands that had to be obeyed in order to restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden.

### THE ONE COMMAND

*The love command is an order from the King of kings and Lord of lords.*

When Jesus came He fulfilled the law totally, and gave us the one command that takes precedence over all the others. He said in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

The love command is an order from the King of kings and Lord of lords, the everlasting Head of the church. Jesus is the Captain of our salvation and when He gives an order He expects it to be carried out. It's not a choice! You are ordered by God to love one another just like Jesus loves you.

Get this settled in your heart, the New Testament commandment is love. It's not a suggestion or an option. It's a command that must be kept whether you feel like it or not.

You don't have to feel love toward someone to keep the order. It's an act of your will, an act of obedience.

The Old Testament teaches people to love. Lev. 19:18b says, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." Love was taught from the beginning so why does Jesus say this is a "new" commandment?

In the Old Testament you loved your neighbor as you loved yourself, but in the New Testament you love others as Jesus has loved you. Jesus taught a brotherly love as opposed to a neighborly love. 1 John 2:10 tells us, "He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him."

Jesus came to show us a higher level of love, a love that will bring you to the point of being willing to sacrifice yourself for the sake of another. This is New Testament love. This is Christianity.

A Christian will take on a burden that is not their own and use their faith, energy, and resources to meet the need and get the burden removed. The love of God has been shed abroad in your heart and to love as Jesus loved you takes a willingness to get your hands dirty with somebody else's problems.

Gal. 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." The Message® Bible says, "Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law." The law of Christ is the law of love. God will lead you and guide you in the way you should go, but direction won't come until you first take your eyes off of yourself and consider the needs of other people.

1 Thess. 4:9,10 says, "But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so

toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more." God will personally teach you how to love one another and we are to increase in this love more and more. The Message® Bible says, "Keep it up, get better and better at it." The Wuest® translation says, "you yourselves are those taught by God with a view to loving one another with a love that impels you to deny yourselves for the benefit of the one whom you love."

To be taught is the responsibility of every believer Col. 3:10, and only those taught by God and led by His Spirit can keep the love command.

Ps. 25:4,5 says, "Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day."

Ps. 71:17 states, "O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works."

Consider Ps. 143:10, "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness."

Isaiah writes, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths" Is. 2:3.

## LOVE ISN'T JUST A WORD

God's call to His own has always emphasized unselfish love. His teaching is not that which provides information alone, but that which creates disciples who will live in responsive obedience to God's will.

People think the bulk of Christian love is talk, that if they tell somebody they love them then they have obeyed the love command. That

*Lead me in Your ways;  
Teach me Your paths.*



is not so. Love is an action. 1 John 3:18 says, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” Keeping the love command means you do something, and until you do, your love is empty.

Love always shows itself in action. James 2:15,16 tells us, “If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

Keeping the love command will cost you something, but you must take up your cross and endure hardness as a good soldier <sup>2 Tim. 2:3</sup>. You can keep the love command with God’s grace and help, and He is personally going to teach you how. You must receive His help by faith and you’ve got to be willing to learn it, do it, and grow in it. If you’ve already been loving one another, then you must increase and do it more and more.

Jesus said in John 15:10-12, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Walking in love is fun! His joy will abide in you and will give you the strength to walk in love every day. Your joy will be full and you’ll be the happiest you’ve ever been. The more you walk in love, the happier you’ll be.

As a disciple of Christ you live to give, you live to bless people and to help remove their burdens. You’re so busy doing things for other people that you forget about yourself. You’re already happy and fulfilled, satisfied and blessed. Your joy is full and your needs are met,

because what you make happen for others God will make happen for you.

Eph. 6:8 says, “knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord whether he is a slave or free.” The Message® Bible says in vs. 6-8, “Don’t just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ’s servants doing what God wants you to do.

And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you’re really serving God. Good work will get you good pay from the Master, regardless of whether you are slave or free.” You’ve got every reason to obey the love command and no good reason not to. It’s not always easy, but it is always fun.

#### LOVE ISN’T A REQUEST

Love is given as a command, because your flesh may tell you some people aren’t worth loving. This is precisely why we are to love them, because those

who need love the most- deserve it the least.

We must never forget that at one time we were all in the same dead spiritual condition. Thankfully we read in Rom. 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

1 John 4:10,11 tells us, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (appeasement, resolution) for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

There are a lot of Christians who Jesus is not their Lord. He’s their Savior, but not their Lord. The word “Lord” means He’s in charge and you’re not. He gives the orders. Sad to say, this is not the case with millions of believers. They want to be in charge of their own lives and this is precisely why it’s in the mess it’s in today.

*Love always shows itself in action.*

But if Jesus is your Lord, then you will do what He says and do it cheerfully. And it was Jesus Who said in John 15:12, “**This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**”

## THE WALK TRUMPS THE TALK

Walking in love is the evidence that you are a real Christian. It's not about going to church or carrying your Bible or quoting scriptures or having your name on some membership roster. It's about whether or not you obey the order. Do you keep the love command? Do you love one another as God loves you? Jesus said “**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another**” <sup>John 13:35</sup>. Jesus is talking about how we love each other as Christians.

Divided churches and divorces among Christian couples destroy our witness to the world. If Jesus is your Lord, then you will obey the order to love one another as He has loved you, and you will be excited doing it. Remember, it's the doers that get blessed.

You can go to church all your life and watch other people praise God and love others, but until you do it yourself you are just taking up space and are of little or no value to the kingdom of God.

Love is not something you talk about from time to time; it's what you live in and do every day, every night. It's a full-time job, so get excited about obeying the love command.

The good news is that you can obey this order even when you don't feel like it. Feelings have nothing to do with it. In fact, love is strongest when you have no feelings. Real love shows up when you bless somebody when you'd rather slap them and walk away vindicated.

The greatest gift you can give to another

person is to believe in them and to love them, to treat them like they're important and valuable. Thankfully, God won't leave you hanging. You won't be left wondering what it is you're supposed to do. He tells you to love one another and then He teaches you how to do it. He takes you by the hand and leads you in the way you should go. We read in Rom. 12:9,10, “let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

All pain and tragedy and suffering is caused by the selfishness of man, but the God-kind of love prefers his brothers. When you prefer somebody, you yield to their wants and needs and let them get what they want first. In Greek, the word “prefer” means ‘to go before and lead; taking the lead to show deference.’ God is teaching you to take the lead in preferring one another.

*God tells you to love, then  
He teaches you how.*

Don't wait for somebody to treat you good, take the lead and treat them good first. Carnal Christians walk by feelings, but mature Christians who take the lead walk by faith, hope, and love.

No matter how they feel;

No matter what they think;

No matter what other people have done to them;

They always walk in love and do it with a smile on their face.

If the whole church would take delight in honoring one another, and excel in showing respect for each other, you would have heaven on earth. If every member would take the lead in seeking to outdo the other in showing compassion and helping to meet one another's needs then the world would be turned upside down. The early church did this and we

read in Acts 2:44,45, “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.”

The Message® Bible says, “They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person’s need was met.” The Lord spoke about this to the prophet Isaiah when He said in Is. 58:1a, “Cry aloud, spare not.” Do not hold back in showing preference to one another. Spare not!

He continues in vs. 6,7, “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?”

He then said in vv. 10,11a, “If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually...”

## LOVE IS SELFLESS

You can’t steer a parked car, but if you will step out and take the lead in obeying the love command, God will lead you and guide you continually. Paul continues this train of thought in Phil. 2:3,4, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

The Message® Bible says, “Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your

own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.”

Esteeming others as better than yourself is the highest form of love there is. When you treat people like they’re better than you, when you regard them as being more important than you are, your life will be better than it’s ever been before.

Giving more honor to others does not mean they are better than you, but you do treat them that way. Jesus preferred us when He hung on the cross. People mocked Him and blasphemed Him when they said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save” <sup>Matt. 27:42a</sup>. He put our needs above His own, and by doing so He showed us how to keep the love command.

Two thousand years ago Jesus left the splendor and majesty of heaven and came to earth to live as a man. He came to be a servant

of all people everywhere, and shortly before His death He set the example by kneeling down in front of His disciples

and washed their feet.

He laid aside His garments and put on a slaves’ towel and in love even washed the feet of the one He knew would betray Him. The disciples were not better than Jesus, but He was treating them like they were. At that moment Jesus took the role of a slave and the disciples had the role of a master.

Afterward He sat back down and explained the meaning of what had just taken place. “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is he who is sent greater than he

*Treat others as if they are better than you.*

who sent him. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them” John 13:12-17.

The Message® Bible closes out this passage with these promising words, “If you understand what I’m telling you, act like it - and live a blessed life.”

The happiest people in the world are those who take the lead and serve. The willingness to serve, the willingness to put others above yourself, is the mark of spiritual greatness. Like Jesus you can wash peoples’ feet every day and treat them like they’re better than you. You can defer to what they want, because you’ve been told to do so, you’ve been ordered to keep the love command.

The standard or the measure of how you love other people is how Jesus loves you. He said in Matt. 20:28, “**just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.**” Paul said the same thing in 1 Cor. 10:24, “Let no one seek his own, but each one the others’ well-being.”

## A LIFE WORSE THAN DEATH

Living a selfish life is worse than dying. A self-centered life is a hellish life, a life of hurt, misery, and pain. The more you try to get what you want and the more you step on other people to get there, the more miserable you’ll be. You can have three mansions, two airplanes, one yacht, and twelve sports cars and still not enjoy them if all you do is think about yourself.

God planned it that way. He put something in you that demands more than self-gratification. He placed in you a void that only He can fill. He placed in you the need to walk in love, and if you don’t take heed to the call to love others as Jesus loves you, then all these luxuries will be like gravel in your mouth.

But when you walk in love you will be on

the threshold of some glorious things. God will come into your midst and manifest Himself. His glory will increase more and more until you know- that you know- that you know- He is here.

And where God is, there is love. This is how you are able to keep the love command. Like the Master, you’ll suffer before you’ll let somebody else suffer. You’ll sacrifice what *you* want and need in order to ease the pain of other people and help remove their burdens. Your highest desire is to help their dreams come true so that they’ll reach their full potential in Christ.

Jesus came to make you feel wanted, and when you care for other people you make them feel wanted also. Every day you have choices to make.

Will you prefer others or not?

Are your thoughts and actions centered on yourself or on other people?

*In you is the God-planted need to walk in love.*

Are you going to do all the talking or remain silent and let other people talk?

Are you going to focus on getting your own needs met or are you going to take the lead and help meet the needs of other people?

It is profanity to only think of yourself and is a violation of the love command. Preferring others is going to cost you something every day, but when you esteem others as being better than yourself, God will see to it that you get what you need and want. You won’t go without. You’ll cast your cares on Jesus and trust Him to supply what you need and want instead of you trying to do it yourself.

You’re too busy preferring other people to think about yourself, but you can have the confidence that God is thinking about you every minute of every day.

Your flesh wants what it wants, so you have to choose. Is it you or is it them? Are you



going to focus on what you want or on what other people want? Take the lead and prefer other people. Count those around you as being more excellent than yourself. Jesus came to serve and you must do the same. This is the law of Christ. This is true Christianity. This is love.

## CHAPTER TWO

# A DEBT OF LOVE

Love is a costly thing. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). The Message® Bible says, “Don’t run from suffering, embrace it. Self-sacrifice is the way, My way, to finding yourself, your true self.”

The story is told of a lieutenant addressing his platoon, “I’m looking for volunteers. Chances are, this mission won’t succeed and many of you won’t come back alive. If you’re interested, step forward,” Everybody looks around and then takes a collective step backward, leaving an unsuspecting volunteer standing alone.

This is not how it is in the army of the Lord. God is not looking for involuntary volunteers. He wants people who are willing to leave their comfort zone and to sacrifice everything for people who may never know they did it.

### LIFE ON GOD’S TERMS

Oswald Chambers (evangelist, teacher; 1874-1917; author of the devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*) once said,

*“If we are devoted to the cause of humanity we will be crushed and broken-hearted, for we shall often meet with ingratitude. But if our motive is love for God, no ingratitude will hinder us from serving our fellow man.”*

God is looking for a few good men, followers who will do something different by making a positive difference in the lives of other people. To obey this command to love, you must

give up those expectations that life be lived on your terms and be willing to pay the price so that God’s purposes can be fulfilled on planet earth. What’s more, He expects you to do it daily. Minute by minute, hour after hour.

God is not asking you to do something He hasn’t already done Himself. 1 John 3:16 tells us, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” The Message® Bible says, “Christ sacrificed His life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves.”

Are you willing to die daily <sup>1 Cor. 15:31</sup>? This is

*Christ sacrificed His life for us. Live sacrificially for others.*

harder than physical death, because it means to deny yourself and obey God even when it goes against

the grain. Still, that’s what you’ve been called to do when you step forward with a willingness to obey the love command.

Paul writes, “But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish...” (Phil. 3:8). To many people sacrifices are associated with regret and sadness, but to God it’s an act of love that brings joy and gladness. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 12:15a, “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls...” It is a great privilege to be given the opportunity to make a sacrifice for other people.

There is, however, no reward unless your sacrifices are done very gladly. You’re not just glad to make the sacrifice, you’re very glad. God loves a cheerful giver <sup>2 Cor. 9:7</sup> and if your sacrifice isn’t given very gladly, then it’s not very Godly.

Gladness is the qualifier as to whether or not you are sincere in what you're doing. Give with a smile on your face as you consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in you <sup>Rom. 8:18</sup>.

Christianity is about finding out what God wants you to do, and then doing it. It's about being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only <sup>James 1:22</sup>. 1 John 4:7,8 reveals specifically what God wants you to do with your life, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

Love is the indicator that one has been born again *and* knows God. It doesn't matter how religious you are, or how many scriptures you can quote. What matters is whether or not you obey the command to love others as Jesus loves you.

Paul writes in Rom. 13:8, "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible says, "Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along."

John writes, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" <sup>1 John 4:11</sup>. The word "ought" is derived from the root word "owe." Love is a debt owed to people and God is telling you to pay your debts. The reason this is so important is because people see God by seeing you.

God is love and when you love others, people come in contact with Him. Deep calls unto deep <sup>Ps. 42:7</sup> and the creation calls unto the Creator. The Creator is love and He lives inside of you. No other religion has this and no false

god can make that claim.

## LOVE IS A CONSUMING POWER

Love is not a thing you achieve; it's a force you become. God is love, He is all powerful, and you are made in His image. Jesus became the love of God everywhere He went and you are to do the same. Let the love of God consume you! Love people so much that you'll diligently look for and find ways to bless them. Jesus did things other people wouldn't do because of the love He operated in. Mark 1:40 tells how a leper came to Jesus asking to be made clean. "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put out His hand and touched him, and said to him, '**I am willing; be cleansed**'" <sup>v.41</sup>.

Jesus touched the leper! You don't do that! But love does. Compassion is God's love in action and Jesus made it personal when He

touched the leper. Love is the power with which God accomplishes His will on planet earth. There is nothing more powerful

than love. God is love and His love makes you strong. It makes a difference when you do things motivated by love. It increases the value of whatever you do, so take the love of God and minister it to people one person at a time. Keep yourself in the love of God <sup>Jude 21</sup> and work on a level where He operates.

Love takes the limits off God and when you walk in love, God is unlimited in what He can do *in* and *through* you. Everything God does benefits other people. Ps. 19:8 says, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." God can use you to change somebody's world and to bring rejoicing to their heart. There is no greater blessing than that.

Love is the bedrock to your success at

*Christianity is about finding out what God wants you to do, then doing it.*

being a child of God. There is such a distorted concept of love in the world that people rarely walk in the true light of Godly love. They ignore love to their own peril and need *major-mind-renewal* when it comes to the subject of love.

Jesus said in John 15:13, “**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.**” How many people actually do this? Love never thinks of itself. It always thinks about the other person. As Jesus hung on the cross He was concerned about the relationship His tormentors had with the Father. This is why he said, “**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do**” <sup>Luke 23:34</sup>. In John 10:14,15 <sup>MSG</sup> Jesus said, “**I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own sheep and My sheep know Me. In the same way, the Father knows Me and I know the Father. I put the sheep before Myself, sacrificing Myself if necessary.**”

He continues in vs. 17,18a, “**This is why the Father loves Me: because I freely lay down My life. And so I am free to take it up again. No one takes it from Me. I lay it down of My own free will.**”

Jesus was not a victim. He was not helpless in the hands of those who crucified Him. In the Garden of Gethsemane He willingly let the people take Him. This is love in action and is the same love you are commanded to walk in. When you lay down your life you must be glad to do it. Just doing it isn’t good enough. With joy and gladness you must do it willingly.

The value of something is established by what somebody is willing to pay for it. “**Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**” <sup>Matt. 6:21</sup>.

Abel brought the best he had, Cain did not. If you’re not willing to gladly sacrifice all you have then you cannot be the Lord’s disciple (see Luke 14:27). Nothing can be more valuable than

God and you’ve got to be willing to pay any price to follow Him.

### WHAT PRICE IS TOO HIGH?

The rich young ruler walked away sad when Jesus told him to sell all he had, give to the poor, and come follow Him. The price was not too high for the young ruler to pay. Instead, his love for Jesus was too small. When there is true, genuine love, when you love God with all your heart, soul, and strength, there is no price too high to pay.

The disciples received beatings for preaching the gospel, and Acts 5:41,42 tells us, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

Don’t tell Jesus you love Him, show Him! Love God with all you’ve got. Hold nothing back! God

smells the fragrance of a Godly sacrifice. Paul wrote how he received “the things which were sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God” <sup>Phil. 4:18b</sup>.

If it’s a Godly sacrifice, somebody else is benefiting from what you’ve done. Excel in hospitality and seek for opportunities and the resources to build up and increase your brethren in Christ.

People are most valuable to God, and a person after God’s own heart will value what He values. In the Parable of the Feast <sup>Luke 14:15-24</sup> those first invited did not go because other things were of greater value to them. The things of God are supposed to be a big deal and those who walk in love see value where others do not.

Shortly before Jesus went to the cross “a

*Jesus is love in action.  
“This is why the Father  
loves Me.”*



woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table” Matt. 26:7.

Spices and ointments were like gold and very expensive. This particular flask of oil was worth a year’s wages, but the woman valued Jesus more than the money. Judas Iscariot rebuked the woman for doing this and when Jesus told him to leave her alone, he immediately left to go to the high priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” v.15. Like the rich young ruler he valued money more than he valued Jesus.

Some people say it’s too hard and it cost too much to obey God and keep the love command. These same people have time and money for everything else, but when it comes to God they say the price is too high. Is that the case or do they not value the things of God enough? Those who truly love God and value what He values are the ones who will gladly sacrifice for Him. They’ll endure hardness like a good soldier and do whatever it takes to complete the mission.

You must make up your mind as to what matters most to you. Paul said he would very gladly spend and be spent for those he ministered to. When you’re spent you’ve got no more to give. You’ve given it all.

Abraham was a man who was willing to give God anything and everything. He left his people to go to an unknown destination and in Gen. 22:2 God asked him to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Surely this was too high a price to pay. Abraham didn’t think so, for the next day he rose up early and set out on a journey to obey the Lord’s command. He took God at His word that through Isaac his descendants would outnumber the stars in the sky, and if necessary God could raise his son from the dead. This is

why he was called the friend of God and his faith will always be honored.

Jesus taught in Matt. 13:45,46, “**Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it.**” This man was seriously and deliberately searching for goodly pearls for he treasured what God treasures. In order to secure the costliest gems he would travel far and was prepared to secure them no matter what the cost.

This is what happens when you love God on purpose and value what He values. You’ll go out of your way to search for ways to honor Him and be a blessing to other people. You will gladly spend yourself and be spent, because in your heart there is no price too high to pay, no cost too great.

*Some people say it’s too costly to follow God.*

In the Parable of the Hidden Treasure we read, “**Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field**” Matt. 13:44.

The joy factor is a key element in the sacrifices you make to keep the love command. Jesus said in John 15:11,12, “**These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**” The Message® Bible says “**that My joy might be your joy, and your joy fully mature.**”

***Jesus is telling you to have a self-sacrificial love so that your joy will be full.***

Neh. 8:10 says the joy of the Lord is your strength and when you walk in love you’ll be a strong Christian. You’ll be bold and strong, you’ll

walk in your authority as a child of God. You'll have confidence toward Him <sup>1 John 3:21</sup> and your faith will work when you walk in love.

People think if you walk in love you'll be unhappy all the time and never get what you want. The only people who are not happy are those who are selfish and not walking in love. Those who obey the command to love are living in overflowing joy and it's the cheerful, sacrificial giving that allows God to open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing there is not room enough to contain.

The Lord said in Ezek. 34:26, "I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their seasons; there shall be showers of blessing." God will cause you to be a blessing to somebody else so always care about people and cheer them on. Encourage them to press on and keep going no matter what obstacle they may face. And if need be, reach inside your wallet and give them all that you have. Be willing to spend and be spent for others.

### THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Examine yourself. How happy have you been lately? How joyful? Christians are supposed to be the most joyful people on the planet. Joy is the environment of heaven and when you walk into a room the sun shines and the birds sing. God's love is the light that shines and this same love should be seen on your face.

Love does not frown and pout when it doesn't get its' own way. Love rejoices in the truth <sup>1 Cor. 13:6b</sup> and when truth wins out somebody gets set free. Love is genuinely glad when other people get blessed. Love is not jealous or envious and rejoices more over another person's victory than it does its' own.

Jesus said, "What man of you, having a

hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'" <sup>Luke 15:4-6</sup>.

Love makes the effort and takes the time to notice another person's blessing. If a friend gets a new car, rejoice with them and offer to buy the first tank of gas and pay for their first oil change. Have a celebration party! Invite people over and celebrate their victory and the good that has happened to them. Those in heaven rejoice when spiritual progress is made on earth <sup>Luke 15:7</sup> and we should do the same. Real love rejoices and is accompanied by real joy and real strength.

Shortly before His betrayal Jesus told His disciples, "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I" <sup>John 14:28</sup>.

Jesus is leaving and the disciples are not happy. Something good is about to happen. The price of sin is about to be paid and fellowship with the Father will soon be restored. This is good news and worthy of celebration, but the disciples could only think of how the Lord's departure would affect them.

People who are miserable and unfulfilled are those who only think about themselves, what they want, what they need, and what somebody didn't do for them. They live to satisfy themselves and this is why most of the world is unhappy. All of mankind is about to benefit from the Lord's departure and Jesus told the disciples to rejoice if they truly loved Him. People in the

*Joy is the environment  
of heaven.*

world today are not celebrating enough. Love builds up, it edifies, and it rejoices in another person's victory. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 10:33, "just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

Care so much for other people that you celebrate and rejoice when they get born-again or when their house gets paid off or they get a promotion at work. Love seeks not its own and will diligently search for ways to be a blessing to other people. This is the key to finding true joy. God is love and when you obey Him completely you will find all the satisfaction you'll ever need.

Love means nothing unless you do it, unless you put actions to your words. Paul writes in Rom. 16:26 <sup>MSG</sup>, "All the nations of the world can now know the truth and be brought into obedient belief, carrying out the orders of God, who got all this started, down to the very last letter." If you believe God, you'll obey Him. Jesus said, **"If you love Me, keep My commandments"** <sup>John 14:15</sup>.

## COMMITMENT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The key to success in anything is commitment. A missionary society wrote to David Livingstone and asked, "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to know how to send other men to join you." Livingstone wrote back, "If you have men who will come only if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all."

There is a price to pay to fulfill the call to keep the love command and the down payment is commitment. Commitment demands that you apply yourself by giving the very best you have and to give priority to that which you are committed to. The level of your commitment

reveals the level of your love for God and other people. This is why there is no such thing as love at first sight. There is no commitment there. People who live together without being married lack commitment. They want to keep one foot out the door in case they want to quit the relationship and leave. It's like a biker who backs his motorcycle into the parking space. He wants to be able to leave quickly in case things get rough and out of hand inside the bar.

Commitment will cost you! People need you when they need you, not when it's convenient. Commitment will hold a marriage together when the fun is gone. Commitment will rise up in the middle of the night and will go to great lengths to express itself. Prov. 17:17 says, "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Love that is not seen is not love.

Paul wrote Timothy, "Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica"

<sup>2 Tim. 4:9,10</sup>. Demas had no commitment. He forsook Paul just as Judas forsook Jesus and sold Him out.

A lack of commitment is when people say, "What's in it for me?" You're not loving people if you're always complaining about what they're not doing for you. Don't judge people for not loving you. God told you to love them. Do it because He told you to. Do it for Him. Love people who don't deserve it. Forgive them and bless them because you love God. When you do, God will manifest Himself and become more real to you than any living person. Jesus said, **"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him"** <sup>John 14:21</sup>.

God reveals Himself to those people who love Him to the point that they'll obey Him. God

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments." -Jesus*

will fill up your life and your house and your car with His presence and you'll be filled with His thoughts and His Spirit. He will not do this to doubters or unbelievers but to those who love Him and are committed. Yes, love is a costly thing but it is a price well worth paying.

As author Dwight L. Moody once said, "Faith makes all things possible...love makes all things easy."



## CHAPTER THREE

# THE LOVE TEST

The debt of love is one debt you will always owe and never be able to pay off fully. You'll never reach the place where you can say you've loved others as much as you ought.

No matter how long you've been a Christian and how much you have grown and matured, you still have room to grow in love. Since you can never exhaust the debt of love, you must keep working to pay it off.

Paying off debts is hard because it requires denying yourself in order to reach your goal. You have to take your focus off yourself and put it on others and their needs in order to work at this debt of love that you owe.

Since self-denial runs contrary to your flesh, love will require constant effort and thought. Do you love difficult family members? Do you love your angry boss at work who yells at you all the time and treats your coworkers better than you? Do you love those in the church who rub you the wrong way? If so, how did you show it in your words and behavior? If they irritated you, did you respond with patience and kindness or did you get angry and retaliate with harsh words?

John Calvin (French theologian; 1509-1564) wisely observed that *"nothing flows away so easily as love"* and that is why there are 55 New Testament commands to walk in love. Sometimes we think that love should be spontaneous and effortless but Biblical love is not automatic. It's a lifelong process and you've got to work at walking in love on a daily basis for the rest of your life. If you don't focus on it and work hard at it, it easily flows away.

Love is an effort and you will be tested. God will tell you to do something for a person who won't appreciate it and won't say "thank you." He'll then tell you to do something extra nice for them the next time you see them. Hearing people say "thank you" feeds the flesh and that's why you want to hear it all the time. Just remember that you're not doing it for them, you're doing it for God and your reward comes from Him.

Love is a sacrifice and every sacrifice has its reward. First comes the cross, then comes the glory. Rom. 8:17b says we are "joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that

we may also be glorified together." The flesh is lazy and it always wants what's easy and free. Love will always cost you something

and you can't wait for a feeling to motivate you. It is an effort and you must do it on purpose. You must give attention to your love walk. You must study the subject of love in the Word day-in and day-out, day after day.

### LOVE ON PURPOSE– WITH A PURPOSE

God is calling you to excellence. He is a God of excellence, a God of integrity, and He says love is the more excellent way <sup>1 Cor. 12:31</sup>. You must remove the conditions you have placed on your love for others. You can't love them only if they treat you right or if they say "thank you" all the time.

Love people unconditionally. Love them on purpose because God told you to and not because you got some mushy feeling when somebody said "thank you." You are God's

*Love is a sacrifice and every sacrifice has its reward.*

representative so get yourself off your mind and treat people with love and respect.

### TAKE THE TEST

There is a simple test to see if you are of God and striving daily to walk in love.

1 John 3:10,11 says, “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest:

- Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God,
- Nor is he who does not love his brother.
- For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible says, “Here’s how you tell the difference between God’s children and the Devil’s children:

- The one who won’t practice righteous ways isn’t from God,
- Nor is the one who won’t love brother or sister. A simple test.”

Are you striving daily to walk in love and do what’s right, or are you only concerned about how people treat you? Verse 14 states, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.” The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible says, “Anyone who doesn’t love is as good as dead.” Death is when you say “What about me?” and refuse to obey God’s command to love others as He has loved you.

A command is an order, and you are ordered by God to walk in love. You experience God when you abide in His manifested love, and the only thing that can truly satisfy you on the inside and make you happy is when God uses you to be a blessing to somebody else. You can be a multi-billionaire and still be the most miserable person on the planet. It satisfies

you deep inside when God uses you to help somebody get their needs met. This is the love of God being manifested through you and is the only thing that will give you fullness of joy.

### A LOVE DEFICIENT WORLD

We live in a love starved society and one only has to go to the shopping mall to see bizarre and weird behavior. Security cameras have filmed women fighting over who gets to buy the last purse sitting on the shelf. Prisons are filled with people, who during an act of road rage, committed deplorable crimes against another person. The list is endless because people are selfish and only think of themselves.

Even in evangelical churches there are many who claim to be born again, but do not love others and don’t even make an effort to do so. They are angry, unkind, impatient, abusive in their speech, self-centered in their daily lives,

and judgmental of others. They spread malicious gossip with great delight and are defensive if you

try to point out any of their sins to them. In Rom. 12:9 Paul said, “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

There is a strong tendency among believers to put on a mask of love to cover hearts that are full of selfishness, jealousy, manipulation, and even hatred. The epitome of love with hypocrisy was when Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss <sup>Luke 22:48</sup>. Outwardly it looked as if he really cared for Jesus but in reality he was giving Jesus over to bloodthirsty men who would torture and kill Him. The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible says, “Love from the center of who you are; don’t fake it.” Paul is calling you to pass the test and have a sincere love that flows from your heart.

Paul knew more than anybody that the enemy of your faith walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour <sup>1 Peter 5:8</sup>. He is

*“Let love be without hypocrisy.  
Abhor what is evil.”*

a thief who comes to kill, steal, and destroy <sup>John 10:10</sup>. In his early travels Paul founded a series of churches in the Roman province of Galatia, and a few years later he wrote them these special words, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” Gal. 5:14, 15.

The Message® Bible says, “If you bite and ravage each other, watch out - in no time at all you will be annihilating each other, and where will your precious freedom be then?”

Satan steals the Word from people and hinders their effort to fulfill the love command by getting them angry and offended. Anger is the cruelest of all emotions and is a manifestation of selfishness, pride, and hatred.

People who get angry think they’re superior and always look down at other people. They are unable to walk in love because they’re too busy being upset about what they don’t like or about what somebody did or didn’t do to them.

Solomon wrote in Eccl. 7:9, “Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.” Anger will make a fool of you because “a fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back” <sup>Prov. 29:11</sup>.

It is far better to exercise self-control and obey the words of James 1:19,20, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

One thing interesting about people is, they’re everywhere you go. You can’t get away from them, and no matter where you go there will always be people who will rub you the wrong way. Without even knowing why they’ll dislike you and begin to say things in an effort to

destroy your character and rob you of the peace that is in your heart. These people are nothing more than puppets on a string controlled by the devil as he attempts to destroy your life and the mission for God that you are on.

The spirit of offense is like a cancer that, if not dealt with, will destroy your home, your health, your ministry, your relationships, and everything else that pertains to your life. The word “offense” means *‘that which causes one to trip or stumble,’* and is one of the most harmful and dangerous things that could ever happen to you.

The devil is out to separate you from the Lord and His people and he uses offense to cause you to feel displeasure, to get angry and hurt, and to disconnect from those you should be loving.

Many people no longer go to church because they got their feelings hurt and got offended. Somebody sat in their favorite chair or else the pastor didn’t shake their hand after the service.

The devil wants you to lose your faith and stop walking in love and he uses offense to do it. If not dealt with, offense will make you grow bitter inside and soon you’ll stay home from church and do nothing for the kingdom of God. Instead of getting offended, be like a nail - the harder you get hit, the deeper you go in God.

Two thousand years ago when Jesus walked the earth, He made it clear to His listeners that He would one day return again to the earth. This sparked the interest of all those who heard Him say this and one day He was asked, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” <sup>Matt. 24:3</sup>. He was unable to answer the first question because only the Heavenly Father knows when the end will be <sup>v.36</sup>, but He was able to make known to them the signs that would

*Anger is the cruelest  
of all emotions.*

precede His glorious return. He then spent nearly two chapters expounding on the answer to their second question. Natural calamities will occur and the actions of the godly and ungodly alike are recorded in great detail.

## SIGNS OF THE END

Any person who is even remotely aware of the conditions of the world around them will quickly come to the correct conclusion that all the predictions have been fulfilled and we are indeed living in the last days. Jesus can and will return any day now.

As a believer you must pay particularly close attention to what Jesus said in vv.10-13, because it contains a warning to all those who claim to be children of God. What He says may shock you, for His words reveal the stark reality of what will happen to many believers in the last days. Pray you are not one of them. *“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”*

The Message® Bible says, *“going from bad to worse, it will be dog-eat-dog, everyone at each other’s throat, everyone hating each other. In the confusion, lying preachers will come forward and deceive a lot of people. For many others, the overwhelming spread of evil will do them in - nothing left of their love but a mound of ashes.”*

It is a stab in the heart to realize that these verses describe the actions of born again believers and not the wicked sinners of the world. The office of prophet is a ministry given to the church and false prophets and lying preachers will not deceive non-saved sinners,

because they won’t be preaching to them.

Those who will be deceived are cold-hearted believers who are unable to tell the difference between right and wrong. Their sin will dull their spiritual senses and will take away their ability to hear from God. Truly there is a price to pay for sin and dullness of hearing and a lack of discernment are two of them.

## OFFENSE CREATES DEFENSE

Notice also in v.12 where it says “the love of many will grow cold.” The word “love” in this verse is the Greek word ‘agape’ which is the God-kind of love. Only believers can have this kind of love, and Jesus is saying that many people who are saved and born again will have this God-given love turn cold within their hearts, and as a result will begin to betray and hate one another. Christians hating Christians!

What causes this love to grow cold?

- Lawlessness!
- Sin!
- Offense!
- The absence of holiness in the lives of wayward believers!

It is a shame to know that Christian divorces now outnumber the divorces of the community of non-believers. Churches everywhere are grasping the idea that homosexuality is an acceptable behavior and some are electing openly gay clergymen to the highest offices in the organization. What must the Lord be thinking? Churches are split nearly every day and each night many believers go to bed bitter and angry at their fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.

What caused these evil feelings to take root in these people? To answer that you must go back to the beginning of our scriptural context and see what Jesus said. Matt. 24:10 begins by

*“And then many will be offended, will betray one another,” -Jesus*



saying, “**And many will be offended...**” Notice it doesn’t say a few will be offended, but many!

Believers being offended at one another are those who have failed the love test and is a sign that the end of the age is fast approaching. The Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible gives an even clearer picture of the repulsive condition many members of the body of Christ are now in. It says they “**will begin to distrust and desert Him (Whom they ought to trust and obey) and will stumble and fall away and betray one another and pursue one another with hatred.**” It is a sad commentary that sin in the church is even listed in this category of end-time events. For sure, the root of bitterness runs deep.

The word “offense” also means ‘to create resentment, injustice, insult, to hurt the feelings of.’ If not dealt with, hurt feelings will grow to bitterness and hatred. In Greek the word means ‘to bait a trap, to ensnare.’ It’s the part of the trap where the bait is laid.

It pleases the flesh to lash out at others when one’s appetite for self-centeredness is not filled to full capacity by those around them.

Getting offended is a bitter reaction to not getting one’s own way and only selfish and self-centered people get offended. Sadly, these same people often turn to uncontrolled anger that causes them to do harm to the one whom they are offended at.

The Bible is filled from cover to cover with stories of people who got caught in the deadly trap of offense.

- In Genesis 4, Cain got offended when God rejected his offering and as a result rose up and murdered his brother Abel.
- The sons of Jacob got offended when their younger brother Joseph told them about his God-given dream that foretold a day when

they would all bow down before him.

- King Saul was jealous when more attention and praise was given to David and once offended tried on several occasions to murder the anointed heir to the throne.
- In the New Testament Martha got offended because her younger sister Mary sat at the feet of Jesus instead of helping with the serving of the guests.
- And let’s not forget what some offended people did to the Lord Jesus Christ after He spent all His life doing nothing but good to those around Him.

The number of stories in the Bible about people getting offended are vast, and informs the reader with certainty that offenses will come. Minute by minute they’ll come and every person on planet earth will be tempted with- and will be given the opportunity to get offended at somebody. Listen to the stark warning Jesus

gives in Luke 17:1, “**It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do**

**come.”**

The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible says, “**Hard trials and temptations are bound to come, but too bad for whoever brings them on!**”

You will never be in a relationship with a person who doesn’t do something to irritate you. We all have faults and there are things about our personality that irritates other people as well.

Most people use pride to tell themselves they didn’t do anything to offend the other person, and it was them who did something wrong to you. Jesus dealt with this in Matt. 7:3 when He said, “**And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own?**” The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible says in vv. 1-5, “Don’t pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults - unless,

of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own.

Do not have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you' when your own face is distorted by contempt! It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor."

The devil is a thief and he uses offenses to bait the children of God into a life of resentment, hatred, and ultimate destruction. The solution to this evil deception where one believes they have the right to be offended, is found in the Lord's prayer where Jesus taught us to pray these words, **"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"** Matt. 6:12.

Paul writes in Eph. 4:31, 32, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you."

#### WHAT IS YOUR SPIRITUAL I.D.?

Whatever is in you, is going to come out of you. You can't hide it. Bitterness will show up on your face and hardness will be heard in your voice. Resentment builds walls but love and forgiveness build bridges.

Love identifies you as a Christian, and we are to treat people so good that people on the outside want to get in. Love always believes the best of every person and never keeps a record of wrongs.

Let the love of God transform how you feel about those who have offended you. If somebody hurt you then believe the best and

believe they didn't do it on purpose. Get out your Holy Ghost eraser and forgive them and wipe clean the slate of recorded wrongs done to you.

Forgiveness is when you give up the right to have retribution made against the person who did you wrong. The devil will make you think the other person owes you something for having offended you, but in truth it is you that owes them something. Forgiveness is a debt you owe and Rom. 13:8a says, "Owe no one anything except to love one another."

Forgiveness is a very serious thing. On the cross Jesus set the example by asking the Father to forgive His tormentors and those who betrayed Him. Forgiveness is not something deserved and is the kindest thing you can do to another person. *It is an act of ultimate love*, and once forgiveness is made you must get over the hurt and pain you felt and quickly obey the words

*Forgiveness is a very serious thing.*

of Jesus spoken in Matt. 5:44, **"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..."**

If believers would take heed to these very important words they can have the full confidence they will not be one of the end-time saints whose love has turned cold.

When you forgive, you are then free to be forgiven by God for those times when you have missed the mark and became an offense to somebody else. Forgiveness cancels the debt you owe and it also releases that other person from the debt you feel they owe you, because you were offended by them.

If you're thankful for being forgiven, then forgive somebody else. People not forgiven get a hard heart and get mean. They don't like themselves, but those who are spiritual should restore such a one in

a spirit of love and meekness. God will give you the love to forgive with, so if somebody has offended you forgive that person, get over it, and then go out and show the love of God by doing something good for them. Remember, Jesus will return any minute now.

The question is, “Are you ready?”

## CHAPTER FOUR

# NEVER FAILING LOVE

Several hundred miles off the coast of Guam is the Mariana Trench, the deepest place in the ocean. The depth of the ocean is mind-boggling here. The Mariana Trench is nearly seven miles down. The water pressure at the bottom of the trench is 15,931 pounds per square inch, yet there is life there surviving despite the pressure and the darkness. It is hard to fathom just how deep the Mariana Trench is, but it's much more difficult to comprehend the infinite depth of God's love for you.

### GRASP THE LOVE

The apostle Paul was hard pressed to describe this love, but he prayed that his readers would be able to somehow grasp the love of Christ

*God wants you to live in four dimensions of His love.*

which surpasses all knowledge. To the saints in Ephesus he prayed "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God"

Eph. 3:17-19

The word "comprehend" means:

'To take eagerly or to seize and thus to make something one's own, or to hold as one's own;

To gain control of through pursuit;

To grasp mentally;

To apprehend with the mind;

To perceive.'

The word comprehend carries the idea of mentally grasping something, while "apprehend"

suggests laying hold of it for yourself. It is possible to understand something, but not really make it your own.

The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible translates Paul's prayer this way, "And I ask Him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test it's length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God."

God wants you to live in four dimensions: 1) the breadth, 2) length, 3) depth, and 4) height of His love - a love that is immeasurable and

never failing. These were terms used to express the totality of the universe and astrologers utilized them in

their calculations. The universe is infinite and so also is God's love for you. "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you" Jer. 31:3.

God loves us with infinite dimensions and to an endless degree. The love of God extends from eternity past to eternity future and there will always be as much horizon before us- as behind us.

Christ's love is like His Name, and that is Wonderful Is. 9:6, so wonderful that it is above all creatures, beyond all measure, contrary to all nature. Time did not begin it and time shall never end it. Paul prayed that we would comprehend the love of God in its total fullness, that we would know fully and completely the totality of God's love for you. He wanted every aspect of your being - spirit, soul, and body - to know and experience and come into a relationship with



the love of God.

The good news is that you can attain what Paul is saying in this prayer. Paul was anointed when he wrote these words and the Spirit would not give the church a prayer that can't be answered.

The love of God is as high as the heavens above the earth and the only way to know and comprehend this love is to love others as He has loved you. When you demonstrate your love for Jesus by following His command to walk in love He will manifest Himself and His love to you. John 14:21 <sup>AMP</sup> says, **“The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me...and I [too] love him...[I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.]”**

Those controlled by their emotions don't know the love of God, but the person that endeavors to show it will come to comprehend it in a rich, full way.

You may not always be able to feel love for the unlovable at the outset, but you can be willing to be the channel through which love flows. As Christ's love through you broadens, lengthens, deepens, and heightens, you will come to know and experience the vastness of His great love.

Everything that pertains to your life gets its strength and nourishment from the love of God. You must be established in that love because love never fails, never becomes obsolete, never comes to an end. Love abides forever and when you are rooted and grounded in love you are firm, solid, and you'll never come to an end either. You'll never fail because you're standing on the firm foundation of love.

Paul was praying that the foundation of your life would be anchored in the love of God. In order to fully comprehend the magnitude of God's love you must first be rooted and grounded

in that same love. Eph. 3:17 <sup>NLT</sup> says, “Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.”

The Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible states, “May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love.”

The Phillips<sup>®</sup> Bible says you are to be “firmly fixed in love yourselves.” Being “rooted” means ‘to become stable; to render firm; to fix; to be firmly established; to be strengthened with spiritual roots; to be firmly fixed with the focus upon the source of such strength.’

## HOW TO WALK THE TALK

Believers are established and settled securely in the love of Christ. They are rooted deeply in the soil of love and thus rooted are able to grow strong and massive. In Christ believers find life-giving soil “that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified” <sup>Is. 61:3</sup>.

A tree must sink its roots deep into the soil if it is to have nourishment and stability. As a believer you have been permanently and completely rooted deep into the love of God.

Paul writes in Col. 2:6,7, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

Psalms 1:2,3 says blessed is the man whose “delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

Jer. 17:8 says, “For he shall be like a

*Love never fails, never becomes obsolete, never comes to an end.*

tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river and will not fear when heat comes; but her leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”

The born-again believer must be established in love as a way of life, a life of kindness, selflessness, brokenness, and meekness. It is the life of Christ finding expression in and through the life of the believer.

Love is the soil in which your life must have its roots, and it is the rock upon which your faith must ever rest. The word “grounded” describes the foundation which lies beneath, with reference always to something secure and permanent in itself. It means to ground securely, deeply, and firmly founded, like a building rising higher and larger.

The picture conveyed is that of a house which is so firmly fixed on a foundation that it is not moved by winds and floods, or by the stormy waves of suffering, or the loud howling roar of your adversary the devil. Love is the key to the fullness of God.

If you want to get filled up with God, then you must walk in love. You are to be rooted and grounded in that love which is unconditional, sacrificial, and always giving. When you’re walking in love, you’re walking in God for God is love <sup>1 John 4:8</sup>.

Nothing in your life will fail if love is your motivation. You can’t be defeated; you won’t be destroyed; you can’t be undone. Jesus looked like He was defeated when He hung on the cross, but He wasn’t. The love of God is a force that has all the appearance of weakness and yet is the strongest force that exists. To His tormentors and mockers Jesus appeared weak as He hung on the cross; to the world He looked defeated. But on that cross was pure love which could not be defeated.

## THE BREADTH

Jesus spread His arms out on the cross and said, “This is how much I love you.” That’s the breadth of God’s love and it has the ability to encompass the entire world and to reach every person.

## THE LENGTH

The length of God’s love is how far love will go and extend itself to help or reach another person. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).

## THE DEPTH

The depth of the love of God is the inability to change or be altered by bad circumstances and rejection. It may feel hurt and pain, but it will overcome it. It’s too deep to be dominated by it.

*Love is the key to the fullness of God.*

## THE HEIGHT

The height of God’s love is the magnitude it can achieve, the extantcy it can attain in the heart of someone who gives it and receives it. Love never fails and it was the fullness of God’s love that raised Jesus up three days later. Because of that love, death and the grave was forever defeated, as was sin, sickness, and poverty.

Your relationships at home, church, school, and work will remain and endure forever if you are rooted and grounded in love. If the motivation factor behind all you do is love, even if you do or say something at the wrong place and time, God will turn it around in your favor.

Love never fails. You can mess things up, but if you are rooted and grounded in love, even if what you did was wrong, when it crumbles it will crumble back into love.

Love will pick you up, set you on your feet, and send you on your way. You cannot be

defeated if you are walking in love even though many times you may look defeated and weak. If you are responding to life in the love of God you are going to come out on top every time.

The blocks you build your life upon may crumble, but they'll crumble back into love. Pick up the pieces and keep walking in love. If someone strikes you and you turn the other cheek, the love of God will stop them from hitting you on the other side.

There is no way to be defeated or undone when you walk in the love of God. It is impossible to fail. Real love has staying power. The world is changing around us day by day, but the love of God never changes, never ends, and never fails

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 13:8

Love is eternal. It never dies. It will last forever and it never, not at any time, never at all, fails! It is for this reason that Jude 21 tells you to “keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

1 Cor. 13:13 says, “And now abide ***faith, hope, love***, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Not only are these spiritual forces, but are also the three basic needs that every person has. A person has to have these three things if their life is to be fulfilled and complete.

***There will never be a day  
throughout all eternity  
when you won't need  
faith, hope, and love.***

These three things remain and endure forever. You were created to believe and in order to walk in faith you must have hope, a confident expectation, a dream, an aspiration.

Without faith and hope, people despair and give up on life. Both are needed in abundance, but the greatest need a person has is love. Not

only does a person need to receive love but even more so a person needs to give love. Yes, the need to give is the greatest need you'll ever have. You were created in the image of God. God is love and love always gives <sup>John 3:16</sup>.

Prosperity hasn't manifested in the church like God desires it to, because the only reason most people want money is so they can buy themselves a new car. God wants you to have nice things, but you're not going to get them outside the love of God. The proper motive for prosperity should be so you can be a blessing to someone else. Love always gives. When you do that God will add all these material benefits into your life.

Prosperity must be rooted and grounded in love, as does healing. Don't desire healing so you can watch TV without pain. Get healed so you glorify God and use your physical strength to do more for Him and other people. Get rooted and grounded in love first, then believe God for healing and prosperity.

Many people refuse to love, because they've been deeply hurt in the past. They come into the faith from backgrounds where love was not experienced. Maybe your parents abused you verbally or physically and perhaps you were in a series of abusive relationships with the opposite sex. You've had no role models of how to love other people and today you ridicule Jesus and take His Name in vain.

It is urgent, once you trust in Christ as your Savior, to learn from God's Word and from more mature believers how to love others in a practical, daily manner. You will need to unlearn many bad ways of relating to others that you brought with you from the past. You will need to relearn how to think and speak and act in loving ways, especially toward those who have wronged you.

***Without faith and hope,  
people despair and give up  
on life.***

If you do not learn to love others, you will fester with anger and bitterness, and your relationship with Christ will suffer. Rather than thinking angry thoughts about how somebody wronged you, begin to pray for that person that he or she would come to know Jesus. Forgive them and look for opportunities to return good instead of evil. Then let love extend to your speech.

Put off abusive speech that tears down the other person and cease from gossip and slander. Put on speech that builds up and edifies and begin to practice loving deeds, looking to serve others and becoming a blessing to them. Become zealous for good works <sup>Titus. 2:14</sup>.

### LOVE IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE

If you really want to walk in love, then you better be ready to work at it. Loving people who are unlovable is the hardest thing you will ever have to do, and as soon as you try the devil will rise up and attack you.

Love is spiritual warfare and you can never love without being vulnerable and opening yourself up to hurt. It can't be done. Not loving, however, will hurt you more than anything another person can do to you.

It is better to have a soft heart that can be hurt than a cold heart that can't. Love is deep and can supersede hurt, rejection, and bad circumstances. Love never fails and if you're white hot on fire with love, the devil can't touch you.

Ps. 84:11 says, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory: No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Choose love and don't draw back if you've been hurt. God will shield you and protect you. Open yourself up and love

again, because love will pick you up and give you the victory that you long for.

The greatest need you have is to love and be loved, and if nobody else will love you, God will. Bask in that love. If people love you, great! If they don't, so what? God loves you and this gives you the motivation and power to love people no matter how they feel about you. Jesus came to meet your need to be loved.

Always and forever you are loved! People have to love and be loved and this is why Jesus gave the command to love one another. It's man's greatest need.

### LOVE IS UNITY

Love is how unity comes to the body of Christ. The church will never come into unity based on what people believe. Believers loving one another is the key to unity, prosperity, healing, and faith. It's the key to the power of God, the key to everything God has and is.

The love of God needs to be your chief objective, the foremost thought in your thinking. You have to constantly be thinking about and dwelling on the question, "What would love do?" What would love say and how would love respond in the situation you find yourself in? If people call you names and say bad things about you, keep yourself in the love of God at all costs.

If you're not in the love of God you're in Satan's territory which is ruled by hatred and deceit. The majority of Christians and sinners alike have not seen God as He truly is. Rom. 2:4 says God is rich in goodness, rich in forbearance, and rich in longsuffering.

Love puts up with a lot of things and it's the goodness of God that leads people to repentance. The love of God seeks unity and desires reconciliation and the more you love

*"No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."*



other people the more you'll know God and comprehend the depth of His love. Remember, God loves the people you don't like and He wants you to love them as He has loved you.

## LOVE IS THE NATURE OF GOD

Love is the nature of God. His character, essence, and temperament is love. He can't do anything outside of love. He acts in love, He talks in love, He responds in love. A person's nature is revealed by close observation and the more you dwell in the presence of God the more you'll learn that His nature is love.

Since God is love, you can be love also. You can be patient and kind, not rude, jealous, or envious. Learning the concepts of walking in love will change your life because it teaches you to take your eyes off yourself and put them on other people. Nobody is going to be happy as long as they are selfish and think about themselves all the time. Jesus gave Himself up for us and it's this same nature of love that you must adopt as your own.

Your life may be a mess, but walking in love opens the door for God to change you. If you don't like who you are, then go out and do something nice for somebody else. God will change you if you do. You'll be changed into the image of God which is the image of love. You'll be changed from glory to glory, from love to greater love.

As you get rooted and grounded in love, you'll be able to comprehend with all the saints the four dimensions of God's eternal and glorious love. This same love will radiate out of you and will become your very own.

For love to grow, it has to flow. It has to get out of your heart and into your words and deeds. It has to govern your actions and your

bank account. Listen to what people say, be attentive to what they need and want, and then reach out and be a blessing to them.

Also, everybody you give to doesn't need to be poverty stricken. Give to somebody who has more than you. They may not need what you give them, but they do need the love and encouragement or the example of what walking in love is really like.

Love is not measured by verbal expression, it's measured by actions. Your love for God is measured by your obedience to His commands. 2 John 5 says, "And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another." The Wuest<sup>®</sup> translation says, "that commandment which we have been having continually from the beginning."

The disciples were continually going back to love, drawing the church's attention back to this truth.

John exhorts his readers no less than ten times in his writings to love one another. He places great emphasis on this subject because of its importance to the integrity of Christianity.

### ***True love is bound by the truth of God's will.***

Love finds the manifestation in responding to the will of God as revealed in His Word. Truth and love are the riverbanks between which God flows. In essence, love is applying God's Word to life's experiences. When you obey the Word, you are walking in love. God is love and since God and His Word are the same, then the Word is love. 2 Cor. 11:3 talks about "the simplicity that is in Christ." The Message<sup>®</sup> Bible calls it "the simple purity of your love for Christ." The

*For love to grow,  
it has to flow.*

simplicity of Christ is love.

In the Garden of Eden life was pretty simple. They only had one command - don't eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Today we also have one command, the command to walk in love.

## LOVE IS HABIT FORMING

Love should be a habit you perform daily, a divine love that is sacrificial in its essence. It's not concerned how it's been hurt but only how it can help. Nothing will mature you faster as a Christian.

John continues in 2 John 6, "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it." God's command is a statement of His will and the content of this love comes by revelation. Love is more than sentiment for it also involves content.

Shakespeare said, "Love reasons without reason." This is the opposite

of what God says. God says that love always contains content, a divine revelation of what the true love of God is all about. Man cannot artificially produce divine love on his own. Love manifests itself by responding to the content of God's will.

Keeping God's will out of a sense of duty and with little love for God is not true love. Sentimental love without God in it is as dry as last year's bird's nest. It has no depth and is as dry as the dust.

True love is hard to counterfeit. You can tell whether your belief and trust in God is genuine by the nature of your love. It's a response to the grace of God in Christ and love that is real does not lie beyond the sphere of action.

Love must be seen and not heard only. Love as an emotion or sentiment has

no accountability, but love in action reveals what you truly believe. Faith applies truth to experience and love presents the patent test of the genuineness of belief.

The Amplified<sup>®</sup> translation of 2 John 6 states, "And what this love consists in is this: that we live and walk in accordance with and guided by His commandments (His orders, ordinances, precepts, teaching). This is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you continue to walk in love [guided by it and following it]."

Love desires to guide you. It wants you to follow it. When you follow love you're following God, for God is love. It desires to govern everything you do.

God will personally instruct you how to love unlovely people. He'll show you how He loves them so you can love them the same

*God will personally instruct  
you how to love  
unlovely people.*

way. Let love urge you and prompt you to do the right thing. Don't grow weary and give up, for the love of God is too deep to quit.

Loving one another reveals how much you love God, so keep pressing forward with a never failing love no matter how people may respond back to you.

Natural people get their natural nature from their parents, but spiritual people get their spiritual nature from God. When you became a new creature in Christ, you got yourself a new nature. Rom. 5:5 says that the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart. God's love nature is in you! God is love and so are you! Say out loud, "I am love!"

Love is the greatest need of man, and God wants to use you to help meet that need. As you do, then and only then, will you be filled with the fullness of God and be able to comprehend the riches of the love of God that He has for you.



### About the author:

*Randall J. Brewer has been conveying the mind of God for more than thirty years, and we believe he's just getting started.*

*Raised in an abusive home, Randall has overcome numerous obstacles throughout his life by his trust in the One True God of the Bible. Writing for the Lord, Randall will put pen to paper anywhere the Lord finds him. From the comfort of his home to sitting in his car in a frozen Illinois parking lot, Randall can tell you that when the Spirit of the Lord is upon you to move... you move wherever you are.*



*Gifted with the Holy Spirit's willingness to express God's attitude and clarification of the Word, Randall has distributed a myriad of his publications worldwide over the years. Thousands of requests pour in each month needing the ministry teachings of Randall and the Holy Spirit's revelation of the character of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the King. Countless ministers throughout the world are using Randall's teaching as a basis for their sermons and study guides.*

*For more information about all Randall's publications, go to our website:*

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