



Practical Christian Living

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". Matthew 6:33
Course 4 Lesson 21

Love One Another



KEY VERSE:

"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"

Just before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, the Lord Jesus spent one last evening with His disciples. He used this time to comfort and instruct them. He also gave His disciples this command: "Love one another." The Lord Jesus said,

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34

This command is found in many places in the Bible. Here are a few:

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John 15:12

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Galatians 5:14

"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." 1 John 3:11

"This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4:21

"Above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8 NKJB

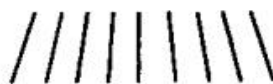
This command that we love one another is given special importance by the Lord Jesus Himself. Jesus said that obedience to it would be the identifying mark of His disciples. He said,

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35

GOD'S LOVE



BELIEVERS



God wants us to allow His love to flow through us to others.

WHAT THE LORD'S COMMAND MEANS

The command of the Lord Jesus that we love one another means two things:

1. Loving one another is not optional.

Christians are commanded to love one another. It is not a question of whether or not we want to love other believers. It is our Lord's command. Not to love another believer is to disobey Him. The Lord Jesus said,

"These things I command you, that ye love one another." John 15:17

2. Loving one another means loving every believer.

Loving one another does not mean loving only those believers to whom we are naturally attracted. It means loving every believer.

The Apostle John said that loving one another is the proof that we have been truly born again. John wrote,

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 1 John 3:14

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOVE

Since love is so important to the life of a believer, we need to

understand what the Lord Jesus means when He commands us to love one another.

The Greek language has several words to express the concept of love:

1. EROS - The word "eros" is used to describe the love of pleasure, the love of that which pleases me.

2. PHILIA - The word "philia" is used to describe the love of attraction. It is the warm love and affection that we have in a close friendship.

3. AGAPE - The word "agape" is used to describe the love of God. AGAPE love is that love which the Father has for His beloved Son. Jesus said to His Father, "Thou lovest (AGAPE) Me before the foundation of the world." ¹ AGAPE love is also the love which God has for the human race. The Bible says,

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

Amazingly, this AGAPE love is the very same love that Jesus commanded us to have for one another. Jesus said,

"This is My commandment, That ye love (AGAPE) one another, as I have loved you." John 15:12

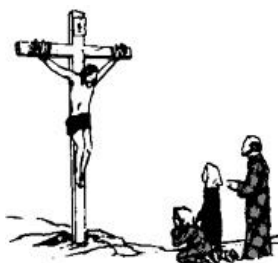
WHAT IS AGAPE LOVE?

It is not easy to define AGAPE love. It is something inward which shows itself in its actions. AGAPE love is most clearly seen in God's giving His Son to die for us while we were yet sinners. The Bible says,

"God commendeth (He showed) His (AGAPE) love

toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"Herein is (AGAPE) love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation (sacrifice) for our sins." 1 John 4:10



God's love is most clearly seen in His giving His Son to die for us.

These verses help us to understand what AGAPE love really is. **AGAPE love is that love which gives and sacrifices for the highest good of another person.** The main characteristic of AGAPE love is that it is utterly unselfish. It does not seek its own interests but always seeks the best interests of the other person.

Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians is called the "love chapter" because it tells us how love acts. Here is the way AGAPE love expresses itself:

- Love suffers long.
- Love is kind.
- Love does not envy.
- Love does not parade itself.
- Love is not puffed up.
- Love does not behave rudely.
- Love does not seek its own.
- Love is not provoked.
- Love thinks no evil.
- Love does not rejoice in iniquity.
- Love rejoices in the truth.
- Love bears all things.
- Love believes all things.
- Love endures all things.
- Love never fails.

NOTE: The Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 13 is "agape" (Pronounced a-ga-pe). It is best translated "love" rather than "charity" as in the King James Version.

GOD'S PROVISION OF LOVE

In ourselves we do not have the kind of love that the Lord commands. But God never commands us to do something without enabling us to do it.

How does God enable us to love one another with AGAPE love? **He gives us the indwelling Holy Spirit.** The same Spirit that dwells in the Father and in the Lord Jesus now dwells in us. That AGAPE love which is in God's heart flows to us and through us to others by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says,

"... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Romans 5:5

AGAPE love does not come from our self-efforts or anything in us. It is the "fruit of the Spirit." The Bible says,

"The fruit of the Spirit is (AGAPE) love" Galatians 5:22

God's love flows through us to others as we yield ourselves to Him to be channels for His love. We can say to someone, "I love you because God has placed within me His wonderful love for you." This AGAPE love is so powerful that it can enable us to love even our enemies.

It was AGAPE love that enabled the first martyr, Stephen, to pray for very men who were stoning him to death.



God's AGAPE love enabled Stephen to pray for his enemies.

HOW TO LOVE SOMEONE YOU DON'T LOVE

Though we are one with all other believers in our spirit, we are entirely different from others in our souls or personalities. Because our personalities are so different, we are naturally attracted to some people and not attracted to others. This is not sinful. God made us different from one another, and therefore we have different likes and dislikes. Jesus did not say that we must like every believer; He said that we must love them. To not love a fellow Christian is sin. The Bible says,

*"He that loves not his brother abides in death. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."
1 John 3:14,15*

Right now, God may be speaking to you about someone you do not love. It may be a relative, a fellow church member, or someone else. You may be saying, "I know that I should love that person, but how do I do it?" Here are the steps:

STEP 1 I must confess my lack of love as sin.

That lack of love in my heart, which we will call "unlove," is sin. When my heart attitude is wrong, I must acknowledge it and confess it to God as sin. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin confessed as sin, but it does not cleanse me when I excuse myself.

Next, I must exercise my will and choose to be delivered from the sin of unlove. Love is not just a matter of the will, but I will never be delivered from the sin of unlove unless I exercise my will and choose to be delivered. I

must say, "I choose to be delivered from this sin of unlove.

STEP 2 I must count on the fact that, in Christ, I died to the sin of unlove.

I can be delivered from any sin by counting on the fact that, in Christ, I died to that sin. The Bible says,

*"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"
Romans 6:1,2 NKJB*

No Christian should continue to live in sin. Why? Because, in Christ, he died to sin. And, in Christ, we died to the sin of unlove. Let us make these verses personal:

What shall I say then? Shall I continue in this sin of unlove, that grace may abound?

Certainly not! How shall I, who died to this sin of unlove, love any longer in it?

Must I be a slave to this sin of unlove the rest of my life? No! God's Word says that I died to this sin. I must step out in faith, believing God's Word.

STEP 3 I must choose to love that person.

I cannot control my feelings, but I can control my will. I cannot make myself have a feeling of love toward someone, but I can choose to love that person. If I make that choice and hold to it, I will find that my feelings will, in time, follow the choice of my will. The important thing to remember is this: **I am controlled by the decision of my will and not by my feelings.**

You may say, "But what if that person doesn't respond to

my love?" You can love him anyway. Jesus said,

*"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy 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."
Matthew 5:43,44*

STEP 4 I must trust God to do what I cannot do.

Paul said in Romans 7 that he could "will" or choose what is right, but that he could not, of his own ability, do it. Paul learned that he had to depend on the Holy Spirit within him to enable him to do it.

This is true of us also. I may choose to love someone I don't love, but I will discover that, in myself, I cannot do it. I must depend on the Holy Spirit within me to enable me to do it. He will do this, but I must make the decision. I must say to God, "Lord, I choose to love that person. In myself I cannot do it. I am trusting You to enable me to do it."

God is always ready to enable us to carry out a decision that is in accordance with His Word. But we must choose it. The Bible says,

*"Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee"
Job 22:28*

STEP 5 I must pray that person into my heart.

Sometimes, even after I have asked God to work, nothing seems to happen. What do I do next? I begin to pray for that person. I pray that God will bless that person. I pray that God will bless him and help him. Often, as I

pray earnestly and sincerely for God's blessing upon the other person, God works in my heart to change me.

STEP 6 I must earnestly seek to change my attitude toward that person.

To be critical of another believer, or to not love him because he is not like me, is to fail to see God's wonderful plan. God wanted us to be different from each other! He made us all different that each of us might, in a special way, display the glories of Christ. When I see God's great plan, I will appreciate and esteem every believer because he is precious to the Lord and able, in a special, unique way, to manifest the glories of Christ.

STEP 7 I may need to go see that person.

Sometimes God works a miracle when we go to see a person and talk with him. We often find, to our surprise, love swelling up in our heart for that person. Jesus told the man with the withered arm to stretch forth his arm. As he obeyed the Lord, he found God's power flowing into him, enabling him to do what he could not do before.



As the man with the withered arm obeyed the Lord, God's power flowed into him, enabling him to do what he could not do before.

STEP 8 I must plan positive behavior.

If you do not love someone, do for him what you would do if you did love him.

You may say, "But wouldn't I be acting like a hypocrite if I did that?" No, you would not. You have within you Christ's life and your sinful self-life. You must choose which one you will express. It is not being hypocritical if you choose to express Christ's life and His love to someone even though you do not feel like it.

You do not have to have a feeling of love to act in love. The Christian writer, C.S. Lewis, said,

The rule for all of us is perfectly simple. Do not waste time bothering whether you love your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we learn one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love them.²

LOVE ENABLES PEOPLE TO SEE THE UNSEEN

How can people "see" the unseen God? There is only one way - they must see Him in His people. The Apostle John said,

*"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."
1 John 4:12*

What is John saying here? He is saying this, "No one can see God with his eyes. If we love one another, other people can 'see' the invisible God as they see His love manifested in us." This AGAPE love is powerful beyond measure.

Out of Russia comes this story of a young girl named "Mary" who was imprisoned for her faith in Jesus Christ. It is a story that reveals the power of AGAPE

love. From her prison cell, "Mary" wrote,

I am still in the same place of exile. There is a Godless society here; one of the members became especially attached to me. She said, "I cannot understand what sort of person you are; so many here insult and abuse you, but you love them all." She caused me much suffering, but I prayed for her earnestly. Another time she asked me whether I could love her. Somehow I stretched out my hands toward her. We embraced each other, and began to cry. Now we pray together ... Her name is Barbara.³



"I stretched out my hands toward her. We embraced each other, and began to cry. Now we pray together."

Barbara accepted Christ as her personal Savior and testified boldly of her faith in Christ before all. Because of her fearless testimony, she was beaten and imprisoned, Mary wrote,

Yesterday, for the first time I saw our dear Barbara in prison. She looked very thin, pale, and with marks of beatings. The only bright thing about her were her eyes, bright and filled with heavenly peace and joy ... I asked her through the bars, "Barbara, are you not sorry for what you have done?"

"No," she firmly responded. "If they would free me, I would go

again and tell my comrades about the marvelous love of Christ. I am very glad that the Lord loves me so much and counts me worthy to suffer for Him."



Discovered Gem

I can love other because God has put His wonderful love in me.

1. John 17:24
2. C. S. Lewis, "Mere Christianity"
3. Quoted by William R. Newell in "Romans, Verse by Verse".

MEDITATION GUIDE

(TO STUDY AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEXT LESSON)

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages there is a Meditation Guide for each of the three lessons in this booklet. Each Guide has a key verse, comments, and questions that will help you to see from the Bible the main message of the lesson.

AFTER YOU FINISH the Question Pages, and have sent them in, we suggest that you work on the meditations. Do NOT send in your meditations. They are for you to personally use and keep.

THE PURPOSE of the Meditation Guide is to help you learn how to study the Bible on your own. It will help you to think (meditate) about a portion of Scripture in order to understand it. It will help you learn how to get in touch with God through His Word and through prayer.

MEDITATION. What does "meditation" mean? It does not mean to let your mind go blank. Quite the contrary, meditation means that you get hold of your thoughts and bring them all

together to concentrate on a portion of God's Word. As you do this, it gives the Lord an opportunity to make Himself known to you.

PAUSE TO PRAY. Before beginning each meditation, pause to pray, quieting your heart before the Lord so that you will be ready to hear what He has to say to you from the Bible.

If there are any words you do not understand, be sure to look them up in a dictionary.

MEMORY VERSE. You may wish to memorize the Key Verses, or other verses found in these Meditation Guides. Memorizing Scripture is one of the best means to meditate on God's Word. It would also be very helpful in keeping before you the main truth of each lesson.

NOTE: The King James Bible was used in preparing these Meditation Guides.

KEEP THIS GUIDE - DO NOT SEND IT IN

Lesson 21: LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Key Verse:

"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

These verses are an actual quotation of what Jesus said to His disciples. Since these are words of Jesus, that makes them very important. He told them that He was giving them a new commandment. What was it?

What do you think is meant by the word "commandment"?

Why do you think Jesus called it a "new" commandment?

He gave an example of this kind of love that He was talking about. What was it? (See also John 15:12)

Just how great is this love that we are to have for one another? (John 15:13)

Jesus was referring to a particular incident in John 15:13. What was it?

Pause now to think of those that you do not love. Perhaps there are those whom you dislike so deeply that you believe that you will never be able to love them. Stop in your reading right here and talk to God about this.

We need God's love in our hearts. Turn to Romans 5:5. Who brings God's love into our heart? _____
 _____ Begin now to trust Him to do it. Confirm your decision in prayer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Turn to the Question Page as you finish each lesson. Fill in the answers for that lesson before going on to the next lesson.
- 2. When you have studied all the lessons and have completed the Question Pages, prepare for mailing. Don't forget to write in your name and return address. Send in your ANSWER SHEET ONLY!

EXAM

Lesson 21

- 1. The command of the Lord Jesus that we love one another means two things:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 2. AGAPE love is that love which _____ and _____ for _____. The main characteristic of AGAPE love is that it is _____.
 - 3. How does God enable us to love one another with AGAPE love? _____
 - 4. The steps in loving someone I don't love are:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____
 - 4. _____
 - 5. _____
 - 6. _____
 - 7. _____
 - 8. _____
 - 5. If you do not love someone, do for him what you would do if _____.
- What is the most important thing you have learned from this lesson? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Send your exam to the following address:
Latin Evangelical Outreach
 P.O. Box 549
 Irvington, New Jersey 07111-0549

Your Name and Address.....Please Print

Complete Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

ZIP Code _____

Do you have friends who would like to receive these lessons?

Please send us their address:

Complete Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____