

LESSON 13



KEEPING IN GOD'S LOVE

Scripture Texts: Jude 20-21; 1 John 4:7-8; Romans 5:5; 1 John 2:5; Romans 13:10; Ephesians 3:16-19

The love of God is the love He has in His heart for mankind. He showed it when He gave His only Son as the perfect Sacrifice for sin. He gives it to a human when He saves him from sin and fills him with His Spirit. We perfect this love in us by obedience to God. This leads on into the fullness of God.

We are not now living under the Ten Commandments. In Christ we are made free from the Law. Christ brought to man a better way. Love fulfills the Law. Jesus Christ brought forth a new Law. In His new Law, old things are passed away, and all things became new.

MEMORY VERSE: *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

Keep Yourselves

Jude 20-21. **Keep yourselves in the love of God.** Not our love *for* God nor His *for* us but the love that fills God's heart. Out of His boundless store He gives a supply to every child born into His family. If kept and used, this love leads on—through **the mercy of our Lord . . . unto eternal life.** We are kept in this love by building up ourselves **on the most holy faith.** Feed on it. Grow.

Romans 8:2 says that in Christ we are made free from the old Law. Jesus came to fulfill the old Law by bringing a new one. The old Law was, "thou shalt." The new commandment, is, "if ye love me, keep . . ." Christ gave the sacrifice the Law demanded: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Jesus fulfilled the demands of the old Law that could not make one perfect. The new Law of Jesus, when obeyed, gives freedom from death and takes one on into perfection. See 1 John 4:12. We want to do right, and we have the power, through God's love, to carry out our good desires. Keeping ourselves is our response to the love of God. Read John 14:15.

More Than a Natural Love

First John 4:7-8. **Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God.** Only those born of God love with His love. It is a gift of grace. It is only given when one repents of sin and is made alive in Christ. The fact that one loves his family and friends does not mean he has the love of God. This is a natural love. It is good as far as it goes, but measured by God's love, it falls short (see Matthew 5:46).

Romans 5:5. **The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.** When one is born of God, he is given love from God. This is the first step in salvation. See Romans 5:1-4. Verse 5 reveals the major One in the second step—**by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.** Without the Holy Ghost coming in, the love of God cannot be shed abroad in our hearts. It flows to fill the heart with a warm glow of love. From there it flows out toward ALL people, the unlovely and the persecutor as well as the lovely. It desires that they, too, should know the Savior. If the love of God did not take us beyond the natural love, it would be of little or no help to us. Read 1 John 4:20-21.

Love Perfected

First John 2:5. **In him verily is the love of God perfected.** All things of God progress. The love of God is not finished when it enters the center of human affections, the heart. It is there to work. It is **perfected** in a continuing process by Him who **keepeth his word**, who continues obeying. Love energizes an active, godly life. Love directs his thoughts and motivates his acts. Love is the mark of discipleship—**hereby know we that we are in him.** Read verse 6 also.

Love Sufficient

Romans 13:10. **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.** It seeks the good of all. There is not one point of God's Law that love would not cause one to obey. **Love is the fulfilling of the law.** Where other virtues such as patience, long-suffering, faith, and hope fail or fall short, love supplies. See 1 Corinthians 13:13. Charity will succeed in spite of blunders and lack of wisdom. Love is the catalyst that energizes other virtues, as "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). It "shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

Love Reaches Out

Ephesians 3:16-19. **According to the riches of his glory** Paul recounts his prayer for the Ephesians—and for us, too—in his greeting: "to the faithful in Christ Jesus." He prays that our spiritual life will be blessed in many steps. The life in Christ always involves growth measured by **the riches of his glory.** Only our lack of faith and obedience limit it.

He prayed that we **be strengthened . . . by his Spirit**, the Holy Spirit—by His entrance into our **inner man.** Also, **that Christ may dwell in each by faith.** Thus we will be **rooted and grounded in love**—firmly established so that love prompts and characterizes every act.

Circumstances will not easily shake our love. The love of God helps one to reach out and comprehend **the breadth, and length, and depth, and height** of what God has in store for His saints. **And to know the love of Christ**—not know ABOUT it but know IT, even though it **passeth knowledge.** That is, it is not understood or explained by natural man. Read 1 Corinthians 2:14.

God through faith and His love makes it possible for an insignificant human being to be caught up into God, to be part of Him, to grow and reach and accomplish this experience of love that **passeth knowledge.** It is never exhausted and always has more to be learned. All this is **that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.** This is the ultimate blessing. Can we fathom the reach of God's love in us? *Keep yourselves in the love of God.*

JUST A THOUGHT

**Overlook the faults of others,
but look over your own carefully.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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