

Love and the New Covenant

Fred R. Coulter—July 9, 1993

One thing we need to understand—the spiritual maturity to which we need to come—*we need not be afraid of anything, anyone, or any doctrine*. I feel that if you really strive to stay close to Christ, which I'm sure all of us are trying to do, and you ask for the mind of Christ, and study His Word, that you will be able to know the Truth and understand it. You will be able to differentiate Truth from error, because Christ promised we would.

It says, 1-John 4:6: “By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.” Therefore, you can have discussions of any length—and even quite heated at times like it was in Acts 15 if necessary—and still love each other, and still have the Spirit of God, because God doesn't want us to be just doormats. I mean, how on earth are we going to assist Christ in ruling in the Millennium if we're just doormats? *Never happen!* One of the things that we need to understand, and understand more deeply in the differentiation between law-keeping to the letter of the law.

Can you have a relationship with people or with one another, based solely on law, and be correct, but have it a nonfunctioning agreement? This is what has happened in so many Churches of God, which stress—and rightly so, but too much so—*keeping the commandments*. No one is saying we should not keep the commandments, which is really kind of the lesson of Job. Job did everything perfect in the letter, but he was missing one important ingredient: really loving God enough to see his own position in relationship to God. That's why he had to repent so drastically at the end.

I want to play this song, and it's from *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Do You Love Me?

Tevye: Golde do love me?

Golde: Do I what?

Tevye: Do you love me?

Golde: Do I love you?

Tevye: Well?

Golde: With our daughters getting married and there's trouble in the town, you're upset, you're worn out, go inside, go lie down. Maybe it's indigestion.

Tevye: Ah no, Golde I'm asking you a question. Do you love me?

Golde: You're a fool.

Tevye: I know. But do you love me?

Golde: Do I love you?

Tevye: Well?

Golde: For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked your cow. After twenty-five years, why talk about love right now?

Tevye: Golde, the first time I met you was on our wedding day. I was scared.

Golde: I was shy.

Tevye: I was nervous.

Golde: So was I.

Tevye: But my Father and my mother said we'd learn to love each other. And now I'm asking, Golde, Do you love me?

Golde: I'm your wife.

Tevye: I know—But do you love me?

Golde: Do I love him?

Tevye: Well.

Golde: For twenty-five years I've lived with him, fought with him, starved with him. Twenty-five years my bed is his. If that's not love, what is?

Tevye: Then you love me?

Golde: I suppose I do.

Tevye: And I suppose I love you, too.

Tevye and Golde: It doesn't change a thing, but even so, after twenty-five years, it's nice to know.

If you listen to the song very carefully, he asked, 'Do you love me?' She said, 'Well I suppose I do.'

Many people in the Church of God are that way toward God. They think that they can love God, and express the love to God, by just keeping the commandments. That's exactly the reverse of what God wants us to have.

Let's see something interesting and ask: Why should we love God? And that was really the question that he was asking his wife: Why don't you love me? *Well I washed your clothes, and I mended your socks, and I've cooked your meals*. All legal binding agreements in the law for a marriage—right? *Yes!* 'But do you love me?'

We need to clarify something else I think is most important and most profound: You've heard said that God is putting us through all of this misery we're going through so we will learn not to sin. That's true, but I'll tell you one thing that's important: We're not going to go through all eternity beating our spiritual flesh, as it were, saying, 'I'm not going to sin, I'm not going to sin, I'm not going to sin.' No, because *the only way you can live for eternity is by love*. You think on that a minute! God

is not going to have us there unless we love Him. And that's just the way it's going to be.

Let's come to Mark 12:28, and this will show you that the love of God is more than just a commandment. It's more than just repeating the words and a ritual. "And one of the scribes who had come up to *Him*, after hearing them reasoning together *and* perceiving that He answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is *the first* commandment of all?'" The Greek there is 'protos'—*primary*, the most basic fundamental commandant of all

Verse 29: "Then Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments *is*, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God...' (vs 29-30). Notice how this is to be. There is not one word of commandment-keeping here. And we will see how that all flows together in 1-John in just a minute.

Verse 30: "And you shall love *the* Lord your God with **all your heart**... [So you won't have to ask: Do you love me?] ...and with **all your soul**... [If your soul is your physical body, then that means you have to take care of it and eat the right things, and so forth.] ...and with **all your mind**... [That's something else, because people truly, deeply in love can think of nothing else! All your mind, and not only that, it's not a part-time job.] ...and with **all your strength**. This *is the* first commandment. And *the* second *is* like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (vs 30-31). And Jesus gave a third commandment: that you 'love one another in the same way that I have loved to you.'

He also said, Matthew 22:40: "On these two commandments hang **all** the Law and the Prophets." They hang *from*. Love is not supported *by*; they come *from*. So, Law is derived *from love*. When we understand that God is love, and there is only one Lawgiver—Who is God—then Law comes *from* love because God is love, which is very important. We'll change our whole perspective in how we obey God, how we look to the things and how we're going to respond to God.

Now notice what he said, Mark 12:32: "Then the scribe said to Him, 'Right, Master... [that is, *well spoken Master*] ...You have spoken according to Truth that God is one, and there is not another besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *one's* neighbor as oneself, **is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices**'" (vs 32-33). In a marriage you can put up with an awful lot of clothes not washed *if* you truly love each other.

Now notice Jesus' answer. And this is what

is missing most of the time, v 34: "And Jesus, seeing that he answered with understanding, said to him, 'You are not far from the Kingdom of God.'" He's getting close to the object of it, and when you put all of this in context with the punctiliousness of the keeping of the commandments in the letter by Judaism, you will understand the profundity of the statement. 'You are not far! You are finally getting close!' Then look at all the other questions that they asked Jesus, and so forth.

Now let's understand something that is so *profound*; let's see the **requirement of love** that God put on Himself for us. This is a very basic fundamental Scripture. Let's hope we can learn some more of the love of God from this, John 3:16: "For God so loved the world..." This means God's profound love for the world, not just us, but *the world*. In God's own time He's going to show that, and prove that. After all it's the same thing, just like in marriage. What on earth good is a marriage if it's just run by law, if there's no love? It will soon break down in hate. And what good is it to serve a God who is not a God of love? I mean, you think about that!

Verse 16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten** Son... [And it's interesting in the Greek: 'He gave His only Son *the begotten, the only begotten*'—so it's even more emphatic.] ...so that everyone who believes in Him..." As I mentioned in the series on John that 'in' means *into*. Your faith comes *from within* you, **out of you toward God**, and *into* His very being of faith and love.

"...may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (vs 16-17). That is God's desire. He's given the choice up to us.

Let's understand how this impacts into our lives. Let's see some very important things. This is the whole basis of the New Covenant, 1-John 4:7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love**.... [it's something we can possess, but that is what God is.] ...**In this way**... [in the Greek again, as we will learn, it is 'en toutoo,'—*in this way* or, *this manner* or *this means*] ...the love of God was manifested toward us..." (vs 7-9).

He's talking about the apostles in relationship to showing the love of God toward the disciples and the believers. That this kind of '**God is love**' was manifest in us that we are preaching to you vs the first part of this, which are the antichrists and the ones of the devil.

He goes on saying here: "...that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.... [now we come back to the present tense again] ...In this *act*, is **the love**..." (vs 9-10). In other words, that there's no other way of saying the profundity of the love of God—**the love**—in this very act of sending His Son.

When you look at it, the hardest thing for us as people to do—I've had to go through this, and I know you have—is *to show love to someone that you don't want to show love to*. With the world filled with sin the way it is, would you come and die for them? I mean, think of that the next time you watch all the evil on TV, and you'll realize, as I do, we have a long way to go in growing in love—right?

That doesn't mean, for the acts they have done they don't deserve to be punished, because they do. We know God's plan; that God is going to take care of it in the long run. But nevertheless, Christ was sent **before** these people were even created, and His sacrifice applies to them even to this day. You know that in this world we're going to be dealing with a lot of people. It's not going to be a matter of arguing over whether you go to church on Sabbath or Sunday; it's going to be a matter of how they can restore their lives to God. And living in such a hateful world, how's it going to be if there's no real true love? You can have all kinds of mealy-mouth love; you can have all kinds of things where you profess love, but to really have it, that's what we're trying to learn here.

Verse 9: "In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is **the love**—**not that we loved God**... [And that's the whole lesson of Job. No one is going to go to God and say, 'God I love You; You've got to give me salvation.' Because in that you're telling God what to do.] ...not that we loved God..." (vs 9-10).

What is the greatest thing that brings us to repentance? *To understand the love of God!* In spite of all the stupidity; in spite of all the sins; in spite of all the difficulties that I have gone through—that you've gone through—whenever you've gone through a trial or difficulty or whatever it is, you realize that **God loves you**. That's the whole basis of the New Covenant, brethren.

"...rather, that He loved us and... [not only that He] ...sent His Son *to be the propitiation*... [Propitiation is one step above expiating. Expiating is removing your sin once. Propitiation is removing your sins on a constant basis—which we need. And that's why we have grace.] ...for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are **duty-bound** to love one another" (vs 10-11). We've never had it put this

way before—have we? *But that is true!*

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time.... [There were a lot of people going around saying that they had seen God.] ...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." You think about that for a minute, brethren. The very fact that you have the Spirit of God in you, **God is dwelling in you!** Now, that's a tremendous amount of love in itself just to think on that one thing alone. Of all the people in the world—and we surely have got to come in somewhere right at the bottom rung or near to it, or maybe on the bottom side of the bottom rung—**God loved us!** Not because we're great, that we love God and God responded because of our great deed. **No!** And **God dwells in us!**

1-John 3:1 "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure" (vs 1-3).

Based on love, let's see how our conduct has to be, v 4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.... ['anomos'—*against law*] ...And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him **does not practice sin**..." (vs 4-6). That's what it means in the Greek: you're not *practicing* sin. It doesn't mean you don't sin, but you don't *practice* it.

"...anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him. Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who **has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His seed of begettal**..." (vs 6-9). The Greek for *seed* is 'sperma'—from the Father. That's how He is dwelling in us; is dwelling within him.

"...does not practicing sin, because His seed *of begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God" (v 9). Brethren, this means that anyone who has the Spirit of God, if they're living in sin, God is going to bring them to a conviction so they can repent, because they can't be practicing sin.

I recently had someone come to my door, and was so happy that I was still living where I was when I was pastoring in Monterey. This individual went to the congregation in Monterey that I was pastoring at that time; and with all the trouble and difficulty in the Church, dropped out, and has been going to a Methodist church every Sunday and *knew* that it wasn't right.

She came and knocked on the door and said, 'I've got to get back on the track.' ***You cannot be practicing living in sin!*** This is a fantastic example, brethren. Think of how many are out there, that have the Spirit of God, that are wandering like lost sheep, and all they want to know is: Do you love me? And all God wants to know is: Do you love Me?

To ask in relationship to what I just said about someone not living in sin, what about weakness? If you have a weakness, which causes you to sin—and I guarantee everybody one thing: you will never be perfect in the flesh, and everyone has a weakness somewhere along the line. Let that be a motivating factor to let you love God more and more, because you don't have the strength within you to overcome the weakness. It is a weakness, and only through the strength and love of God can you ever overcome it.

Verse 10: "By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from *the beginning*—that we should love one another" (vs 10-11). I'll tell you—from the pulpit and between brethren—there's been too much *lack of love*: bashing, knocking and condemning.

Verse 12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother. And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous. My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren. **The one who does not love his brother is dwelling in death.** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. By this *very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren" (vs 12-16).

We think that it's easy to love God Whom we haven't seen. But God says you better love your brother that you do see. We'll see how this ties in with the love of God.

1-John 4:14: "And we have seen *for* ourselves... [the apostles; probably at this particular

time John and Andrew and some of the other apostles at Ephesus when this was written] ...and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him" (vs 14-16). Now you see how this ties in with the command to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being.

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. **There is no fear in the love of God...**" (vs 17-18).

Now, you need to think about that! That doesn't mean that we throw caution to the wind and we run out down the road at 200 mph or anything like that, and say we have no fear. But ***there is no fear in coming to God, if you love Him!*** There is no fear in love. If you have a husband and wife who love each other, opposite of what we've heard on this song here, then there's no fear. He wouldn't have to have the fear: Do you love me? And she wouldn't have to have the fear to answer back and say, Well, I do all these things. This is the kind of fear it's talking about.

"...rather, perfect love casts out fear..." (v 18). It's an ongoing thing. You are ***casting it out***. This includes:

- your sins
- your weaknesses
- fearing that you won't make it into the Kingdom of God

How many times has that been held over people's head? *God wants you there!* That's why God has called you. You should have no fear that you're not going to make it. *God wants you there!*

"...because **fear has torment...**" (v 18). I tell you, the times I've had fear, and worry, and frustration—what happens? *Torment! Sleepless nights!* We've all gone through it. Anyone who hasn't, it'll come because it's a test of love. And I'll tell you one thing that is sure, absolutely for sure: as human beings ***we do not have love perfected in us unless we suffer. God did not have love perfected in Him through Christ, until Christ suffered!*** Think on that!

God is always perfect in love, but what God did to redeem us was such a loving act that even God had His love perfected to a greater degree through the suffering of Jesus Christ, because of what Jesus went through and what He bore in His body.

“...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God. We love Him **because He loved us first**” (vs 18-19). We need to always remember that, and especially for a minister. What did Christ ask Peter?

- Peter, do you love Me? *Yea Lord, I love you!*
- Feed My sheep.

He said the second time:

- Peter do you love Me? *Yes Lord!* He was a little irritated that time: *You know I love You!*
- Feed My sheep.

And the third time He said:

- Peter, do you love Me? *Yes, Lord, You know I love You!*

And we know the play on words between ‘phileo’ and ‘agape.’

- Feed My lambs!

This needs to be an act that a minister does, not because he wants to prove that he’s a minister, but because he loves God:

Verse 20: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.... [God puts it right back to us—doesn’t He?] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs 20-21).

Let’s see that in the Sermon on the Mount is exactly where Jesus started—wasn’t it? He said, Matthew 5:23: “For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go *your way*; **first** be reconciled... [which is an act of love] ...and then come and offer your gift” (vs 23-24).

1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him Who begat also loves him who has been begotten by Him. By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: **when we love God...** [present tense] **...and keep His commandments**” (vs 1-2). How much more will you keep the commandments of God if you love Him? How much better will you keep the commandments of God without having to say, ‘Oh I got to keep it better.’ By having the whole attitude of loving God.

Verse 3: “For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

Now let’s go to the Gospel of John, chapter 14. When I did the *Passover Ceremony* booklet, it really dawned on me how absolutely profound the New Covenant is, *based on love*. Love is greater

than law. Law will give you the minimum requirement as to what you should do. If a husband says, I want my breakfast at six every morning and he has to tell his wife every day. ‘I want my breakfast at six every morning.’ If she loved him she would have it ready, he would never have to ask. She would know, and wouldn’t that make things better? Or likewise, with the husband. You don’t come along and suspect because certain things aren’t done that she doesn’t love you or care for you. Anyone who says that they’ve been married and never had a fight, well then come and tell me about it, I’d like to know. Even ministers and their wives have fights, everybody, once in a while, I’ll guarantee it. They’re not human if they don’t.

Here’s the whole basis of the New Covenant John 14:15: “**If** you love Me...” Notice there again—**love first**. You’re going to keep the commandments because of love, and that profound love, of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being; as you say, every fiber of your being.

“...keep My commandments—namely My commandments” (v 15). This would be an interesting thing, and I don’t have it on computer, nor do I have the Greek on computer, but I hope to one of these days as one of my projects: go through the New Testament and pick out every commandment that Christ gave. Some people like to specialize in going back over the 630 in the Old Testament. That’s fine, nothing wrong with that. But let’s try all the ones in the New Testament and see how we measure up.

Then He says He would send the Holy Spirit (v 16). Let’s come on down to v 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him”

Brethren, we are sitting here with the most profound thing, and I pray for greater understanding of this: *God the Father*, the greatest Being in the universe, **loves us**. I mean, think on that! If you feel down, if you feel out, if you feel neglected; if you feel put upon; if you feel unwanted—which all of us have—**remember, the greatest Being in the universe loves you!** And loves you so much that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, **Who was God**.

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... [v 14]: ...And the Word became flesh...” so that God could understand the temptation and the sin that we go through. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and carried the *law of sin and death* within His very members, so that we could have our

sins forgiven. That's what He bore in His body to the tree, to the cross. *Not having sin but tempted in every way like we are*, He would show His *profound love for God* and *His profound love for us*. And that is so profound what He did: for God to empty and divest Himself as being God to become a human being, which he was a human being, and having *the law of sin and death* in Him, and to be *tempted in every way as we are*, was an absolutely qualifying for Christ as our Savior—had to be.

Now coming back to here in John 14:22: “Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’”—which is quite a question.

- What makes you different than other people in the world?
- What is it that separates us from people in the world?
 - ✓not because we're better
 - ✓not because we're richer
 - ✓not because we're greater

But there's been a manifestation to us by the Holy Spirit of God to lead us to Him, and lead us to love Him and keep His commandments. So, He says, ‘Here's how I'm going to manifest Myself to those that I call and not the world.’

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, **he will keep My word**... [You can do a great and profound study on that: *In the beginning was the Word*; not only just the commandments, but the words of Christ.] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me” (vs 23-24).

That, brethren, is really a deep and profound thing how we need to really love God. I've been through every doctoral argument that there is, and some people like to say that they manifest love by throwing out doctrine. You can't do that, because doctrines are the teachings of God. You can't love God and throw out doctrine. But I tell you what, even though you get it all right and get it all straightened out, *if you don't love God what good is it?* Are there people who know of the Sabbath Day and keep it in their own way but don't have Christ? *Yes!* Are there people who don't murder and don't have Christ, that don't have the love of God? *Yes!* You can go right on down the line any one of the commandments. That's not to do away with them.

Let's see how that this love, coupled with grace—and grace is the first manifestation of the

love of God—that something very important happens. By faith, by grace and by love, what we actually do when we love God, we keep the laws of God in a proper and correct way. That's something to really think and ponder on—isn't it? We do! And what are we doing with this love, because you can have law without love and *you accomplish nothing eternally*. But if you have eternal love and you keep the commandments of God with faith and grace, then here's what you do:

Romans 3:31: “Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, we are establishing law.” It's very interesting that in the Greek it means: *you make the law to stand*. And I think that's profound. **We make it to stand!**

Let's see how this is true with loving God and magnifying the law. Isaiah 42:21: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake...” Think how absolutely perfectly Christ kept the laws.

(go to the next track)

Verse 21: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake... [Think how absolutely perfectly that Christ kept the laws. Why did He keep the laws that way?] ...**He will magnify the Law and make it glorious.**” How will He make it glorious? *By basing it on love!*

Let's go to John 5:19. “Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself...’ That's interesting from the point of view the Greek is ‘ek’—that means *coming out from within Himself*. In other words, He's not going to initiate anything on His own.

“...but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder” (vs 19-20).

Let's come to the very heart and core of the whole process of the New Testament, the New Covenant, John 15:8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit...”

I want you to pay particular attention to Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone that says to Me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who's doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we* not cast out demons through Your name’” (vs 21-22).

What kind of fruit? A lot of people look to income and say, ‘Boy! God is blessing us, we must

be spiritual.’ But what kind of fruit? That poor little group over there. I know when I talk to different ministers they ask, ‘How many do you have?’ And I say, ‘Everyone that truly believes. How many do you have?’ ***Because it’s not the number!*** Though sinners march hand-in-hand, they’re all going to fall. It’s not the number! What kind of fruit is it that we’re going to bear?

John 15:8: “...so shall you be My disciples.... [Then He answers the question. Notice, too many times we don’t connect the verses so they’re one after another—isn’t that true? Notice how He says to bear fruit]: ...As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love....” (vs 8-9). IF you continue in ‘My love’ then you’re going to *bear the fruit ‘I want.’* What is the fruit?

‘...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness... against such things there is no law’ (Gal. 5:22-23) Why? *Because those are a spiritual law to themselves based on love!*

- We make the law to stand!
- We make the Sabbath stand!
- *Because we love God!*
- We make the Holy Days to stand!
- *Because we love God!*

We don’t do away with them. We don’t have the gall to march up to God and say, ‘God I love you so much but I hate Your Law.’ That’s incongruous— isn’t it? ***That’s stupid!*** It doesn’t work

How it is to be, v 9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; **live in My love.** If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love.... [*it is a living love*] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full” (vs 9-11).

And everyone asks: Why am I so miserable in this Christian life? I’ve had my share of misery in it. *So that we will learn to love!* Do you not appreciate love when you have suffered? *Yes!* That’s what it’s all about. May we quit beating up on each other and learn to love each other so we have the joy.

I’ll tell you what, you come down to the last where you think there is no one in the world, when you think that no one understands you: your wife doesn’t understand you, your husband doesn’t understand you, your kids don’t understand you, nobody in the world understands you and you’re a dirty rotten slob. The only thing you can do is go to God and bawl and say, ‘God, I don’t know anything.’ That’s when you appreciate love. That’s

what He’s talking about here. That’s when you can have joy and it will be filled in you through Christ and His Spirit.

Verse 12: “This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this...” (vs 12-13). It all comes to giving of Christ’s life. The only one that God the Father ever begat in the flesh—the one and only. Did He risk all eternity? *Yes! It was only one!* That’s how much love God had for us, and He had for Christ. The only way Christ could do it was because He loved God. How? *With all His heart, with all His mind, with all His soul, with all of His being, with all of His Spirit, with all of His strength—everything that was in Him*—and that’s the model that we are to follow. That’s what He says, ‘As I have loved the Father, as the Father has loved Me.’

Verse 13: “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. **You are My friends.**” When you get that very alone feeling, you still have one good friend, and that is Christ. And He loves you, and He knows all of your faults and mistakes. He knows all of your weaknesses, and difficulties, and temper, and anger. And you go to God blubbering and say, ‘Oh God, forgive me.’ Whatever your problem may be, *God knows!* He still loves you, and He is still your friend.

Verse 14: “You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.... [I’m going to do that. Please, someone help me to do that—the commands in the New Testament.] ...if you do whatever I command you.... [We’re going to find that not only are those based on the Ten Commandments, but they are based on love and they are so profound.] ...No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father. **You yourselves did not choose Me...**” (vs 14-16). The reason that is there is that so no man could boast.

Can you imagine how Job would be if he entered into the Kingdom of Heaven after having... You know at one point he got so angry he said, ‘After I’ve done all these things, I just wish that there were a betwixt man [an umpire] between me and God, and he will know my righteousness.’ Can you imagine what it would be like if he got into the Kingdom of God on that?

There is law-keeping without love, there is law-keeping without understanding human nature. That’s why he had to be brought to repentance. How did God bring Job to repentance? *He came and smashed him on the head and said, ‘Job you’re a dirty rotten no good sinner.’ NO!* God said, ‘Job:

- Where were you when **I** laid the spans of the heavens?
- Where were you when **I** called forth the deep?
- **I'll** declare to you, Job, that **if** you can clothe yourself in majesty you can save yourself.

And Job said, 'Ah, **I've heard of You by the hearing of the ear but now my eye sees You.**' And that, brethren, is God's love to bring him to repentance, and that's why Christ has called us *in love* to that repentance and to this kind of relationship as a friend. When we, as the bride of Christ—I mean, just think of this down further—Christ is never going to have to come to his bride and say, 'Do you love Me?' **Never!**

Now let's see if we can go on further with this, and if there's anything that we can do to keep this in mind, brethren. There are certain things in the Bible that God has given to just purely inspire us, because inspiration is the vehicle to overcoming sin. That's how you overcome sin: *loving God and knowing God loves you* is the vehicle to overcome sin!

John 16:26: "In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you." Neither will Mary because she's not there. You don't need Mary up there. Mary will hold a prominent position in the Kingdom of God. Believe me, she will be *magnificent! The only woman in all of history to have been selected by God the Father to be impregnated with the seed directly from Him* for His only begotten Son. Some other women have made the claim when they've gotten caught: 'It wasn't so.' She was the only one to have conceived **from the seed of God the Father** in her womb. No other woman can make that claim.

And for us, v 27: "For **the Father Himself loves you...**" God's love is on a constant, continuous, ongoing basis for each one of us. But He's given us all free choice, so therefore, He doesn't interfere in our lives because He wants to know, 'Do you love Me?' That's the question now. He's not going to ask it later, He's asking it *now*.

"For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (v 27).

Verse 33: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation.... [that's why you go through all the things you do] ...But be courageous! I have overcome the world." And *with His Spirit and His help*, you can, too!

John 17 is the most inspiring part of the whole New Testament, brethren. Let's think upon

these things, and let's think upon the song, as we read this: *Do you love me?*

John 17:1: "Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You.'" Just think for a minute that the love that God has for us that we are going to have the glory.

Romans 8 is also inspiring. Why are the Epistles of Paul so inspiring? *Because he suffered terribly so that he could write this for us!* When he was called He told Ananias: 'You go to him and you tell him that he is to testify of Me before the nations, before the children of Israel and the things that He would suffer.' Look what he wrote!

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by *the Spirit of God*, these are *the sons of God.*" If there are any ministers listening, this is how you ought to treat the brethren, *as the sons of God.* They are not chattel, they are not dollars, they are not merchandise, they are not numbers, **they are the sons of God!**

Verse 15: "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear... [Remember when we said *perfect love casts out fear*, that's what John wrote.] ...but you have received *the Spirit of sonship*, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying that we are the children of God.* Now, if *we are children we are* also heirs—truly, **heirs of God** and **joint heirs with Christ...**" (vs 15-17).

God is the Author of ownership of property, brethren. If we're joint-heirs we're going to inherit the property of the kingdom. I mean, you think on that! Isn't that something? That's why it's so foolish to try—think on that for a minute: how foolish for a Church of God to drown itself in wealth when we're going to inherit the Kingdom. Think of it! And remember what He told the rich man. He said, 'You had your consolation in this life.' Don't go out and take a poverty vow, going to the other extreme. Remember, we're going to inherit the Kingdom of God:

"...joint heirs with Christ—if indeed **we suffer** together with Him... [that's the tribulation we were guaranteed] ...so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (v 17). Do you know how fantastic it's going to be to have a *spirit* body, to have a *spirit* mind, to have the *glory* of God? It will be so good for those of us who have the problem of trying to lose weight. We won't have to worry about getting overweight (just a little aside). **We're going to be glorified together!**

Verse 18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” That’s why we have to be resurrected on Pentecost and meet Him in the air on the Sea of Glass, so that we will be all glorified together. We will all be there at the marriage of the Lamb, and we will receive the blessing of God in full *spirit fullness*. That, I tell you, is something! That is something!

Verse 19: “For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God; Because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope, In order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (vs 19-21). How will that be? ***By the love of God!***

When you get down to your very lowest—and I’ve been there, and you been there—you go to Rom. 8:28. ***This is a promise, this is a guarantee!***

Verse 28: “And we know that **all things** work together for good to those who love God... [we come full circle back to *loving God*] ...to those who are called according to *His* purpose. Because those whom He did foreknow, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His own Son, that He might be *the* firstborn among many brethren” (vs 28-29).

This is what He was praying about, John 17:2: “Since You have given Him authority over all flesh, in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.” Think on that! On your calling! God the Father called you! ‘None can come to Me unless the Father draw him.’ I’m still trying to fathom that, brethren, that the Great Creator, the most superior, magnificent Being of the universe, ordained to reach down into my life, into your life, and call us and give us of His Spirit. I mean, think on that! That is profound! Does that not pale into insignificance then, all of the stupid little things we put ourselves through trying to be Christian? ***Yes!***

Verse 3: “For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your Word.” (vs 3-6).

Verse 7: “Now they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You. For I

have given them the words that You gave to Me; and they have received *them* and truly have known that I came from You; and they have believed that You did send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and all Yours *are* Mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*” (vs 7-11). Even Christ looked to this being in the Family of God together.

Verse 12: “When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I am speaking *while yet* in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in them” (vs 12-13). Brethren, how can you have the joy that God fulfilled in you unless you understand what we’re going through right now? ***You can’t!*** Because there’s nothing to be joyful about.

Verse 14: “I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world... [as much as we may desire that from time-to-time when things really get bad, but He’s not going to.] ...**but that You would keep them from the evil one**” (vs 14-15). And I just wonder how many times, brethren, God has rescued us in keeping this prayer that Jesus asked, to keep us from the evil one.

Verse 16: “Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth. Even as You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your* Truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word; **That they all may be one**, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You...” (vs 16-21).

Brethren, that can’t be accomplished unless there is love. The only way we are going to live through all eternity is ***on love, by loving God***. We’re going to keep all of His commandments, don’t worry. This is what so many people are afraid of. I don’t even think they comprehend that they are afraid of love because they think that if you really preached love that somehow you’re going to lose keeping the commandments God. ***No way, never happened! Never happen!*** Christ’s whole goal is that we may be one.

“...as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, in order that the

world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave to Me, in order that they may be one, in the same way that We are one: I in them, and You in Me, **that they may be perfected into one...**" (vs 21-23). That's what God is doing now. Perfection is done how? *'Perfect love casts out fear!'*

"...and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me may also be with Me where I am, so that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; because You did love Me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You did send Me. And I have made known Your name to them, and will make it known; so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (vs. 23-26).

'Do you love Me?' is what God wants to know right now. Our answer should be, ***'with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, with all our being, with all of our strength.'***

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred. R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 John 4:6
- 2) Mark 12:28-31
- 3) Matthew 22:40
- 4) Mark 12:32-34
- 5) John 3:16-17
- 6) 1 John 4:7-10, 9-12
- 7) 1 John 3:1-16
- 8) 1 John 4:14-21
- 9) Matthew 5:23-24
- 10) 1 John 5:1-3
- 11) John 14:15, 21
- 12) John 1:1, 14
- 13) John 14:22-24
- 14) Romans 3:31
- 15) Isaiah 42:21
- 16) John 5:19-20
- 17) John 15:8
- 18) Matthew 7:21-22
- 19) John 15:8-16
- 20) John 16:26-27, 33
- 21) John 17:1
- 22) Romans 8:14-21, 28-29
- 23) John 17:2-26

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- Acts 15
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