

Love in the Church

Fred R. Coulter—May 20, 1995

I've been studying some rather technical things, and I got to thinking that you can have all the technical knowledge in the world that you want, but if you don't have the love of God, you really don't have anything. It's fine to understand the technical things, and that needs to be. But if you don't understand the love of God, and if it doesn't come from the heart, then all the technical things in the world are not going to save you. It may be interesting information, it may be fine to try and understand the Bible more, but God wants us to be able to have His love and His Spirit as the primary and most important thing.

Let me just show you an example. Let's look at the Church that is called Thyatira. This Church had an awful lot of problems, and He even says that they have a prophetess, some of them have known the depths of Satan. But notice what He commends them for, Revelation 2:19: "I know your works, and love... [works and love go hand in hand] ...and service, and faith, and your endurance, and your works; and the last *are* more than the first."

In spite of all of these problems God commends them for their love, and their works, and their patience, and their faith, and they got into trouble—I am sure just like so many do—by getting into the technicalities of philosophy and being taken down with the inner things of Satan the devil. God is interested in love, and ***love is really the most important thing that we can do.***

We're going to review a few things because it's been quite a while. 1-John 4:6: "We are of God... [God wants us to know that we are *of God.*] ...the one who knows... [the one who is knowing] ...God listens to us..." How do we understand that we ***know*** God? *John tells us!*

1-John 2:3^[transcriber's correction]: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments." Anyone who knows God is going to keep His commandments. You will find that the Epistles of John fit together almost like a sphere; everything interrelates one with another.

Verse 3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him... [a double affirmation] ...if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word..." (vs 3-5). Again, this has an awful lot to do with our relationship with God. It's not just commandment-keeping, but it is even the words of Christ.

- Which Word of Christ would you be willing to reject?
- Which Word of God would you be willing to reject?

That why it's this way, so that we understand.

Whosoever is keeping His Word: "...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we ***are in Him***" (v 5). So, everything that we do in growing in love and grace and knowledge is *a perfecting*. Isn't that what Jesus said? He said, 'Be you perfect as My Father in heaven is perfect.' And the first time you read that you think: My, how can you possibly do that? *Well, you can do that with the Spirit of God, and the love of God!*

Brethren, one thing that we need to understand and realize is this: ***If God is perfecting His love in you, it is pleasing to Him!*** Can you do the things that please Him? *Yes!* Should that not be taught in the Church? What you do is to build the love of God and to do the things which please Him, which John talks about! It's very important.

"...By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (vs 5-6). That's the whole reason for the very love of God in our lives. We are to *know* God.

1-John 4:6 "We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us..." Isn't that what we get with so many of the letters that the brethren write, that 'we're thankful for hearing the Word of God'? They hear us!

"...the one who is not of God does not listen to us..." [that's a good thing to be able to know and understand] ...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6).

- We're to *know* that.
- We're to *understand* the wiles of the devil.
- We're to *prove* whether these things are so or not.

God commended the Ephesians 'for trying them that say they are apostles, and you found that they weren't, and you found them to be liars.' Which means that God is expecting us not only with the love of God and His Spirit, but He's expecting us, then, to have the kind of thinking and the kind of mind that God has, so we can understand the Truth from the error, which means that you need to be spiritually mature enough to be able read anything as

it were and be able to discern the Truth from the error. I think just about everyone here is able to do that because you are exercising your senses. God has given us a mind very akin to His. The only problem is, most people put it to evil. God wants us to put it to good.

In Hebrews 5 we find something very, very interesting. It shows what happens when you don't exercise your mind spiritually. The other night I was watching Discovery Channel. That's one of my favorites because they have things on there that are at least reasonably true. Do you know what the most watched channel is today? Just to show you the intelligentsia of people, the most watched channel today is Nickelodeon, the cartoon channel! I don't think it's all children watching it.

If you don't exercise your mind then your're mind becomes stagnant. What they were doing is showing a special as to what happened when they had to have an operation and take out part of this person's brain. That how they were able to re-instruct other parts of the mind to make up for the missing part of the physical brain. They had to do it with training, they had to do with physical therapy and exercise so that the brain would readjust. But what happens is the brain actually changes and can permanently retain these things in another area. So, if you have the problem of lack of memory because of age, don't worry it's still there. It's the recall that's the problem.

Now let's understand this in relationship to what God wants us to do in growing in grace and knowledge, in growing in love, in growing in the Word of God; letting the Word of God rule in our mind. It becomes a part of us and actually becomes a part of our mind, coupled with the Holy Spirit of God. Here's what happens when that is not done:

Hebrews 5:11—speaking of Christ: “Concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of in hearing.” They weren't exercising their minds as God expected them to—to know good from evil, to understand righteousness from sin, to be able to understand the more technical aspects of God's Word.

Verse 12: “For truly, by this time **you ought to be teachers**, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God...” Just like anything else, ***if you don't use it, you lose it!*** If part of your mind is gone, taken out, then you have to re-educate the rest of your mind. Beginning from the very basics. They actually found—they ran a test on this one Japanese boy who had to have a whole half of his brain removed. Everything shifted to the other

side of the brain, because the left side of your brain controls the right side of your body, and the right side of your brain controls the left side of your body. In order for the brain to, on one side control both the right and left side, he had to start right back from the very beginning: to move the arm, to move the fingers, to move the eyes, to pronounce the words. But after about two years, this boy was hardly detectable from any other child his age—just a wee bit slower.

Now, *spiritually* the same thing can happen, if spiritually we let ourselves go brain dead, then we have to do the same thing here: “...*but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* word of righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown...” (vs 12-14)—mature Christians

- so that we can *discern right from wrong*; Truth from deception
- so that we are able to *think properly* with the Spirit and the Word of God

When you have that in your mind, and you study and you grow, and you let God's Spirit and God's grace work with you and you exercise it, then you are able to understand.

“...who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern [understand] between good and evil” (v 14). That's what the Love God will do for you. I know some of this is review, but this is so profound that we need to really repeat it, and know it, and understand it.

1-John 4:6: “...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.” That's so important for us to know today, because Satan's deception is really going to sweep this whole world. If we don't know it, if we don't understand what's happening, we won't be able to realize.

Verse 7: “Beloved, we should love one another because **love is from God**... [love is coming from God to us] ...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God.” We're going to see that everything, just like in the Epistles of John, is in the present tense. It is helping us in doing what we are doing **now**.

Verse 8: “The one who does not love does not know God... [or you could in the more practical English say, 'is not knowing God'] ...because God is love.” This is the test for all of those who are religious and profess religiosity, that if they don't preach and teach the love of God—which is the greatest thing of the Gospel—are they not missing the boat? *Yes!* Are they not falling short of what God

wants them to learn? *Yes! Because everything else is going to fall! Love never fails!* The reason is **God is love**.

How can you possibly have a religion that does not have love and say it's from God, and claim you know God when you don't have love, because *God is love*? That's the very characteristic that comes from God. And I'll also tell you this: I've taken my own advice and asked God to help me grow in love. I've had some difficult times; so will you. Why? *So that you will learn it!* If you get discouraged in growing in love and understanding it, don't worry about it. Christ came and had to love God the Father and love the world while it was an enemy of His, while it was plotting against Him, while it was seeking to kill Him and finally did.

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..." (vs 9-10). *God is love*—isn't He? How can we then as human beings go to God and give something to God, which we don't have by nature? *We can't!* God has to give it to us, so it comes back to God. That's why God is not a glob! You try this sometime: get a balloon and fill it with water. You don't have to put much in there. But you can bounce it around, and you have a glob. Now if God is like a glob, how can you love that? How can you have a relationship with that? I mean, you may be able to do some interesting childish things with it, like have a water balloon fight. But how can you love a glob?

- That's why God is a person.
- That why we are to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.
- That's why John said in 1-John 1:3: "...for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ."

You can love a thing to a certain degree, but real love is between persons. That's why God created us the way that He did, so that we can understand His love is a greater expression beyond that. He wants us to have the relationship with Him—because He loved us first:

1-John 4:9: "...so that we might *live* through Him. In this *act* is **the love**—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the propitiation*... [a continual atoning] ...for our sins" (vs 9-10).

- Does God know you have a sinful nature? *Yes!*
- Did He give it to you by inheritance? *Yes!*
- Does it surprise Him if you sin? *No!*

What He wants you to **not do** is to intentionally, determinedly, with will and forethought and malice, go sin. But it doesn't surprise God. That's why it's a propitiation—**continual atonement**. And part of overcoming is realizing how wicked the human mind really is, and how much you need that propitiation.

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another." That's the whole basis. **We ought to love one another**.

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time.... [He has that in there because I'm sure there were those saying, 'Well, I've seen God.'] ...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us." God is dwelling in us. Christ is dwelling us. That's what's so profound and important in the whole aspect of love.

Verse 13: "By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us." So, we can check that. We know that we have the Spirit of God, and having the Spirit of God, we also realize the depths of the evil of human nature. You can't understand your own mind unless God reveals it to you. People in the world do not try and overcome a thought of temptation that comes in their mind. They may think it's a really good idea and go right along with it. But with God's Spirit we're able to understand. **That's how we know**, and we **know** that we **know** with the Spirit of God. He wants us to grow in that love, and grow in His Spirit, and grow in His grace in a continual, expanding and deepening relationship with Him.

Verse 14: "And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God... [truly, truly confess that] ...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**..." (11-16).

That's the only thing that's going to straighten out the Church of God, brethren. All the reorganization in the world, if there's not repentance and the love of God it isn't going to straighten anything out, because of what the whole church and the whole world is going through, is to realize that unless they love God, life really is miserable. Life is rotten.

"...God is love, and the one who dwells in love..." (v 16). Living His way of life is living in love. That's hard to do. That is really hard to do! But you can do it with the Spirit of God, and that's why he's telling us. **That if you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, you can do it**. It's going to take

some effort, because everything we do, spiritually, is going to take some effort. God hasn't done it for us that we do nothing; otherwise, He would've just made robots. You could have happy little robots all programmed, running around. *NO!*

But to come to the understand love, and Truth, and have God's Spirit in you is really a profound and fantastic thing. Especially living in an evil world. That is a great accomplishment, brethren. What God is doing is marvelous. You consider all the odds against it. That's why it takes the Spirit of God.

"...one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us..." (vs 16-17). It's a whole life long process that finally, in the end, God has—with what He has already created with your mind and the way it functions, as we described just a little teeny bit of it—with God's Spirit in us to come to that perfect love. And then that perfect love is, as much as we can have it perfected in this life, **at the resurrection**, and we have a spirit mind, and we have a spirit body; and we have the true seeing of God, face-to-face, and seeing Christ exactly as He is.

Can you imagine the profound love that that is going to give us? That's something! And I think that's why God has us live in this life the way that it is, and why the evil is there; **so that we really come to desire the love of God**; and when all the chips are down and when every episode of life has been lived we know that the love of God, never, *never, never* fails. It's perfected! What is this going to do for us?

"...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world" (v 17).

Because of this love, God does something so profound for you that it still takes an awful lot of understanding to realize. God says, 'All right, because you love Me with all your heart and mind and soul and being, and because I sent My Son to be the propitiation for your sins, because I love you and loved you first, and you responded to My love; and I know that you're physical, and I know that you have human nature. Therefore, I'm going to give you a gift that is going to be profound: My love and the righteousness of Christ.'

So then, in the 'day of judgment' it's not going to be: 'Let's look at the record. Our qualification was that if you have one thousand good works, you may enter into eternal life. Now let's look at your record. My, my, my, you missed it. You only have 999—and it requires a thousand.' That's why you have to have the righteousness of Christ, that, in the 'day of judgment,' the judgment of God for you will be the same as Christ—eternal life.

There are **no** sins against you; your name is written in the book of Life. God is not doing an accounting system. Yes, our reward is going to be based upon our works, that is true—*absolutely true!* But only God can give love, and only God can give life, and we are in this world as Christ was.

Therefore, now you understand v 18: "There is no fear in the love of God..." That was one of the hardest verses for me to understand. Very hard for me to understand when I first read it because I didn't know a thing about the love of God. Are we not to fear God? *Yes!* Well, how can you have no fear in love then? Because your love becomes so strong, and with the Spirit of God in you, that **there is no fear and torment**. While you fear God in reverential awe—and that's what that means—and in worship, and love, and adoration, this kind of fear is the fear, which is torment.

Verse 18: "There is no fear in the love of God; rather, perfect love... [the love which is being perfected, which is that love which comes from God] ...casts out fear... [That's why we need the love of God. It's casting out fear.] ...because fear has torment..." Oh yes, it does! And every time you go through an experience where you're fearful, or you're upset, or you're angry, you're just miserable and you are tormented—aren't you? *Yes!* Mentally! Spiritually! Maybe even sometimes physically. Maybe you even are tormented so much you get sick.

"...And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (v 18). We can work this around the other way. If you are not preaching the love of God, and teaching the love of God, and teaching the brethren that, then you have a church which is *run on fear* and you don't have a clue as to what the Truth of the Gospel is.

Verse 19: "We love Him because He loved us first.... [That's what it has to be, always.] ...If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar.... [We've already gone through that. You can put any name you want there.] ...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?" (vs 19-20).

That's a challenge. This is a lifelong—these vs 16-21—Christian lifelong goals, because God has made us to have challenges—correct? When there is no challenge there is nothing to work for—right? God has set before us the greatest challenge of all: **perfect love**—that we grow into in our whole lives. Sometimes we just have to start by getting on our knees and say: 'O God, I just don't have a clue as to what love is. I want it; I desire it. My heart says, *yes*, but my life says, *no!*'

- Teach me how to love!
- Teach me how to understand the love!
- Teach me how to express the love!

And the answer may come back, ‘Well, ok, let’s start you out with some of your enemies.’ Now you’ve got it, because that’s perfect love—correct? *Yes!* Or what if it’s just a hateful situation that you can’t get out of? Just look at the politics going on today with all the conspiracies and counter-conspiracies, and all that sort of thing that’s going on. Are they solving any problems? *No!* God is just going to let it just heap up until it collapses under its own.

...how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?... [God is saying, ‘Let’s prove your love here.’] ...And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs. 20-21). And that’s the way a congregation needs to be.

We are going to see that this is an active thing of loving, of doing, of bringing forth the fruit that God wants us to bring forth. And again, this is a *lifelong* challenge. You’re not all of a sudden one day going to go from being totally evil to being totally righteous; to being totally hateful, from being totally hateful to being totally loving—it isn’t going to happen. It is a process! It is a growth! It is the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit!

God wants us to understand what love will really do. The first part, he talks about what a minister should do. So we’ll review that, 1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love...” It says ‘charity’ in the *King James*. I don’t know why they translated it that way. Sometimes in the *King James Version* they translate some of these words just a little bit awkwardly, because it’s not charity, it is *love*.

Charity is doing something out the kindness of your heart to someone who needs help. That’s why there are what are called ‘charitable organizations.’ That’s why there are charities to help, but all of those charities, then, should be based upon love. So, I assume that’s why they translated it ‘charity.’

“...I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal...” (v 1). Just so much noise that it isn’t even worth listening to. Every minister needs to read these things and understand, that if he doesn’t have love, as 1-Cor. 13 is showing us here, then what kind of a ministry does he have?

Verse 2: “If I have *the gift of prophecy*...” I tell you, isn’t that something? I would like to understand every prophecy—wouldn’t you? But you know what would happen if we understood every

prophecy. We would be so vain! We would be so puffed up! Wouldn’t we?

Maybe you can understand why God hasn’t let very many prophecies of too many ministers really come to fruition, because they would get all lifted up in their vanity. There was a man who said that this year in Los Angeles that there would be a drought; California was going to be drought-stricken, and literally burn off the face of the earth. Well, God and Christ probably said, ‘Well now, let’s show this little man down here a thing or two. Let’s send some rain.’ What did we have? We had floods and floods, and rain and rain. And they have more snow pack up in the Sierra’s than they haven’t a clue as to know what to do. When it all starts melting and running down, there are going to be problems with it. His prophecy failed. That’s the kind of prophecies that fail.

And then he goes on to say, “...and understand all mysteries... [Be the greatest brain in the world] ...and all knowledge...” (v 2). Wouldn’t that be something? You could take all the technical things that there were, and you could just understand them. Snap! Bam! Boom! You could understand everything scientifically; you could understand everything that there was. And *if you don’t have love, you’re nothing*.

“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (v 2). I think about that a lot. Jesus said, ‘If you ask in faith, if you have the faith, the grain of a mustard seed.’ I said that one time, and Marilyn Gremlich came the next week and brought me a little bag of mustard seed. And every time I get to thinking about real faith, ‘If you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed...’

I probably have, if you would count them, 2-300 mustard seeds here. Christ said, ‘You could say to this sycamore tree, *be removed and go into the ocean*, and it would.’ Jesus also said, ‘Ask whatsoever you will, and I will do it for you.’ Then Paul says, ‘We know not how to pray for the things as we ought to.’ It makes me wonder:

- How much *faith* do we really have?
- How much *love* do we really have?
- How much do we really *know*?

That’s why the love of God is so important. That’s why He said that, so you could look a little teeny seed and realize: Get off your stinking high horse; you’re not so great. That’s what God wants us to understand: *I’m nothing!*

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods [to feed the poor]...” There are a lot of people who give everything. There’s one person who left a mammoth amount to take care of cats. Not even

people—*cats!* Finally, they all died off and they didn't know what to do with the remaining money.

“...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing” (v 3). Love gives us the ability to do some things positively, and it also gives us the ability to restrain ourselves from doing things negatively or sinfully. It has a twofold effect

1. to do what is right and good and positive
2. to restrain from doing evil

Verse 4: “Love is patient... [forbearing, patiently enduring, suffers long, as well as being able to endure suffering] ...*and* is kind...” This gives us those qualities, and *kind* comes from the word, ‘chrestos (chresis)’—which means *gracious*—that then you will do the things which are gracious, regardless of what is happening in your suffering, regardless of what it may be.

“...love envies not...” (v 4)—which means, it's not affected by covetousness, by wanting what other people have.

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We are going to see everything that love is, and everything that love stands for is everything that the world does not want. The world wants to lust. If in your heart with the Spirit of God, you're loving God, then the love of God is going to be able to put down the lusts. You cannot overcome a carnal mind with carnal things. As I said before, *you can't do spiritual things with physical means*. You can't overcome sin by just merely trying to put it down, but you can conquer it greater when you have the love of God to give you the outgoing, the outreaching to God, to have Him give you the strength to overcome it.

When your mind is focusing in on loving God and with God's Spirit, then you're not going to be doing these things; you're not going to be having jealousy and envy.

Ephesians 2:2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world...” We've already studied that in 1-John: ‘Love not the world, neither the things of the world. The lust of the world, and the pride of life, and these things are not from the Father, but of the world; and it's passing away.’

“...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [a lot of them think that this is light] ...among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world” (vs 2-3). Why? *Because we were filling all*

the works of the flesh—correct? You cannot overcome the works of the flesh with the works of the flesh. You can only overcome the works of the flesh *with the power of God's Spirit, and the love of God*. When you see how great God is, and how great His love is, then your desire to do these things will be completely overcome.

Love is not envying (1-Cor. 13:4). God's Spirit and His love give you the ability to not envy, to not be jealous. If someone has something, is blessed with something or receives something or does something or accomplishes something, we can rejoice with them. And we don't have to say, ‘I wish I had that. I wonder how he did that. I wonder why they got it and I didn't get it. God, why did You give it to this person and not to me?’ Don't worry about it. God has made vessels to honor and to dishonor. The ones to dishonor are sometimes, as we look at it as human beings, the ones as Paul said: we bestow the most honor upon.

“...[love] does not **brag** about itself...” (v 4)—‘vaunting’ (KJV) is this: *does not show oneself as a boaster, the big I: ‘I have done this; I have done that; I am this; I am that.’* I think the epitome of that was, you could say, in the person of Mohammad Ali: ‘I'm the greatest; I am the greatest.’ But I think right now he may be a pretty humble person. Remember what happened him? *He literally got his brains beaten out*, and has Parkinson's disease. I'm not going to say that it is God's judgment upon him, but nevertheless, with that he has become a very humble person. He used to *vaunt* himself.

We have someone who vaunts himself today—don't we? Who says, ‘I am the only apostle; I am God's vicar on earth; I am the leader of the church...’ and at 75, ‘I will not step down.’ You can put it in all kind of supposedly humble terms, but he *vaunts* himself. Love will give you the understanding that you don't vaunt yourself up.

Then the next one that comes along with it. Vaunting is a boaster or a braggadocio, or being rash. The next one goes right along with it: “...is not puffed up...” (v 4). What does ‘puffing up’ do? *It exaggerates!* That's why it comes right after being a braggadocio, then it exaggerates, and how great this accomplishment is, how great that accomplishment is.

Listen, when we start comparing ourselves with God and His love, what accomplishments do we truly have that really amount to anything? Think about it! In our own mind they may be fine. That's why whatever you have done, wonderful. But don't bank on it. Count on God's Holy Spirit! Count on God's love! Whatever you can do, wonderful, but remember, God has given you the ability to do everything—has He not? *Yes!* Do you remember one

who bragged an awful lot? Remember one who puffed himself up? *Good ole Job!* God took care of him—didn't He? And when Job repented then he was blessed tremendously.

What it helps you not to do, 5: “*Love does not behave disgracefully... [void of proper deportment, foolishness, moral depravity; it doesn't behave itself that way] ...does not seek its own things... [v 4]: ...Love is patient... [present tense] ...and is kind; love envies not... [present tense, notice—all the way through] ...does not brag about itself, is not puffed up. Love does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things...*” (vs 4-5).

Why don't you do this some Sunday watch some of these infomercials which have to do with self-improvement, with puffing yourself up to make yourself good. You can do a certain amount with that. Just remember these things in 1-Cor. 13 while you're watching that program. I did that one time with his fellow who has Fran Tarkenton with him? That man used to be a minister in Worldwide Church of God, believe it or not. It's amazing what they can do with that. “...does not seek its own things...”

Philippians is telling us how a congregation needs to be run. Again, just like in that letter I read where this fellowship group gets together—small group—they have love, they have unity, they have peace, they have harmony. Just like with us here. That does not mean there may not be troubles; that doesn't mean that we haven't had them. But it means that with God's Spirit we can overcome them—correct? We can find a right solution—true? *Yes!*

Philippians 2:1: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions.” That means clear down in the deep inner recesses of your being. What happens when you're really upset? When you're really angry? *Your whole insides and your whole digestive system just is cranked up in crash mode—right? Yes!* So, he's saying, *let it be true from the innermost part of your being!*

Verse 2: “Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love... [which comes from whom? *God the Father and Jesus Christ*] ...being joined together in soul, minding the one thing.” How is that done? *If we're all seeking and loving God, we will be more of one accord and one mind than anything else—won't we? Yes we will, and it will happen.*

Verse 3: “*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory... [being puffed up, braggadociousness, and how great you are, what you

can do, and all this sort of thing] ...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things...” (vs 3-4). Not seeking his own. No hidden agenda. No things for the self as it were, but to serve the people of God and do what is right, and love one another.

“...but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus” (vs 4-5)—***Who loved God!***

In this what we are finding is a step-by-step way on how to apply love on a daily basis. That's what this is really telling us.

1-Corinthians 13:5 “...is not easily provoked...” That is hard. That's a hard one for every one of us. Many times we say, ‘Well, I'm just that way.’ What is that? *I've had to see that is my excuse for not changing—*isn't it? If you are that way:

- Does God expect you to stay that way? *No!*
- Can you change? *Yes!*
- Will it be easy? *No!*
- But can it be done? *Yes!*
- Will it bring the peaceable fruits of righteousness later? *Yes!*

“...thinks no evil... [Is not imputing motives, not rejoicing in evil. Of course, the world has that. They have pleasure in evil—don't they?] ...Does not rejoice in iniquity...” (vs 5-6). No, but there are people who do.

Of all the things that are listed there, Romans 1:32 says: “Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them.*” Have pleasure in sin. The world is filled with that.

God wants us to come to the point of thinking no evil. There is! You have to have your guard up, though, because Jesus also said, ‘Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove’ Because if you are not alert to some of the evil—this doesn't mean you're not discerning good from evil—this means you are not thinking and planning evil that ***you*** commit and execute. But you have got to understand the evil of the world. Doesn't it say, ‘hereby we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error [deception]’—by using our minds to understand? *That's correct!* But we ourselves are not thinking evil to initiate it on our own as part of our life.

1-Corinthians 13:6 follows right along with that: “Does not rejoice in iniquity... [that's what the whole movie and television industry is based upon] ...but rejoices... [now we come back to positive

things] ...in the Truth.” What happens when you know the Truth of God and you really begin to understand it, and it really begins to sink down deep into your heart and mind? *You rejoice in it—don’t you? You’re happy because of it—aren’t you? Yes!*

“...rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things...” (vs 6-7). Is able to bear up under it, *sustain; support; to fend off*. Why would it mean that? *Because that has to do with our overcoming!* We are to use the power of God and the love of God *to fend off the evil* that’s around us. We bear up under fending off all that evil.

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.... [fend off all of these things; endure up under it] ...Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*” (vs 10-12).

Brethren, we are living in an age when we are going to see the fullness of this take place, with such spectacular, inglorious insanity that this world is going to go through. I truly believe that the only way they’re going to get this one world system in, is like they have done everything else they have ever done: collapse the economy and put people in desperate straits, to where they must embrace the solution. If they do that worldwide, I think that’s the only way they’re going to do it. They’re getting too much resistance now. You can bring people low very quickly. That’s one of the most wicked things you can do is to just put that upon people.

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand” ***To bear up under.***

- Don’t let it get you down!
- Don’t let it be discouraging to you!
- *Go to God!*
 - ✓ Let Him give you His love.
 - ✓ Let Him give you His Truth.
 - ✓ Let Him give you His power and strength.

Verse 14: “Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [so that you ***protect that love of God***] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (vs 14-17). All of this ties in with then bearing

up, ***bearing all things.***

Now let’s come back to 1-Corinthians 13:7: “...believes all things...” Is believing all things, in particularly the Word of God—right? *Yes!* In particularly the Word of God. Who are we to believe in? What did Jesus Christ say was the most important thing to believe in? ***Believe in Him Who has sent Me—the Father!***] ...hopes all things...” Why is that so important? *Because even in the most tragic situation, maybe somewhere down the road God is going to turn it around!* You *hope* for the best; you *pray* for the best.

“...endures all things...” Regardless of what comes along. And ‘endure’ means *to have courage, to be brave; to be able to buck up under, as it were, bearing up all things.*

Verse 8: “Love never fails.... [You want a sure thing into the Kingdom of God? You got it right there. *Never fails!*] ...But whether *there be* prophecies... [What did we start out with at the first of this chapter? The gift of prophecy?] ...they shall cease...” That is, all of *man’s* prophecies. This does not have to do with the prophecies of God. Christ said every one of those *will* happen.

“...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come...” (vs 8-10). That’s what we’re looking for, brethren. Perfect love is going to lead us to a perfect eternal existence.

“...then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child” (vs 10-11). All these childish things of jealousy, and thinking of evil, rejoicing in iniquity, of vaunting the self, of being boastful and proud, all those things are little childish things that go against love.

Verse 12: “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face... [Isn’t that interesting? ***Face-to-face***, because God wants us to have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.] ...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the **greatest of these is love**” (vs 12-13).

That’s what God wants us to focus on. That’s what God what us to grow in. And there are so many, many, things that we could add to it, bring to it. But let’s understand how great that God is, that He went through what He went through to make it possible for us to have the love of God, the Spirit of God, to grow in the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Look at all the areas in 1-John that tell us— and 2nd and 3rd John—about the love of God, and how that is in expressing love to each other. That's how God the Father is loving us with His Spirit. Then when we love each other and we are fellowshipping with God the Father and Jesus Christ, then truly, truly, brethren, we can have a congregation and a Church that is going to be pleasing to God.

We can do those things that please God, if it's all based on the love of God. So that's why love is so important, never fails, and it is the greatest of all!

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

Scriptural References

- 1) Revelation 2:19
- 2) 1 John 4:6
- 3) 1 John 2:3-6
- 4) 1 John 4:6
- 5) Hebrews 5:11-14
- 6) 1 John 4:6-10
- 7) 1 John 1:3
- 8) 1 John 4:9-21
- 9) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- 10) Ephesians 2:2-3
- 11) 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, 4
- 12) Philippians 2:1-5
- 13) 1 Corinthians 13:5-6
- 14) Romans 1:32
- 15) 1 Corinthians 13:6-7
- 16) Ephesians 6:10-17
- 17) 1 Corinthians 13:7-13

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